

MEMORANDUM

From:	Built Heritage Officer		
Service	Green Infrastructure	App No:	261133 + 261134
Address:	Market Place		
Proposal:	261133 - Application for Listed Building consent for the proposed installation of two roof-mounted air source heat pump condenser units and associated plant, together with the erection of a roof-level fall- prevention guardrail at The Courtyard, Town Hall, Market Place, Wokingham. 261134 - Application for Listed Building consent for the proposed installation of two roof-mounted air source heat pump condenser units and associated plant, together with the erection of a roof-level fall- prevention guardrail at The Courtyard, Town Hall, Market Place, Wokingham.		
Heritage Asset:	Town Hall, including the Courtyard together hold Grade II* listed building status and are situated with the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area Listed Buildings along with Conservation Areas are classed as designated heritage assets under the NPPF and in the Council's Local Plan policies		
Site Visit Made:	Previously.		

Summary Of Recommendations

The proposals will result in harm to the fabric and appearance of the grade II* listed building of the Town Hall and Courtyard. The level of harm is acknowledged to amount to minor harm to the listed building itself, whilst the harm to the conservation area would be more limited still.

Being mindful of the guidance given in the National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026), under HE6: *Proposals Affecting Designated Heritage Assets*, should the Local Planning Authority be minded to grant consent, it is recommended that any approval be subject to appropriate conditions to minimise harm during the implementation of the works and to ensure that the detailed design, siting and fixing of all access and safety equipment are undertaken in the least intrusive manner

Comments On Proposal

These further comments are made with respect to the amended details for the proposed location on courtyard roof for 2no. air heat source pump units and for revised safety measures for working on roof and accessing, changes that have been made in response to the Built Heritage Officer's comments dated 27th July, and to those of Historic England who sought an alternative siting of the units elsewhere on

the roof.

The newly submitted details consisting of:

- Drawing No. 1323-Ww-B1-00-DR-A-0010: Proposed Site Layout
- Drawing No. 1323-Ww-B1-00-DR-A—0202: Proposed Elevations 1

Received on 04/09/26

- Heritage Statement as received on 23/09/26, which other than an amended eye bolt detail remained unchanged from the version submitted on 04/09/26.

Following concerns raised as to the potential visual and physical harm resulting from the air source heat pumps being located as originally mooted and that of the intended safe working measures (fall prevention guardrails fixing points for an external ladder. It is now proposed to have installed the 2no. air source pump units on the opposing (western) side of the courtyard roof to that initially applied and would see the units sited further back on the roof from the curving external walling to the Courtyard

In the location, now being proposed, for the air source heat pump units it is considered the ability for the units to be seen from the ground would be greatly reduced compared to the previous location, where it is understood the units were to be mounted on structures over existing plastic barrel-vault rooflights that would have added the overall height the units would have. It being now proposed to site the units on infill plinths/flat boarded roof decking following the removal of existing plastic barrel-vault rooflights. With additional of the existing plastic barrel vault rooflights to be removed from around the units and adjacent to access point to the roof in so negating seemingly the previous intended fall prevention guardrails positioned that from a heritage stance were considered detrimental to the appearance of the listed building, whilst now also hopefully now allowing for more discreet safety measures in the form of a stainless-steel safety wire system intended to be attached (in six locations) into the brickwork of the Town Hall itself where it should be ensured the fixing points are kept low on the walling so as not to be visible from ground and from around Market Place.

With respect to the proposal for a removable ladder access to the Courtyard roof with fixed anchoring points on the external walling, which from the revised submitted proposed elevation drawings is to be sited close to the junction with that of the Town Hall and would be in the vicinity of a fixed bench situated adjacent to the walling and that of fixed water standpipe. Of more concern here is the intention for the anchoring points of the removable ladder to be fixed into the decorative band of brickworks at the top of the courtyard walling. The number of fixing points and precise location for these is not made clear in the submission sufficient to be able to access the potential harm that may result. At this point it is acknowledged that at the Built Heritage suggestion the proposal is now for a black finished eyebolt which is expected to be more recessive in appearance than a stainless steel finished one with broad collar to it, especially where the fixing point be to the black bricks. A further point of concern at this point with the form of the removable ladder having not been stated is with the decorative nature of the brickwork to the top of the Courtyard walling and the copings topping it, that these could become damaged were an inappropriate ladder to be used and/or measures to ensure the decorative brickwork is protected whilst the ladder is in use.

