

Consultation Response from KC Conservation and Design
2019/93638 Holmfirth Civic Hall Community Trust, Huddersfield Road, Holmfirth, HD9 3AS
Listed Building Consent for erection of roof over rear well to create enclosed space, erection of rear fire escape and interior and exterior alterations (within a Conservation Area)
Date Responded: 10.12.19 | Responding Officer: Sue Oakley | Responding Ref:

I have considered this proposal for works to Holmfirth Civic Hall, a Grade II listed civic building which is constructed in stone with a high quality ashlar façade, and dating back to 1842. The hall is in a high profile location on Huddersfield Road and is situated within the Holmfirth Conservation Area.

I have no concerns about the proposal to construct a roof over the rear well as this is the least prominent elevation of the building facing the rear gardens of houses on Hightown Lane and the roof will be set below ground level, sloping upwards towards the string course below the main hall windows. Covering this space will increase the amount of useable space within the building. The proposed roof covering is a profiled sheet roof with rolls which gives the effect of a lead roof without the risk of theft, with conservation roof lights.

A fire escape adjacent to the rear well is also proposed to allow an increased capacity in the first floor meeting room in the south west wing of the building. Although this is an external structure and fairly obtrusive, it is proposed on the rear of the building in an area of low significance. I have some concerns about the structure being sited in front of one of the windows but due to site constraints and the low significance of this elevation I consider this to be acceptable. The intervention of a large fire escape structure will lead to less than substantial harm to the character of the building but on balance I consider that the public benefits of improving safety and enabling a sustainable use for the upper floor space outweigh this harm.

The application also proposes (retrospectively) a defibrillator on the façade, adjacent to the entrance of the building. Although prominent, the public benefits of providing this life saving piece of equipment outweighs the slight harm caused to the building.

I have no concerns about a proposed flag pole on land to the front of the building.

I do not consider any of the internal alterations to harm the character and significance of the building as no significant architectural features will be affected and the works will enhance the space and improve its viability. The WC area has been extensively altered in the past and is in need of refurbishment.

I have no objections to these proposals on the whole as I consider them to enhance the viability of the building, with improvements to the internal layout and facilities. I have concerns about the proposed first floor office window located behind the fire escape and would instead suggest that a single window is inserted adjacent to the existing rear exit door in this room. Alternatively a vertical window on each side of the door could be considered.

I would request that the following further detail is provided:

- Flashings for the new roof should be bedded into mortar joints below the cills of the hall windows.
- Fixing details should be provided for the fire escape prior to installation, with all fixings into mortar joints and not into the masonry.

- Details of the proposed fire escape doorway should be provided. The head and cill should be in stone, with hammer dressed finish to the stone on the jambs to match the existing rear window openings.
- Stone infilling of the rear basement window should be in matching stone, with the existing head and cill retained.
- The existing rear railings should be retained and repaired, with details provided of the intervention where the fire escape will be inserted.
- I would recommend that security of the rear hall windows is considered where the new roof will provide potential access to this area and if necessary any measures should be added to this application.