



25/04385/LBC – The Guildhall and Large Hall, Market Hill, Cambridge

Application details

Report to: Planning Committee

Lead Officer: Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development

Ward/parish: Market

Proposal: Installation of roof plant and screen, refurbishment and enhancement of internal and external fabric including installation of PV panels, alterations to internal fabric, rooms and wall positions, and fourth floor and basement extensions of the Guildhall

Applicant: Cambridge City Council

Presenting officer: Charlotte Spencer

Reason presented to committee: Land within the ownership of the Council

Member site visit date: 23 March 2026

Key issues: 1. Impact on Heritage Assets

Recommendation: Approve subject to conditions.

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1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The application forms part of the wider Civic Quarter project which aims to reconnect the Guildhall, Market Square, Corn Exchange and surrounding public realm. The project aims to create an inclusive, attractive destination that enhances the civic heart of Cambridge. The applicants have engaged with the Local Planning Authority through numerous pre-applications under Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) starting in 2024 and leading up to the formal submission of the application.
- 1.2 The application aims to reinstate the Guildhall as the main civic and office space for Cambridge City Council whilst also future proofing the building in light of the Local Government Reform and proposed Unitary Authorities. The proposals aim to make the Guildhall an exemplar in sustainability with a Net Zero aspiration; to provide sufficient modern office desk space; to ensure the core civic functions can be met; and aim to provide a range of commercial income generating uses.
- 1.3 The application seeks listed building consent for installation of roof plant and screen, refurbishment and enhancement of internal and external fabric including installation of PV panels, alterations to internal fabric, rooms and wall positions, and fourth floor and basement extensions of the Guildhall.
- 1.4 Additional information has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority during the course of the application, including the removal of the ramp to the rear entrance, points of clarification added to the plans, alterations to the cycle access and End of Journey facilities and detailed responses to the consultees. Following the amendments, the scheme is broadly supported by consultee responses, however, there remains concern from Historic England in relation to the roof top plant and screening and alterations to the Strong Room, particularly in regard to a lack of justification for the harm created by these elements.

- 1.5 The Guildhall comprises two separate listed buildings, The Guildhall and the Victorian former Public Library and Town/Assembly Hall ('the Large Hall'), both are Grade II listed. The proposals would result in a moderate level of less than substantial harm due to the roof top plant and screening, alterations to the Chamber, alterations to the strong room and removal of internal walls. Notwithstanding, the Historic England objection, Officers considered that this harm has been sufficiently justified.
- 1.6 The proposal would result in public benefits. The development would follow EnerPhit principles and would aim to be a pilot project for UK Net Zero Carbon Standard which would result in a 65% reduction of energy use and an improvement to water efficiency aiming to reach 5Wat01 credits. The development would bring the building back into comprehensive use as Council offices and would result in improvements to the accessibility It is considered that these benefits outweigh the identified harm.
- 1.7 Officers recommend that the Planning Committee **approve** subject to conditions.

Table 2 Consultee summary

Consultee	Object / No objection / No comment	Paragraph Reference
Conservation	No Objection	6.1
Historic England	Objection	6.10
Third Party Representations		7.1
Member Representations		8.1
Local Interest Groups and Organisations / Petition		9.1

2. Site description and context

- 2.1 The application relates to the Guildhall which is a Grade II Listed Building located to the south of Market Hill. It is surrounded on all sides by public highways of Guildhall Street, Wheeler Street and Peas Hill to the east,

south and west respectively. The current Listing description is from 1996 and joined with the Guildhall is the separately and earlier Grade II Listed Victorian former Public Library and Town/Assembly Hall ('the Large Hall').

2.2 The Guildhall is particularly significant as the civic building of the city and is one of the smaller number of Town Halls from the 1930s by architect Charles Cowles Voysey. Presently, the Chamber and Committee Rooms remain in Council use, the ground floor offices are in use by Allia Future Business Centre and the Large and Small Halls are used for events. The upper floor offices have mostly been vacated, however, are used by a small number of Council Staff. There is an existing Tourist Information Centre which is accessed from Peas Hill.

2.3 The site lies within the City Centre, Primary Shopping Area and the Historic Core Conservation Area. It lies within the setting of numerous listed buildings including the Grade II* Church of St Edward and the Grade I Church of St Mary the Great and No.5 Market Hill.

3. The proposal

3.1 Installation of roof plant and screen, refurbishment and enhancement of internal and external fabric including installation of PV panels, alterations to internal fabric, rooms and wall positions, and fourth floor and basement extensions of the Guildhall.

