

LSTH - SITE HOARDING - HERITAGE STATEMENT

LSTH - Site Hoarding - Heritage Statement

12/02/2024



Hettie Dix

104 Gloucester Green, Oxford, OX1 2BU, United Kingdom

Hettie.dix@purcelluk.com

www.purcelluk.com

All rights in this work are reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form or by any means (including without limitation by photocopying or placing on a website) without the prior permission in writing of Purcell except in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Applications for permission to reproduce any part of this work should be addressed to Purcell at info@purcelluk.com.

Undertaking any unauthorised act in relation to this work may result in a civil claim for damages and/or criminal prosecution. Any materials used in this work which are subject to third party copyright have been reproduced under licence from the copyright owner except in the case of works of unknown authorship as defined by the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Any person wishing to assert rights in relation to works which have been reproduced as works of unknown authorship should contact Purcell at info@purcelluk.com.

Purcell asserts its moral rights to be identified as the author of this work under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Purcell® is the trading name of Purcell Architecture LTD.

© Purcell 2023

CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	Historical Overview	7
3.0	Significance	9
4.0	Heritage Impact Assessment	12

1.0 INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This Heritage Statement has been prepared on behalf of Warwick District Council in support of an advertisement consent application for the installation of temporary site hoarding displaying graphics related to the wider Town Hall refurbishment project. This document focuses on the areas potentially affected by the proposal to install temporary hoarding panels along the Parade, and partly along Regent Grove, in front of the Town Hall. The Heritage Statement identifies the heritage assets potentially affected by the project, providing a proportionate assessment of their significance to understand the impact of the proposals, in line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and duty to preserve or enhance the historic environment as set out in law.

DESIGNATIONS

The Town Hall is a Grade II listed building and is located in the Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area. Listed buildings and conservation areas are protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. National and local planning policies recognise that changes to other buildings or sites within the vicinity of a heritage asset can affect the special interest of that asset. This includes any external work that has the potential to affect the character of the conservation area.

2.0 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The first Town Hall was built in 1831 on the High Street and was the town's municipal administration centre until the opening of the current Town Hall. Leamington Spa's growth meant it quickly outgrew the first Town Hall as a venue for public gatherings. The closure of Upper Assembly on the Parade and Regent Street in 1878 bolstered the feeling that a larger meeting place or hall was needed. The council passed a motion to commission new Municipal Buildings in December 1880, and a design by John Cundall was chosen out of 47 entries. The initial intention was to extend the existing Pump Rooms building to include Assembly Rooms, a library, a Museum and a School of Art. The approach was later changed and the site of Denby Villa was chosen as the site of the new Town Hall. John Cundall's altered proposals were again accepted by the Council.

In August 1882 the Council accepted John Fell's £14,000 construction tender and the foundation stone was laid on 17th October 1882 by Alderman Henry Bright, Mayor of Leamington.



Postcard of a drawing by John Cundall of the proposed design for the new Town Hall.



Foundation stone, laid 17th October 1882.

On September 1884, Mayor Sidney Flavel opened the New Town Hall to acclaim and public ceremony. The building was subject to minor alterations in the early 20th century which included the creation of a new strong room on the north side of the entrance foyer. Additional crucial developments were carried out in the mid-1950s, particularly the installation of a lift to service all three floors, installed at an undetermined point since 1902.

In 1974 Warwick District Council was formed, replacing the Royal Leamington Spa Municipal Borough created in 1875, and who took on the running of the Leamington Town Hall and continued to run council meetings in its chamber. The Town Hall continued to be used as a ceremonial civic centre. More alterations were made in the late 20th century to respond to the pressures on the Town Hall's limited space. These included minor alterations to doorways and partition walls and the notable addition of a rear extension to accommodate further toilet facilities. Fire precaution works in the mid-1990s saw the installation of automatic sliding doors, as well as the provision of new steps and a handrail to service a new door created from an existing window opening at the rear of the building. The main entrance ramp was installed in 1997.

