

## Item No. 12

**DESCRIPTION:** LISTED BUILDING CONSENT: RESTORATION AND ALTERATION OF THE LISTED FORMER TOWN HALL, THE DEMOLITION OF THE LINK TO THE 1990S EXTENSION, THE REUSE OF THE LISTED FORMER TOWN HALL AS OFFICES, THE REFURBISHMENT AND EXTENSION OF THE 1990S EXTENSION FOR RESIDENTIAL USE, THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT COMPRISING 34 NO. UNITS AND ASSOCIATED PARKING AND EXTERNAL WORKS

**LOCATION:** THE LIMES, DUNSTABLE STREET, AMPHILL, BEDFORD, MK45 2JU

GRID REFERENCE: TL032376

APPLICATION NUMBER: 07/01876/LB

PARISH: Ampthill

APPLICANT Storey Property Developments Ltd

CASE OFFICER: Julia Ward

DATE REGISTERED: 26 October 2007

EXPIRY DATE 21 December 2007

**REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE** COUNCILLOR WARD REQUEST.

**RECOMMENDED DECISION** LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

### Site Location:

The application site comprises 1.04ha of land, the bulk of which lies within the Ampthill Conservation Area. The existing buildings on the site comprise the former Mid Beds District Council offices and the Acorn Centre to the rear. The original Town Hall structure is Grade II listed and was designed by Sir Albert Richardson, while there are more modern structures and a car park to the rear of the site.

The site slopes down steeply to the west towards an open brook and is bounded by residential development in Station Road and Dunstable Street to the south, and by the Clevedon Nursery and Russell House (now vacant) to the north.

The main part of the site is now vacant but a limited degree of occupation remains in the Acorn Centre.

### PPG/ PPS:

PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Development

PPG15 - The Historic Environment

**Policy + SPG:  
(Structure Plan + Mid Beds Local Plan)**

Regional Spatial Strategy      RSS14 (East of England Plan)  
   Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy

County Structure Plan      No relevant saved policies

Mid Beds Local Plan First Review (2005) CHE1 - The Council will not permit any external or internal alteration/ addition to a listed building where there would be an adverse impact on its architectural/ historic interest

CHE1A - Planning permission will not be granted for development which would adversely affect the setting of a listed building

CHE1B - The change of use of a listed building will only be permitted where it would not have a detrimental impact on the architectural/ historic interest of the building or its setting

CHE11 - Development proposals likely to have an adverse impact on the character or appearance of a conservation area will not be permitted

**Planning History**

There have been many and various planning and listed building consent applications over time relating to the former use of the site as Council offices. The most relevant planning history is as follows:

06/01657/FULL      Internal and external alterations to office building including demolition of link to rear extension, alterations and change of use of rear extension to form 27 no. flats, erection of 39 flats in 3 blocks following demolition of the Acorn Centre, together with parking, landscaping and ancillary works - Withdrawn 03/01/07

06/01658/LB      Internal and external alterations to front office building, including demolition of link to rear extension and restoration of rear elevation to its original design. Alterations and change of use of rear extension to form 27 no. flats - Withdrawn 03/01/07

07/00223/FULL      Restoration and alteration of the former listed Town Hall, demolition of the link to the 1990s extension, re-use of the listed Town Hall as offices, refurbishment and extension of the 1990s extension for residential use, construction of a new residential scheme comprising 34 no. residential units and associated parking and external works - Refused 10/07/07 due to the proposal having an overbearing impact on neighbouring residential properties, increase in

overlooking, inappropriate design and harmful to character and appearance of conservation area, inadequate provision of car parking on site, and increased traffic generation on Station Road.

07/00228/LB

Restoration and alteration of the listed former Town Hall, demolition of the link to the 1990s extension, re-use of the Town Hall as offices, the refurbishment and extension of the 1990s extension for residential use (26 no. flats) - Refused 10/07/07 as due to the absence of an approved scheme for the alteration and extension of the Richardson building, the proposals constituted unnecessary alterations to the listed building

07/01869/FULL

Restoration and alteration of the listed former Town Hall, demolition of the link to the 1990s extension, the re-use of the listed former Town Hall as offices, the refurbishment and extension of the 1990s extension for residential use, the construction of a new residential development comprising 34 no. units and associated parking and external works. Application pending - elsewhere on this agenda

**Representations:  
(Parish & Neighbours)**

Amphill TC

Recommend refusal of the application. Whilst the Town Council feel that the amended design is more in keeping with the Georgian market town of Amphill, there are still concerns about the increased traffic movements this high density development will create along Station Road and the roundabout at the junction of Station Road and Dunstable Street and therefore the Town Council is unable to support the application. Additionally, the block of housing units at plots 6 - 10 is still out of keeping in terms of its scale, thereby creating an overbearing and dominant appearance within the streetscene.

Adj Occupiers

6 letters of objection have been received to the planning and listed building consent applications specific to the Listed Building application the following comments are made:

1. Walled frontage to offices is unnecessary and remove an area of green space from public use and enjoyment;
2. The seat would be lost for public use;
3. The creation of a central walkway to the front of the offices is unnecessary and would reduce the amount of space available for office accommodation;
4. Height of buildings on Town Hall car park is unacceptable - two storey dwellings are more appropriate;

## **Consultations**

Ampthill and District Preservation Society	Any comments will be reported
English Heritage	Do not wish to offer comments on this occasion. The application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance and on the basis of specialist conservation advice. Should the local planning authority be minded to grant listed building consent, Government Office should be notified in line with Circular 01/2001.
Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings	Any comments will be reported
Ancient Monuments Society	Any comments will be reported
Council for British Archaeology	Any comments will be reported
Georgian Group	Any comments will be reported
Victorian Society	Any comments will be reported
Twentieth Century Society	Any comments will be reported
CPRE	Any comments will be reported

## **Determining Issues**

The main considerations in determining the application are:

1. The application
2. The impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the listed building

## **Considerations**

### **1. The application**

This application is submitted for listed building consent, and is accompanied by an application for full planning permission, which is considered separately on this agenda (ref: 07/01869/FULL).