3.2 The general works can be summarised as follows:

- External Works:
 - Fourth floor extension on the western wing;
 - Existing plant and telecoms equipment removed from roof and replaced with new rooftop plant and screening;
 - Installation of solar PV panels on the large hall roof;
 - Installation of roofs over each of the proposed atriums at third floor level;
 - Small extension at basement level under Peas Hill for a substation;
 - Insulation to sloped roofs and retiled;
 - New rooflight to chamber;

- Internal – Basement:
 - Removal of some internal walls;
 - Installation of new internal walls and openings to create cycle store and meeting rooms for the Council Offices and Wellness Space with changing rooms for commercial offices;

- Addition of floor slab and wall insulation;
- Alterations to police cells under the Court Rooms.
- Internal – Ground Floor:
 - Removal of floor over atria;
 - Removal of some internal walls;
 - Removal of existing floor coverings;
 - Installation of a platform lift at the Market Hill entrance hall;
 - New internal walls to create a café area, council workspaces, council contact centre and end of journey facilities along with a reception for the commercial offices.
 - Addition of wall insulation on some external walls;
- Internal – First Floor:
 - Removal of existing floor coverings;
 - Removal of some doorways;
 - Removal of some W/C fixtures and fittings
 - New fixtures and fittings to create office facilities for council staff;
 - Some floor slab and wall insulation
- Internal – Second Floor:
 - Removal of some internal walls;
 - Removal of existing flooring;
 - Removal of W/C fixtures and fittings;
 - Installation of new walls to create office facilities for council staff;
 - Addition of some floor slab and wall insulation
- Internal – Third and Fourth Floors:
 - Removal of some internal walls;
 - Removal of existing flooring;
 - Removal of W/C fixtures and fittings;
 - Installation of new walls to create office facilities for commercial offices
 - Addition of floor slab and wall insulation
- Throughout:
 - Replacement secondary glazing;
 - New lifts installed.

3.3 The specific works to key rooms can be summarised as follows:

- Sessions Court, Ground Floor:
 - Adjustable writing tables added to existing seating;
 - Replacement floor covering;
 - Existing furniture and fittings to be made good;
- Council Chamber, First Floor:
 - Removal of furniture (which is to be retained and repurposed);
 - Replacement with bespoke furniture;
 - Addition of a height adjustable floor to the centre of the room;

- Addition of a glazed balustrade to the balcony;
- Improve AV provision;
- Installation of a platform lift to the dais
- Addition of insulation to the roof and re-tiling with existing tiles;
- Existing fittings to be made good;
- Large Hall, First Floor:
 - New plant in roof space above hall;
 - Black out blinds installed;
 - New stage curtains;
 - Wall fans removed and replaced with extract duct;
 - New floor covering to balcony;
 - New platform lift to stage;
 - Existing fittings to be made good;
- Small Hall, First Floor:
 - Installation of new freestanding bar;
 - Acoustic panels wall panelling installed;
- Committee Rooms, First Floor:
 - Thermal lining added behind the panelling;
 - Replacement floor coverings;
 - Existing furniture and fittings to be made good;
- Szeged Room, First Floor:
 - Thermal lining added behind the panelling;
 - Replacement floor coverings;
 - Existing furniture and fittings to be made good;
- Mayors Parlour, First Floor:
 - Thermal lining added behind the panelling;
 - Existing furniture and fittings to be made good;
- CEO Office, First Floor:
 - Thermal lining added behind the panelling;
 - Existing fittings to be made good;
 - Replacement furniture

3.4 The application has been amended to address representations, and further consultations have been carried out as appropriate. Amendments include: the removal of the ramp to the rear entrance, points of clarification added to the plans, alterations to the cycle access and End of Journey facilities and detailed responses to the consultees

4. Relevant site history

Reference	Description	Outcome
21/00483/FUL and 21/00484/LBC	Installation of 6 No. antennas on 3 No. on new offset brackets & support poles installed on new climbable tripod support, mounted on new steel grillage frames, Installation of ancillary equipment - 5 No. RRU's to be installed on 2 No. sloping pole brackets, fixed to brace poles at each antenna location, Installation of radio equipment within existing equipment cabin, Existing 6 No. antennas to be removed and replaced with 6 No. antennas fixed to wall and braced back to upper roof level Existing and new ancillary equipment to be installed on 5No. new MAFI freestanding frames.	Permitted
18/0422/FUL and 18/0423/LBC	Installation of solar PV and edge protection on the roof of the Guildhall.	Permitted
08/1258/FUL	Change of use of 74 sqm to cafe (A3) and change of use of 32sqm to shop (A1)	Permitted

Table 2 Relevant site history

- 4.1 The have been multiple alterations to the building, the majority of which are not listed here. The existing cafe and Tourist Information Centre on the Peas Hill Side were approved in 2008. The solar panels on the roof of the Guildhall was approved in 2018 and the most recent applications for the telecommunication equipment was approved in 2021.

