

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	261134
Site Address:	Town Hall, The Courtyard, Market Place, Wokingham, Wokingham, RG40 1AS
Expiry Date:	30 September 2026
Advert Publication Date:	2 July 2026
Site Notice Date:	15 July 2026
Site Visit Date:	15 July 2026
Proposal: Application for Listed Building consent for the proposed installation of two roof-mounted air source heat pump condenser units, associated plant, access and safety equipment, and ancillary works.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

- Listed building

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets (where site is within a Conservation Area)

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
261133	Full application for the 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.	Live Application
251024	Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed addition of film to external windows.	Approved 24/06/2025
200242	Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent 192800 dated 18/12/2019 Condition 3 Method of fixing.	Approved 11/02/2020
192800	Application for a Listed Building consent for the proposed installation of 5No external Closed	Approved 18/12/2019

	Circuit Television Cameras and 4No internal cameras to the existing town hall building.	
122351	Listed building application for the erection of additional external notice boards and the replacement of existing ceremonial flag pole wall brackets, plus one additional flag pole bracket.	Approved 04/01/2013
070189	Proposed conversion of redundant male & female WC to display cabinet and replacement of existing doors.	Approved 05/06/2007
050051	Proposed internal alterations to listed building with the addition of dado rails to first floor corridor.	Approved 01/12/2005
041144	Proposed change of use of part of Town Hall (market hall/courtyard) to class A3 restaurant.	Approved 02/02/2005
042322	Proposed internal alterations & refurbishment to listed building to form restaurant plus replacement timber doors with glazing behind.	Approved 02/02/2005

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WBC Conservation	Objection to the original proposed location of the ASHP condenser units. To address the officer concerns, a revised Heritage Statement was submitted, alongside revised plans relocating the ASHP units. Following a re-consultation, no objection was raised, subject to conditions.
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REPRESENTATIONS

Wokingham Town Council – Raise no objection to the principle of development and request that WBC Built Heritage Officer considers impact of proposed guard rail on the character of the area.

Officer comment: The original plans were revised, and the guard rail has since been removed from the proposed development.

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site consists of a two-storey detached building which houses the offices for Wokingham Town Council. The building also includes a visitor information centre on the ground floor.

The building is located in a prominent position in the centre of Wokingham Town and is part of the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area. The Town Hall stands on the site of the Medieval Guildhall which was demolished in 1858. The new Town Hall was opened in 1860 and originally housed the Town Hall and police station.

The heritage building is Grade II* Listed and was officially listed in October 1969 with Historic England recognising the 1860 building with late 29th century alterations. Historic England reference the red brick with blue brick and Bath stone dressings and

the steeply pitched slate roofs. Also referenced are the windows trefoil headed lancets with stone surround, mullions and transoms under polychrome pointed arches.

The proposal complies in terms of:

Impact on heritage asset:



Policy TB24 of the MDD Local Plan states that the Council will conserve and seek the enhancement of designated heritage assets in the Borough and their settings by:

- *Requiring works to or affecting heritage assets or their setting to demonstrate that the proposals would at least conserve and, where possible enhance the important character and special architectural or historic interest of the building, Conservation Area, monument or park and garden including its setting and views.*
- *Supporting development proposals or other initiatives that will conserve and, where possible, enhance the local character, setting, management, and historic significance of designated heritage assets, with particular support for initiatives that would improve any assets that are recognised as being in poor condition or at risk.*

TB24 also states that '*proposals for building works shall retain or incorporate existing features or details of historic or architectural significance or design quality into the scheme*'.

The proposal has been assessed against Policy HE6 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Policy HE6(3) requires any harm to a designated heritage asset to be afforded considerable importance and weight. Where harm arises, it must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Policy HE6 also confirms that substantial harm to, or the total loss of, a designated heritage asset should only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where substantial public benefits outweigh that harm. For assets of the highest significance, including Grade II* listed buildings, substantial harm or total loss should be wholly exceptional. In this case, the proposal preserves the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II* listed building and accords with Policy HE6 of the NPPF.

This Listed Building Consent application seeks approval for the installation of two roof mounted Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) condenser units and associated works. The units would be fixed to the flat roof of the building. The modern circa 1980s flat roof ceiling above the café comprises an exposed structural roof/ceiling with a glazed rooflight system with industrial style exposed services. Externally, the roof is enclosed by a parapet wall constructed from dentilled Bath stone, red and blue brick. While the flat roof is read as a later intervention within the evolution of the building rather than part of its principal historic fabric, the parapet wall is specifically referenced in the Historic England listing for its architectural significance.

Plans were revised showing the units relocated in a different location on the flat roof. The units would be located on the flat roof above the ground floor café, set approximately 6m back from the roof edge and positioned against two walls of a centrally located gable. The flat roof is enclosed by a parapet wall and forms part of a

modern 1980s roof structure and rooflight system. Whilst the proposals require the removal of six existing rooflights and the installation of associated plant, access and safety equipment, these elements would be largely concealed from public viewpoints by the parapet wall and their setback position on the roof.

The proposed safety wire would be of a slim profile and fixed at a low level to existing walls. Due to the height of the flat roof and the wire's setback position behind the parapet wall, it would be largely screened from views within the surrounding Market Place, resulting in a negligible visual impact on the Grade II* listed building and surrounding marketplace.

Internal works would comprise the installation of two suspended AC cassette units and associated services within the modern café interior, routed through existing voids and modern fabric, resulting in no harm to significant historic fabric.

Given the degree of screening, the modern character of the affected roof area and the limited visibility of the equipment from the surrounding Market Place, Peach Street and Denmark Street within the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area, the proposals would preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II* listed Town Hall and would not adversely affect its setting or the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Furthermore, the scheme would provide social, economic and environmental benefits through improving comfort levels for staff and customers, supporting the continued viability of the café business and providing a more energy-efficient and lower-carbon source of heating and cooling. Accordingly, the proposals accord with Policy TB24 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan, Policy HE6 of the NPPF and Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Built Heritage:

The council's Built Heritage Officer was consulted and raised objection to the original location of the units. Revised plans were submitted to address the objection and the units were repositioned. Following a re-consultation, the Officer raised no objection subject to conditions relating to further details and method of installation regarding the safety ladder, safety wire system and installation process of the ASHP units.

Conclusion:

Overall, the proposal would result in limited loss of historic fabric, limited structural alteration to the elevations of the listed building, and no erosion of its architectural or historic significance. Any change to the setting of the designated heritage asset would be limited in effect. Subject to a condition to secure details of how the safety equipment would be fixed, the proposed works would therefore preserve the significance of the Grade II* listed building and conservation area setting.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010):

In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected

characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

RECOMMENDATION

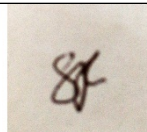
Conditions agreed: Yes

Recommendation: Approve

Date: 24 September 2026

Earliest date for decision: 1 October 2026

**Recommendation agreed by:
(Authorised Officer)**

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Date: 30.9.26