This application is a resubmission of a previous scheme which was refused due to the lack of an appropriate scheme for the refurbishment of the Richardson Building being submitted and approved.

The proposals now submitted indicate that the listed building would be restored to its original format and refurbished in order to continue as a single Class B1 office space. The 1990s extension would be retained, extended and converted to comprise 26 no. residential units with the demolition of its link to the frontage building revealing the original rear elevation of the listed building. The western end of the site (formerly the car parks and Acorn Centre) would be re-developed to provide 34 no. residential units in a more traditional architectural style than the contemporary appearance previously proposed. A total of 60 no. residential units are therefore proposed. The reinstatement of internal and external features within the listed building are proposed, including landscaping of the surrounding grounds.

This application is in respect of the grant of listed building consent and is restricted to consideration of works to the front half of the site.

## **2. Impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the listed building**

The listing of the former Town Hall building includes both the original 1965 frontage building and the 1900s extension to the rear, although the formal listing description very briefly dismisses the extension as being "not of architectural interest". Notwithstanding this, the listing applies to the whole of the building as it presently exists. Thus in planning terms there is both alteration, extension and change of use involved to the listed building. Each of these elements is supported by policy providing the inherent character of the listed structure is maintained and preserved, and continued in useful activity.

The detail of the scheme provides an opportunity for unsympathetic alterations to the historic part of the listed building to be removed, including balustrading, doors and windows. The former Council Chamber, currently filled with a mezzanine floor would be restored to its original open form. The connection to the 1990s office block would be demolished to reveal the original rear elevations of the listed building. A reinstatement of the forecourt, and of front boundary walls, railings and landscaping, would restore the setting of the building.

In terms of the context of the listed building and its setting, the scheme is also considered to benefit the overall relationship of the Richardson building to the wider site. The alterations and extensions to the 1990s structure will benefit the relationship between the two, giving a separation that does not exist at present. The full planning application considers the potential impact of the new-build development proposed to the rear of the listed building.

The detail of the works to the listed building will need to be tied by condition, for example it is considered appropriate to attach conditions to any approval requiring full details of the reinstatement of the rear elevation to be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. However, it is considered that the overall proposal would considerably enhance the character and appearance of the listed building itself and its wider setting and is in accordance with local and national planning policies.

## Conclusion

This application would positively preserve and maintain the character and appearance of the listed building and is therefore recommended for approval in conjunction with the planning application for the overall development of the site.

## Reasons for Granting

The proposal is in conformity with Policies CHE1, CHE1A, CHE1B and CHE11 of the Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan First Review 2005; Planning Policy Guidance 15: Regional Spatial Strategy: RSS14 (East of England) and Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy

## RECOMMENDATION

**APPROVE** listed building consent, subject to comments from the amenity societies, subject to the following conditions

- 1            DG02    The works hereby consented shall be begun within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to ensure that this consent does not continue in existence indefinitely if the development to which it relates is not carried out.
- 2            LB01    All internal and external works hereby permitted shall be carried out in materials to match as closely as possible in colour, type and texture, those of the existing building.

Reason: To safeguard the special architectural and historic interest of this statutorily listed building in accordance with Policy CHE1 of the Adopted Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan 2005.
- 3            LB08    Prior to the commencement of works a method statement indicating the sequence of demolition and reconstruction together with measures for temporary structural support during works, and a detailed specification for repairs and reinstatement, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and thereafter adhered to during construction works.

Reason: To ensure that the structural stability of the adjacent building is maintained.
- 4            LB13    The new works shall be executed in bricks, mortar, tiles, skirting boards, arcitraves, cornices, door and windows frames and sills to match the existing building, details all of which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.

Reason: To safeguard the special architectural and historic interest of this statutorily listed building in accordance with Policy CHE1 of

the Adopted Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan 2005.

- 5 EM02 Before the commencement of development a sample panel of bricks shall be constructed for the consideration and approval of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the appearance of the completed development by ensuring that the development hereby permitted is finished externally with materials to match/complement the existing building(s) and the visual amenities of the locality.

- 6 LB26 Detailed drawings at a scale of 1:2 of the glazing bars to be used shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development. The works shall be carried out and completed strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To safeguard the special architectural and historic interest of this statutorily listed building in accordance with Policy CHE1 of the Adopted Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan 2005.

- 7 LB27 Notwithstanding the approved plans, all rainwater goods shall be of cast iron or aluminium and painted black unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reasons: To safeguard the special architectural and historic interest of this statutorily listed building in accordance with Policy BE6 of the Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan 2005.

- 8 U No works shall be undertaken on any of the following matters without full details including elevations first having been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority:

- i) modifications to the existing lantern to the Council Chamber to provide passive ventilation;
- ii) the provision of any means of escape;
- iii) the installation of any plant, equipment or air conditioning facilities;
- iv) the installation of the new balcony in the former Council Chamber;
- v) the proposed lift doors;
- vi) the installation of any secondary windows;
- vii) the provision of any external lighting;
- viii) the provision of fire escape facilities;
- ix) external surface treatments;
- x) boundary treatments including the walls and railings to the front of the site.

Reason: To safeguard the special architectural and historic interest of this statutorily listed building in accordance with Policy CHE1 of the Mid Beds Local Plan First Review (2005)

## Notes to Applicant

- 1 The applicant is reminded that works specified in condition 8 may require the specific grant of listed building consent.