5. Policy

5.1 National policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

National Planning Practice Guidance

National Design Guide 2021

Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20) Cycle Infrastructure Design

Circular 11/95 (Conditions, Annex A)

EIA Directives and Regulations - European Union legislation with regard to environmental assessment and the UK's planning regime remains unchanged despite it leaving the European Union on 31 January 2020

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

Environment Act 2021

ODPM Circular 06/2005 – Protected Species

Equalities Act 2010

5.2 Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan 2024-2045 (Regulation 18 Stage Consultation - December 2025 to January 2026)

- 5.2.1 The Regulation 18 Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan (the draft 'Joint Local Plan' (JLP)) represents the next stage of preparing a new joint Local Plan for Greater Cambridge. Once it is adopted, it will become the statutory development plan for the Greater Cambridge area, replacing the current (adopted) Local Plans for Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District.
- 5.2.2 Following endorsement by Joint Cabinet in November, the draft JLP will proceed to a formal public consultation (under Regulation 18 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012). This is currently scheduled between 1 December 2025 and 30 January 2026.
- 5.2.3 In line with paragraph 49 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to several factors. The draft JLP is consistent with policies in the current NPPF but represents an earlier stage of the plan making process. Therefore, at this stage, the draft JLP and its policies can only be afforded limited weight as a material consideration in decision making

5.3 Cambridge Local Plan (2018)

Policy 1: The presumption in favour of sustainable development

Policy 55: Responding to context

Policy 56: Creating successful places

Policy 58: Altering and extending existing buildings

Policy 59: Designing landscape and the public realm

Policy 61: Conservation and enhancement of Cambridge's historic environment

Policy 63: Works to a heritage asset to address climate change

5.4 Area Guidelines

Cambridge Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal (2015)

6. Consultations

Publicity

Neighbour letters – N

Site Notice – Y

Press Notice – Y – Affects a Listed Building and Conservation Area

Conservation Officer- No Objection

External

6.1 Works for the atria would not be visible.

6.2 The louvred screen on the rooftop may affect the 'lightweight' appearance as seen within pre-application discussions, however, the current collection of antenna would be removed which is a benefit. Provided the height does not increase and the colour and materials are toned with the building, the impact on the listed building as seen within the conservation area would not be significantly adverse.

6.3 The form and scale of the fourth floor extension conforms to the established building form. The extension would be sympathetic and would not impact the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

6.4 Considered that the PV panels would maintain the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Internal

Chamber

6.5 Works, particularly the removal of the fixed seating, will have a negative impact on the high significance of the chamber and building. Bespoke replacement seating is proposed and this now been shown on a plan.

6.6 The existing seating in the committee rooms and existing iron swing-stair in the boiler room are now shown as being retained and this is acceptable.

- 6.7 Following the amendments, the weight of the proposed works is now better secured and help towards mitigating some of the impacts on the overall proposals.
- 6.8 The harm to the character or significance of the listed buildings remains adverse (low-moderate level of harm). However, it remains the case that the application is made in the expectation of the continuance of the established, historic, local government use which is a key aspect of this proposal.
- 6.9 No objection subject to conditions relating to:
- the securing of contractors,
 - recordings of the building,
 - information of the proposed cleaning techniques,
 - details of external works,
 - details of the MEP plant in the large hall,
 - details of furnishings and lighting and AV equipment in the chamber,
 - method statement for wall panels,
 - details of secondary glazing,
 - details of the small hall bar,
 - platform lift details, and
 - details of the roof top plant screen.

Historic England- Object (22/12)

- 6.10 Welcome the amended plans with the identification of key rooms and the approach the treatment of different areas. Welcome the retention of the original furniture in some key rooms such as Committee Rooms and the Szeged Room. Happy that our queries have been addressed.
- 6.11 Comfortable with the fourth floor extension and could represent an acceptable addition to the building.
- 6.12 However, the bulk of the plant and screening would detract from the building's architectural composition and proportions resulting in harm to its architectural interest as the most important civic building. Remain unconvinced that a robust justification for the plant layout as consider that if it were to be spread across a wider area it would likely result on a less visually disruptive alternative. However, it is noted that this would result in the loss of the extension.

- 6.13 Could not support the relocation of Council Chamber seating in the Small and Large Halls as it would detract from the architectural character on these rooms. However, no concerns with the relocation to the Police Court or 'Heart Space'.
- 6.14 In regards to the Strong Room there are concerns with the differential treatment proposed on this room, with a stark division across separating meeting rooms and spaces associated with the Wellness Space would strongly affect its legibility eroding the overall plan form. It is not clear why the nature of the split between Council staff and commercial area needs to be in this particular form.
- 6.15 In conclusion broadly support the principles and ambitions behind the scheme and much of what is proposed. However, remain unconvinced and unable to support the proposed roof plant and strong room arrangement.

7. Third party representations

- 7.1 No representations have been received.
- 7.2 Members may wish to review the third party comments for the full planning application element of this proposal. Full details of which are available on the Council's website under 25/04384/FUL.