The newly formed Royal Leamington Town Spa Town Council moved into offices within the Town Hall in 2002. The existing lift was also replaced with a hydraulic lift system, which included enlarging the lift shaft.

Certain areas of the building will be subject to refurbishment works which were granted Planning and Listed Building Consent in June 2023.

3.0 SIGNIFICANCE

The Town Hall at Leamington Spa has been a physical landmark and ceremonial focal point for the local community for over a century. Its prominence within the streetscape of the Parade is augmented by the use of brick and ashlar dressing, which contrasts with the stuccoed Georgian terraces which generally characterise the town. This different architectural style demonstrates the evolution and shifting civic status of the urban growth that extended northwards in the 19th century. Fittingly, the building forms the backdrop of the statue commemorating Queen Victoria, whose reign saw the construction of numerous town halls and a general swell in civic pride.

The Town Hall has strong associations with public ceremonies and civic administration, although this has dwindled in recent decades. The balcony and vast interiors provided prominent platforms on which dignitaries and public figures were received, and speeches given – including royalty, celebrities and politicians. Outside of these notable occasions, the Town Hall operated as a hub of local government – representing and working on behalf of the local community. It consequently has especially high social and communal value.

Internally, the spatial hierarchy is clearly discernible and the richness of the internal decoration and finishes generally survives intact, including sculpted works, joinery and stained glass. There are some detracting features such as trunking and modern floor surfaces, behind which there is potential to undercover original finishes. Modifications to the building have generally been very minor and localised; the original plan form and spatial hierarchy are clearly discernible. The high-status rooms on the first floor have retained their rich ornamentation, whereas secondary spaces on the ground floor have comparatively simple features and the second floor is much plainer.

The building has high architectural value, both internally, with some areas of lesser significance where these have performed ancillary roles, and externally, especially the west and south elevations. The north elevation continues the same architectural language but does not have an ornate portico to match that on the south elevation. This is likely to be due to the unrealised library range that was intended to return across the back of the Town Hall and accessed from the south – meaning that circulation into the building was oriented to catch footfall coming up from the earlier urban centre to the south and moving along the Parade.

The building's original architect, John Cundall, has some significance as a local architect with a recognised portfolio of work across the town. This includes several churches, structures associated with the Spa Gardens and Jephson Gardens – exhibiting a particular focus on public-facing commissions.

Overall, the significance of Leamington Spa Town Hall is predominantly drawn from its architectural richness and integrity, as well as its prominent role in the town's civic administration.

4.0 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

SUMMARY OF WORKS

The proposals involve the installation of temporary site hoarding panels on the Parade in connection to the wider Town Hall refurbishment project (application reference - W/23/0381). The hoarding returns onto Regent Grove covering a small section of the south-east façade – up to the Regent Grove entrance portico. The hoarding is proposed to incorporate bespoke graphics which aim to become a celebration of the existing building by providing a timeline of key moments within its history, as well as highlighting key figures who played a part in its evolution. The graphics also serve an informative purpose and provide additional details to members of the public regarding the works undertaken as part of the refurbishment project.

HERITAGE IMPACT

The proposals involve the installation of temporary site hoarding panels on the Parade and Regent Grove, in connection to the wider Town Hall refurbishment project (application reference - W/23/0381). The heritage impact of the proposed hoarding panels is assessed below:

PROPOSAL	ASSESSMENT	LEVEL OF IMPACT	MITIGATION/ ADDITIONAL BENEFIT
<i>Installation of site hoarding displaying bespoke graphics</i>	<i>The temporary hoarding will obscure a large area of the existing building's front elevation along the Parade, as well as a small area of the south-east elevation along Regent Grove.</i>	<i>Temporary Minor Negative</i>	<i>Mitigated by high design value of the bespoke graphics and benefit of promoting the existing building and raising interest in the upcoming refurbishment work.</i>