



Historic England

Mr Dean White
Dorset Council
South Walks House
South Walks Road
Dorchester
DT1 1UZ

Direct Dial: 0117 975 0685

Our ref: L01344410

13 January 2021

Dear Mr White,

**Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2015
& T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**THE GUILDHALL, BRIDGE STREET, LYME REGIS, DT7 3QA
Application No. WD/D/20/002799 & WD/D/20/002800**

Thank you for your letters of 4 January 2021 regarding the above applications for listed building consent and planning permission. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the applications.

Historic England Advice

The grade II* listed Guildhall forms the visual termination to Church Street, the steeply sloping road which provides the main access into Lyme Regis from the east. Whilst it was rebuilt in 1887 to designs of George Vials, it incorporates fittings from the 16th and 17th centuries and forms an attractive group with the Guildhall Cottage which sits at right angles to the north elevation. The Guildhall's northern facade is of two gables, the left hand gable sits over a passageway which leads to the sea wall beyond, the right-hand gable is an Oriel window, the subject of this application. To the right again is the former jail with a stone, octagonal tower.

This application relates to the projecting Oriel window and seeks consent to reduce the projection following numerous and repeated damage by high-sided vehicles. Historic England has provided pre-application advice on this proposal and attended a site visits in 2017 and early 2020 to discuss how this damage could best be prevented or its affects mitigated.

Our initial feedback recommended that before any physical amendments to the building could be considered, preventative measures relating to the road and traffic management must be investigated and the possibilities exhausted. Considerable discussion with Highways England and Dorset County Council followed which unfortunately concluded that it would not be possible to re-route heavy goods vehicles or the double decker buses which pass through the town on this road. Some additional traffic calming measures have been trialled over recent years, including signage and bollards which have had some limited effect, but have not prevented the



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worst of the damage.

Consequently, given the on-going damage which was occurring and the unfeasibility of alternative means to prevent this, Historic England accepted that sensitive amendment to the projecting oriel window appeared to be the only option available.

Three design proposals for alteration of the north façade were therefore set out at pre-application stage:

- A – Reduction of the projecting oriel to make it almost flush with the wall in which it sits.
- B – Removal of the oriel and its roof structure and replacement with two pairs of sash windows to match the eastern pair.
- C – Relocation of the oriel further to the east.

These three options were discussed on site and it was agreed that option A required the least physical intervention into the fabric, would preserve much more of the form and character of the façade but would also maintain the existing window layout within the first floor Council chamber. The existing corbels which support the oriel could be shortened to support a flattened projection and new corbels added to support the roof structure which remains unaltered.

The comprehensive heritage statement submitted with the application has confirmed that much of the structure of the current oriel was replaced in the late 20th century following a major collision and therefore the current proposals would not entail the loss of substantial historic fabric.

Given the current and on-going risk to the building, the comprehensive, albeit fruitless investigations into alternative, non-invasive options and the sensitivity of the design proposed, Historic England has no objection to these works on heritage grounds.

This application also proposes repairs to the the oriel window to the Mayor's Parlour and to the stone pediment over the front door below, both of which appear to have recently been stripped of their paint coverings. Historic England has no comments on this aspect of the application and are willing to defer the detailed consideration of the repairs to your Authority's Conservation Officer.

Recommendation

Historic England has no objection to the application on heritage grounds. We consider that the application meets the requirements of the NPPF, in particular paragraph numbers 189, 193, 194 and 196.

In determining this application you should bear in mind the statutory duty of section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any





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features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess and section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

Your authority should take these representations into account in determining the applications. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us. Please advise us of the decisions in due course.

Yours sincerely



Eve Van der Steen

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cc: Jen Nixon, Senior Conservation Officer, Dorset Council



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