8. Member Representations

- 8.1 None received

9. Local Groups / Petition

- 9.1 None received. However, Members may wish to review the responses from Cambridge Past, Present and Future (CPPF) and the Tourist Information Centre for the full planning application element of this proposal. Full details of which are available on the Council's website under 25/04384/FUL.

10. Heritage assets

- 10.1 Section 16 (2) of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant listed building consent the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

10.2 Para. 212 of the NPPF set out that ‘When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance’. Para. 213 states that ‘Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Para.215 states ‘where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use’.

10.3 Policy 61 aligns with the statutory provisions and NPPF advice.

Fourth Floor Extension

10.4 A fourth floor extension is proposed to the rear of the western wing of the Guildhall. It would span for a maximum depth of 30 metres and would have a width of 7.6 metres. It would be set in from the west and northern existing elevations by 1.4 metres. It would have a height of 4.2 metres which would measure 21 metres above ground level. The form of the extension would follow the existing built form of this wing including a curved wall in the south western corner. It would be clad bronzed aluminium cladding.

10.5 It is considered that the extension is well judged in scale and massing with the set back allowing it to sit comfortably within the established roofline and wider townscape. The use of materials provides a high-quality contemporary material that works well with the tones of the materials on the existing building reading as a well-proportioned and refined addition.

10.6 Solar panels would be installed on the roof of the extension. It is understood that the panels would not be visible above the 0.3 metre high parapet and so these would not have a visual impact from street level of local viewpoints.

10.7 The extension is located in a part of the building that would have been occupied by built form, however, this element was not constructed. In addition, it is noted it would replace an existing array of service equipment. It is considered that the extension would be sympathetic to the listed building.

Roof Plant and Screen

- 10.8 The rooftop plant would be located on the front part of the existing main roof replacing the existing solar panels and telecoms equipment. The screening would run along the edge of the building facing Market Hill, Peas Hill and Guildhall Street and partially along south facing area of the plant. It would be set back from the inside edge of the parapet by 0.7 metres. The screen would have a maximum height of 2.4 metres projecting 2 metres above the existing parapet. It would result in a maximum height of 23.2 metres above ground level. The screen would be an anodised aluminium louvre screen.
- 10.9 The proposed plant would replace existing antenna and associated telecoms equipment. The existing equipment is considered to have a detrimental impact on the listed building. As such, it is considered that the removal of the existing equipment would have a positive impact.
- 10.10 It is considered that the proposed screen would read as a subordinate and recessive element. The use of bronze coloured cladding would match that of the extension and is considered to be sympathetic to the existing building. Whilst the solid board located behind the louvre may affect the screens light weight appearance, the profiles and other detailing would allow the screen to blend into the roofscape rather than appear dominant and bulky.
- 10.11 It is noted that Historic England have objected to this element with concerns about the impact on the appreciation of the building, particularly facing Market Square affecting the buildings proportions and detracting from key views concluding that it would introduce considerable levels of harm to the listed building. This advice is contrary to the Council's Conservation Officer, who whilst raising that there would be some impact particularly with the level of 'light weightness' to the screening, however, they considered that the removal of the existing array of antenna which is considered to have a detrimental impact on the listed building and conservation area would balance out the impact of the new screen. The net impact on the heritage assets is considered below.
- 10.12 Historic England have stated that bulk and layout of the plant has not been sufficiently justified as they consider that the plant could be spread over a large area reducing the harm. The plant is required to reduce the energy use of the building. It has been laid out over the existing flat roof space and under the current proposals there is no further adequate roof space available and in order to spread the plant out further the extension

would need to be removed. The extension is proposed to increase the lettable area of the Guildhall and as explained above, would complete the unbuilt element of the original building. The applicant has stated within the planning statement that the extension would bring in an estimated £103,100 in rent per annum as per table 3 within the Planning Statement. If this was not included it would result in the reduction of a potential surplus revenue by 20% which in turn would have a negative impact on the cashflow to support the front line services and make improvements to the existing building. If the plant was to be spread to a wider roof area, this would not negate the need for screening and may result in additional screening on areas of the roof where there is currently non proposed. As such, officers consider that the plant and screening has been adequately justified.

- 10.13 Discussions have been held with the applicant's design team and the Local Planning Authority prior to the submission of the application and officers consider that the final proposed scheme successfully balances the requirements of the screening, including noise insulation and ventilation and its visual impact. It is considered that it has been well designed to follow the appearance and form of the existing building. Notwithstanding this, officers accept there will be an impact, particularly to the front elevation which is afforded longer views from across Market Square, however, would limit the harm to a medium level of 'less than substantial harm' to the Listed Building. The harm could be mitigated to some degree by the final design of the louvre which can be secured by way of condition.