With the revised proposals when compared to the initially submitted intentions, the proposals are considered to result in a lesser visual detrimental impact in terms of the historic appearance of the Town Hall complex of roof mounted equipment on the Courtyard being visible from the ground in Market Place. The required fixings for the intended safety equipment needed for safe working on the roof will it is considered cause harm not just from the need for the fixings to be physically made directly into the external ornate brickwork, not just as the result of the harm this will cause to the historic brickwork but also as these fixings well have an unwelcomed visual impact. In having a detrimental

With the revised proposals, when compared with those originally submitted, the visual impact arising from roof-mounted plant on the Courtyard roof is considered to be reduced. The repositioning of the air source heat pump units and removal of a number of existing rooflights will lessen their visibility from ground level within Market Place and therefore reduce the degree of harm to the historic appearance of the Town Hall complex.

Notwithstanding these improvements, the proposals would still result in harm to the significance of the Grade II* listed building. In particular, the installation of fixings associated with the proposed roof access and safety systems would require direct intervention into areas of historic decorative brickwork. This would result in physical harm to historic fabric and introduce visual elements that would detract from the architectural character of the building

The level of harm is considered to amount to minor harm to the listed building itself, whilst the harm to the conservation area would be more limited still.

The National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026), under HE6: *Proposals Affecting Designated Heritage Assets*, states that substantial weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, with greater weight afforded to assets of the highest significance. It further advises that where a proposal would lead to harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, that harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In this instance, those benefits may include the provision of improved energy efficiency and the use of low-carbon heating technology.

As such, should the case officer in be minded to grant approval, it is recommended that any such approval be subject to appropriate conditions to minimise harm during the implementation of the works and to ensure that the detailed design, siting and fixing of all access and safety equipment are undertaken in the least intrusive manner possible.

Conditions

Stainless-steel safety wire system

Notwithstanding the details submitted, the stainless-steel safety wire system shall be installed at a level below the top of the decorative brick parapet walling surrounding the Courtyard roof. All fixing points shall be located within the mortar

joints of the brickwork and shall not be fixed into the bricks themselves, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the works.

is to be installed at a level that it is below the level of the top of the decorative brick parapet walling of the Courtyard roof, with the fixing points for the safety wire system to be to the jointing of the brickwork and not into the bricks themselves, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority prior to undertaking the works.

External Ladder Fixing Points

Notwithstanding the details submitted, no works associated with the installation of the anchoring fixing points for the external safety ladder shall commence until details showing the precise location, specification and method of fixing within the external brickwork of the Courtyard have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

External Ladder

Notwithstanding the details submitted, no works associated with the installation of the sitesafe external ladder or its fixing points shall commence until full details of the ladder, together with measures to ensure that its installation and use will not result in damage to the decorative parapet brickwork or coping stones of the Courtyard walling, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The ladder and associated protective measures shall thereafter be installed in accordance with the approved details and shall be retained and maintained as approved whilst access to the Courtyard roof is required or unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to changes being made.

Courtyard Roof Access & Alteration Works

Notwithstanding the details submitted, no external works shall commence until a methodology statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The methodology shall include:

- a) Details of how access to the Courtyard roof is to be achieved for the purposes of altering the roof and installing the air source heat pumps, including details of any temporary protection measures required to safeguard the historic fabric.
- b) Details of the removal of the existing plastic barrel-vault rooflights and their replacement with a flat boarded roof deck, including construction methods and materials, to provide a suitable platform for the air source heat pump units and safe access for ongoing maintenance.

The works shall thereafter be undertaken in full accordance with the approved methodology.

CN2 Matching Finishes

All new works and works of making good to the retained fabric, whether internal or

external, shall be finished to match the adjacent work with regard to the methods used and to material, colour, texture, and profile.

Reason: In order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the building. Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Section 20 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB24

Date:	01/10/26	Signed:	Keith Frost Built Heritage Officer
--------------	----------	----------------	---------------------------------------



Extract from Drawing No. 1323-Ww-B1-00-DR-A-0010: Proposed Site Layout

Private: Information that contains a small amount of sensitive data which is essential to communicate with an individual but does not require to be sent via secure methods.

Public: Information that can be seen and used by everyone inside and outside the Council.



Private: Information that contains a small amount of sensitive data which is essential to communicate with an individual but does not require to be sent via secure methods.

Public: Information that can be seen and used by everyone inside and outside the Council.



Private: Information that contains a small amount of sensitive data which is essential to communicate with an individual but does not require to be sent via secure methods.

Public: Information that can be seen and used by everyone inside and outside the Council.