Solar Panels to Large Hall Roof

- 10.14 The scheme proposes solar panels to the roof of the large hall. These would be located on the eastern, northern and western roof slopes, however, none would be located on the curved section to the south. The panels would be fixed to a raised mounting frame which would sit slightly above the roof slopes.
- 10.15 The northern and eastern facing panels would not be visible from the public realm immediately around the site, however, the western facing panels would be visible from longer views along Bene't Street. However, this slope would not be seen against other key buildings and solar panels are becoming more common in the city centre including on listed buildings.
- 10.16 The placing of PV panels on the prominent curved roof slope to the south would be avoided and this is welcomed. The use of a mounting frame would minimise the unnecessary loss of historic roof slates and allows for

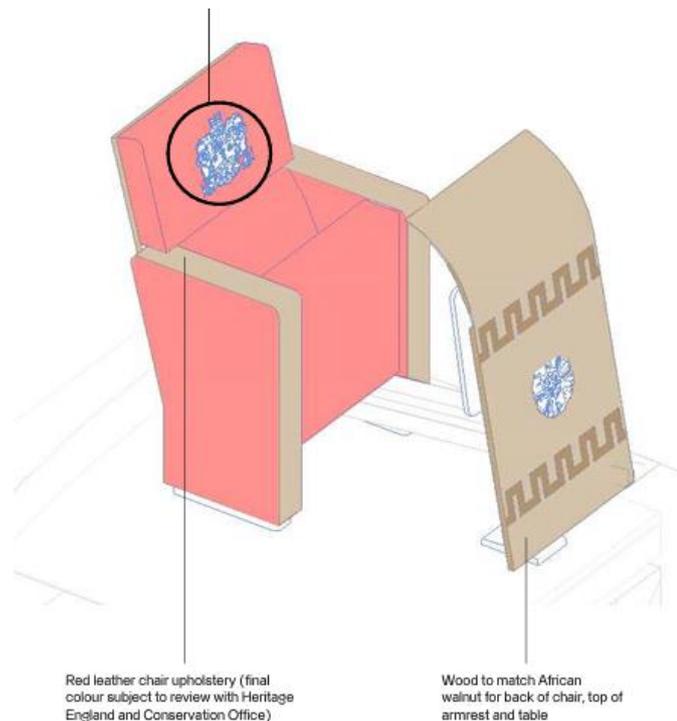
the work to have a level of 'reversibility'. Subsequently, it is considered that the proposal would have a neutral impact effect on the significance of the building.

Other external elements

- 10.17 The other elements such as the roofing to the atria and small basement extension would not be visible from the public realm. It is considered that these are minor alterations with limited impact. As such, it is considered that they would not have an adverse impact on the existing building and surrounding area and would not have an adverse impact on the significance of the heritage assets.
- 10.18 The roofs of the small and large halls, the chamber and the Police/Sessions court would be insulated. This would involve the lifting of the existing tiles and the relaying of the tiles once insulated. It is considered that this would have a limited visual impact. New roof lights would be added to the chamber and courts in the same position as the existing. It is considered that these are minor alterations with limited impact.

Council Chamber

- 10.19 The Council Chamber is currently one of the least altered and most significant rooms in heritage and function terms. The furniture is original, and the floor level tiered. The largely unaltered character and features of the room mean it possesses a gravitas appropriate to its civic function.
- 10.20 The interventions, particularly the removal and relocation of the fixed seating to other rooms of the Guildhall would have a negative impact on the high significance of this chamber due to the physical removal and by affecting the understanding arrangement/plan form and legibility. It is considered that the relocation of the furniture would not mitigate the harm as the significance would be lost due to them being scattered throughout the building and adapted. The installation of appropriate and high-quality bespoke replacement seating which would retain the horseshoe layout would minimise the overall impact within the chamber. Plans have been submitted showing the proposed seating at the time of the application. The seating would be retractable they would fold up when not in use to maximise space and ease movement. They would be connected to a table suitable for a laptop with electrical ports and lighting. A curved piece of wood would be attached to the front of the table allowing for privacy. See image below:



- 10.21 The final customised proposals are still being developed. As such, it is considered reasonable to add a condition for the final details to be approved.
- 10.22 The alteration to the floor would remove the tiered feature of the room and so would result in some harm. However, the plans make it clear that this would be adaptable and so the original tiered floor could be retained and an accessible floor could be used when required. In addition, a platform lift would be added to the dais to allow step free access. A condition can be added to for the final details of the floor and lift to be approved.
- 10.23 New AV equipment would be added to the room and the plans clearly state that 'no fixing to be made through existing timber panelling or leather wall panelling' and that 'All fixings and fittings interventions are to be reversible'. This is acceptable; however, the final details would need to be secured by way of condition.
- 10.24 Notwithstanding these substantial changes, the remaining features would be kept and made good. Subsequently, the interventions to the Council Chamber would result in a moderate level of less than substantial harm.

Small Hall

- 10.25 The proposed freestanding bar and cellar room is proposed to be introduced at the far end of the Small Hall. This would affect the perception of the volume of this simple room. However, the impact would be mitigated as the bar would be freestanding and not attached and so could be carefully removed without long term impact to the existing historic fabric.
- 10.26 The relocation of the chamber furniture into this room is not supported. The chamber furniture is part of a wider joinery fitting in curved sections of wooden chairs and so would take up a large amount of the room. However, it is considered that the furniture would not be fixed and as such, a condition can be added to ensure a final plan for the chamber furniture can be agreed.

Large Hall

- 10.27 There would be limited interventions within the large hall. The largest of which would be the addition of MEP plant within the roof space, however, this would not be visible and so it would not result in harm. Details of the plant and other interventions such as the platform lift to the stage can be dealt with by way of condition.

Other Key Rooms

- 10.28 There would be limited interventions within the other key rooms and it has now been confirmed that the existing furniture would be retained within the Committee Rooms and Members Rooms and made good which is acceptable. Details of limited interventions such as the timber wall panelling and secondary glazing can be secured by way of condition.

Basement Works

- 10.29 The works to the basement would result in the existing layout being completely changed. The basement is generally of low significance, however there are some elements of significance to the buildings earlier functioning such as the strong room. The strong room door/ safe door would be retained, however, the form would be lost due to the new partition wall creating meetings rooms to the Council offices on one side, and a wellness space on the other side.
- 10.30 The applicant has stated that the structural openings within the Strong Room walls would not be full, clear storey openings but include down stands and piers of masonry to create a clear reading of the extents and a relating scale that can be read between floors. The applicant also

considered that the opening up of the atriums will be a visual link between the chamber, heart space and Strong Room.

- 10.31 It is considered that the loss of this form and legibility would result in a low level of 'less than substantial harm'.

Ground Floor Works

- 10.32 The existing reception desk area and the minor rooms behind it are of low significance. The proposals create an open reception area and apart from removing part of the strongroom walls, is positive.
- 10.33 The platform lift would cause a degree of impact to the historic fabric, however, it is considered that this option would be the least harmful approach to providing improved access.
- 10.34 The opening of the atria would be within the existing open lightwell areas in hidden positions of the building. They are of low heritage significance and the proposed interventions would enable the basement remodelling.

Upper Floors

- 10.35 The existing office room divisions are generally proposed to be removed on the second floor as is the corridor wall on the Market Square side. On the second floor new partitions would be added to create rooms, whereas on the third and fourth floor the rooms and corridors would be removed. These partitions are plain. However, the works would result in a loss of definition of the original floor layouts and will cause a degree of 'harm' in heritage terms.

Other Internal Alterations

- 10.36 The Secondary Glazing Visual Impact Study illustrates the proposed inward opening triple glazed window systems. The external glazing would remain as existing and the existing internal secondary glazing replaced with triple glazing. The new glazing would be inward opening vacuum glass window system. A more slender secondary glazing would be used in the more historically rooms. This approach is considered to be acceptable within the low significant, office rooms of the upper floors.
- 10.37 No concerns have been raised by the Conservation Officer or Historic England in regards to the other interventions to the building.

Summary

- 10.38 NPPF paragraph 213 states that any harm to the significance of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 219 states that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for development within the setting of heritage asset to enhance or better reveal their significance and proposals that better reveal its significance should be treated favourably.
- 10.39 Paragraph 215 states that where a development would lead to less than substantial harm, this should be weighed against the public benefits.
- 10.40 As explained above, parts of the proposal would result in harm to the listed building. It is important to understand the overall impact of the works on the Listed Buildings to consider whether paragraph 215 is triggered. Below is a table of the summary of impacts from the main elements of the works.

Proposal	Impact on Listed Building
Fourth Floor Extension	Neutral
Plant and Screen	Moderate level of 'less than substantial harm'
Removal of telecomms	Positive
PV Panels	Neutral
Atria roofs	Neutral
Basement extension	Neutral
Re-roofing of small/large halls	Neutral
Alterations to Council Chamber	Moderate levels of less than substantial harm
Alterations to Strong Room	Low level of less than substantial harm.

Upper Floors	Low level of less than substantial harm
All other internal alterations	Neutral
Net Heritage impact	Moderate level of less than substantial harm

Table 3 Summary of heritage impact

- 10.41 Subsequently the proposals would result in less than substantial harm to the Listed Building. The identified harm is created by the proposed plant and screening on the roof, alterations to the Council Chamber, alterations to the Strong Room and the removal of the internal walls to the upper floors. This has been adequately justified in order to improve the sustainability of the building.
- 10.42 As per paragraph 213 of the NPPF, any harm to a designated heritage assets should require clear and convincing justification.
- 10.43 In regards to the roof plant and screening, Historic England have stated that bulk and layout of the plant has not been sufficiently justified as they consider that the plant could be spread over a large area reducing the harm. The plant is required to reduce the energy use of the building. It has been laid out over the existing flat roof space and under the current proposals there is no further adequate roof space available and in order to spread the plant out further the extension would need to be removed. The extension is proposed to increase the lettable area of the Guildhall and as explained above, would complete the believed, unbuilt element of the original building. The applicant has stated within the planning statement that the extension would bring in an estimated £103,100 in rent per annum as per table 3 within the Planning Statement. If this was not included it would result in the reduction of a potential surplus revenue by 20% which in turn would have a negative impact on the cashflow to support the front line services and make improvements to the existing building. If the plant was to be spread to a wider roof area, this would not negate the need for screening and may result in additional screening on areas of the roof where there is currently non proposed. As such, officers consider that the plant and screening has been adequately justified.
- 10.44 The greatest level of harm created would be within the Council Chamber. The existing chamber is currently not fit for modern purposes due to its limited electricity and audio/visual equipment which are unreliable for

hybrid meetings which are often the norm in today's Councils. The existing tiered floor results in poor accessibility within the room, with those with mobility issues or those in wheelchair cannot access the full room of the dais. The current layout also prevents users of the room to charge electronic equipment including laptops needed for meetings. There is a clear justification for these alterations.

- 10.45 The greatest harm is from the loss of the fixed chairs and tables in a horseshoe shape within the chamber. The Government is currently undertaking a Local Government Review which would unify existing District and/or City Councils with County Councils and this would directly impact Cambridge City Council. Based on preferred options the applicant has estimated that there a capacity of 70 members would be required within the chamber which this exceeds the existing capacity of the chamber. Therefore, it is considered that without alterations to the furniture, it would not be possible for the Guildhall to have the flexibility which would be needed to become the home of the new council. The Guildhall has historically been the civic centre of the city and the chamber plays an important part in its significance. The works would allow the continuance of the established, historic, local government use of the buildings. If the building was not being re-used for this purpose it would be at risk deterioration.
- 10.46 The alteration to the floor would also cause harm to the heritage asset. The adaptable floor within the centre room would allow for a level surface improving the accessibility of the room. It would also allow for a more flexible space when the room is not needed for Council meetings which can help towards the viability of the building.
- 10.47 In terms of the alterations to the Strong Room Historic England have stated that these works to the strong room have not be sufficiently justified and why not a more sympathetic solution that better relates to the strong room and legibility of the building section could not be found. The division is required due to the nature of the split between the Council and commercial offices. Officers consider that whilst this is not ideal, currently the Strong Room is not visible to users of the building and the proposed works would allow this to be a useable space by both council and commercial staff.
- 10.48 The removal of the internal walls on the upper floor would result in some, albeit limited harm. This is required to allow the floors to be rented out to a commercial operator that is currently unknown and so the final layout is yet to be determined. The applicants are reminded that any future internal

works required by the commercial leasees would require listed building consent.

10.49 Other works are needed to improve the energy efficiency and accessibility of the building and bring it up to modern standards.

10.50 Subsequently, Officers consider that the harm has been justified.

10.51 As less than substantial harm has been identified, paragraph 215 of the NPPF is therefore engaged and the harm needs to be considered against the public benefits of the scheme.

10.52 The scheme would result in a 65% reduction in energy use reducing its carbon footprint, more details of this are explained in the section below. This is considered to be a significant environmental public benefit. The building is currently partially vacant and not currently being used as offices for the majority of Council staff. The proposed works would bring the building partially back in council use and it would allow for the building to continue with its established, historic, local government use and this is a significant benefit. It is considered that the improvements would help modernise the building and secure its use in the long term. The accessibility of the building would be improved allowing for a step free access from the main front door which fronts Market Hill. In addition, the works to create a café would improve general public access to the building. The fourth floor extension would bring in an additional revenue stream for the Council, however, this is a private benefit and so would carry no weight in this instance.

10.53 It is considered that these public benefits outweigh the identified heritage harm.

10.54 In order to secure the benefits the Conservation Officer has requested a condition be added to any permission to ensure no demolition work shall take place until the fitting out contracts have been awarded with a start date set close to the demolition works. This is to ensure that the part of heritage is not lost without confirmation that the proposed works would be carried out and to avoid the building becoming unusable. This is considered reasonable.

11. Planning balance

11.1 Planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise

(section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38[6] of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

Summary of harm

- 11.2 The proposals would result in harm to the heritage asset and this has been summarised in table 3 of the report. The net harm of all the elements is considered to be a moderate level of 'less than substantial harm'.

Summary of benefits

- 11.3 The scheme by reason of the addition of the plant, solar panels and extensive fabric upgrades would result in a 65% reduction in energy use coupled with 5 Wat01 credits which represents a 55% reduction in water use. If achieved this would be an exemplar in sustainability with a Net Zero aspiration and is considered to be a significant environmental public benefit. The proposed works would allow for the building to continue with its established, historic, local government use and this is a significant benefit. It is considered that the improvements would help modernise the building and secure its use in the long term. The accessibility of the building would be improved. In addition, it would create more public spaces internally.
- 11.4 Having taken into account the provisions of the development plan, NPPF and NPPG guidance, the statutory requirements of section 16(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the views of statutory consultees and wider stakeholders, as well as all other material planning considerations, the proposed development is recommended for approval.

12. Recommendation

- 12.1 **Approve** subject to:
- 12.2 The planning conditions as set out below with minor amendments to the conditions as drafted delegated to officers.

13. Planning conditions

1. The works hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans as listed on this decision notice.

Reason: In the interests of good planning, for the avoidance of doubt and to facilitate any future application to the Local Planning Authority under Section 19 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

3. No demolition or wall removals shall take place until evidence of a contract(s) for the construction works and fitting-out hereby consented have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: to ensure that the Listed buildings are not left striped out or with partly demolished interiors if the remainder of the consented scheme were not to be implemented and in accordance with Policy 61: "Conservation and enhancement of Cambridge's historic environment", of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018.

4. Prior to the commencement of the works hereby approved, a room by room photographic building recording (including of the graffiti in the basement court cells) with reference to existing floor plans, shall be undertaken and the record provided to the Local Planning Authority and County Records Office.

Reason: to provide a record of the interior features and condition before the commencement of approved works to ensure important features of the listed building are conserved and to be in accordance with Policy 61: Conservation and enhancement of Cambridge's historic environment, of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018

5. Prior to the commencement of any external works, details of the external works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include:
 - Repairs to stone windows surrounds, balustrades and other stone detailing;
 - Any structural or remedial works to balconies and bronze balustrades;
 - Replacement roof gutters

- Any structural works to existing bronze doors, balustrades, sculptures/features.

The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: to ensure important features of the listed building are conserved and to be in accordance with Policy 61: Conservation and enhancement of Cambridge's historic environment, of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018

6. Prior to any cleaning of the external stone surfaces, the cleaning technique proposed shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure an appropriate, non-damaging, cleaning method/materials are used to ensure important features of the listed building are conserved and to be in accordance with Policy 61: Conservation and enhancement of Cambridge's historic environment, of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018

7. Prior to the installation of the MEP plant within the large hall, details of plant, equipment, locations and any proposed roof structure alterations shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The existing roof covering is to be carefully removed and reinstalled once thermal upgrades and membranes are in place.

Reason: to ensure important features of the listed building are conserved and to be in accordance with Policy 61: Conservation and enhancement of Cambridge's historic environment, of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018

8. Prior to the installation of the external lantern rooflight within the Council Chamber, full details and drawings of the proposed rooflight shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: to ensure important features of the listed building are conserved and to be in accordance with Policy 61: Conservation and enhancement of Cambridge's historic environment, of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018

9. Notwithstanding the approved plans, prior to the removal of the existing furniture within the Council Chamber, a plan for the relocation and repurposing of the furniture shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: to ensure important features of the listed building are conserved and to be in accordance with Policy 61: Conservation and enhancement of Cambridge's historic environment, of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018

10. Notwithstanding the approved plans, prior to the installation of replacement seating/furniture shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: to ensure acceptable appearance in relation to architectural and decorative features of the Council Chamber in accordance with Policy 61: Conservation and enhancement of Cambridge's historic environment, of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018

11. Prior to the installation of the new floor within the Council Chamber, full details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: to ensure acceptable appearance in relation to architectural and decorative features of the Council Chamber in accordance with Policy 61: Conservation and enhancement of Cambridge's historic environment, of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018

12. Prior to the installation of any AV equipment full details of size, position, appearance and wiring runs of the equipment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: to ensure important features of the listed building are conserved and to be in accordance with Policy 61: Conservation and enhancement of Cambridge's historic environment, of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018

13. Where timber panelling is to be removed and replaced after the installation of thermal wall lining, or refreshed and polished, a method statement for these works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by Local Planning Authority prior to these works commencing. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: to ensure important features of the listed building are conserved and to be in accordance with Policy 61: Conservation and enhancement of Cambridge's historic environment, of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018

14. Prior to the installation of secondary glazing to the Szeged Room, Members Room or Committee Rooms 1 and 2, Mayors Parlour, Chief Executives Office and the Tourist Information Office , details of the glazing shall be submitted to and approved in writing by Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: to ensure important features of the listed building are conserved and to be in accordance with Policy 61: Conservation and enhancement of Cambridge's historic environment, of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018

15. Prior to the installation of the bar/store within the Small Hall, details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the bar installation is free standing, retains the timber floor below, and can be removed in the future with no long-term impact to the existing historic fabric in accordance with Policy 61: Conservation and enhancement of Cambridge's historic environment, of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018

16. Prior to the installation of any of the platform lifts, details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: to ensure important features of the listed building are conserved and to be in accordance with Policy 61: Conservation and enhancement of Cambridge's historic environment, of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018.