Heritage Statement

1. Introduction

This report supports a full planning & demolition in a conservation area application, submitted on behalf of The Slaitwhaite Civic Hall Trust, for the proposed addition of a main entrance extension, as well as minimal internal and external works to their site and building, in Slaithwaite.

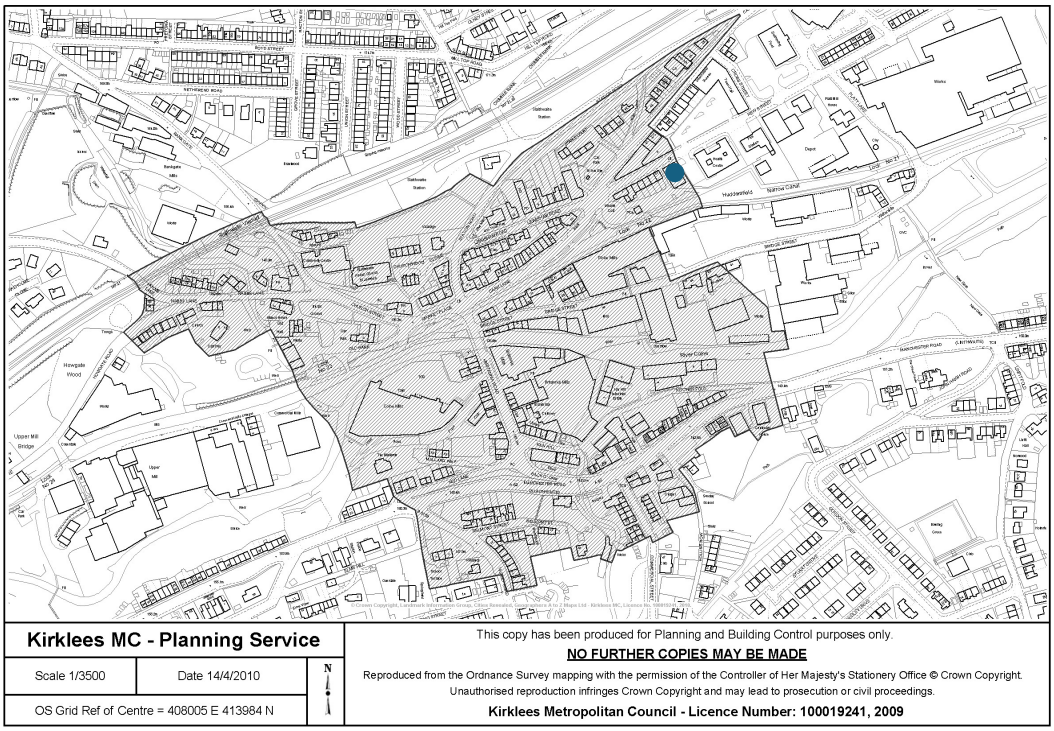
This statement should be read together with all additional pieces of submitted information for this application.

2. Site Description and Setting

The Civic Hall is located in the heart of the Colne Valley and the site is located at the end of a row of terraced houses, in a mix of commercial and residential areas on New Street, close to the A62. The site comprises of the Civic Hall building with neoclassical influences and a hard standing area at the back of the site. Towards northwest the building faces New Street, with the main entrance accessed by steps onto the existing pavement so is not accessible for all. A lift and stair extension has been added to the original building to improve access, however this does not address circulation and accessibility within the building. There is a ramp from the pavement to the external lift to overcome the level difference and that links the ground floor to the rest of the floors within the building. On the other side of the main building there is a secondary ramp connecting the pavement level to a fire exit on the side of the building.

The main material used for both the main building and the extension is stone with Edwardian-style sash timber windows which are in a poor state of repair, unsafe and single glazed.

The existing extension is adjacent to a stone boundary wall which separates the Civic Hall and adjacent health center. Between the Civic Hall and the terraced row of houses towards southeast, there is a footpath leading to the back of the building on the lower ground floor. The lower ground floor consists of an accessible bike repair workshop. This backs onto the Huddersfield Narrow Canal. The area at the back of the building is tarmac and there is a small garden for the building users to enjoy.



Kirklees Council map of Slaithwaite Conservation Area with site highlighted in blue.

3. Conservation area

The building is located within Slaithwaite Conservation Area. Slaithwaite Conservation Area covers a large part of the town center and contains various examples of historic stages and development.

Any development within the Conservation Area needs to be carefully considered, to help preserve the special character and appearance of the area and maintain or improve its environment quality. It is also recognised that conservation areas must be allowed to evolve and ensure that they meet the changing demands of the area and residents.

4. Proposal

The proposed works to the building include:

- A new subservient, modern and crisp extension to replace the existing ramp towards northeast to connect both the main building and the lift / stair extension. The current vertical circulation is hard to navigate for everyone, particularly those with accessibility issues. The extension will provide a platform lift and a set of stairs to create a main entrance which is accessible for all. The extension will become the new main entrance for the building. The material palette will respect the traditional setting of the building and will consist of natural tones, contrasting the existing Civic Hall by creating a contemporary proposal. The extension will be clad in western red cedar with stone plinth to match the existing walls. The lean-to roof will also be clad in western red cedar to create a statement of the proposed extension. The proposed double-glazed windows, roof lights and main entrance door will provide an open and inviting space that would allow natural light into the entrance and immediate spaces of the Civic Hall. The proposed windows and door are in line with current regulations, complying with current Part L Building Regulations, improving thermal heat loss and reducing the energy demand of the building. The lightwell proposed at the front of the extension will allow natural light to reach the lower ground floor workshops and the new cast iron guarding in front will provide a safety barrier to the building users. The immediate area in front of the new main entrance extension will allow for an 1800 mm turning circle and pathway towards the existing pavement to allow two wheelchairs to pass each other and will be paved in Saxon textured paving in natural colour and granite paving in flamed finish and black colour to create a perimeter border. The proposed new main entrance door will be power assisted to facilitate ease of access to the building.

- The replacement of the existing windows with new aluminium and uPVC framed energy efficient windows that offer better thermal performance in the long term. The replacement windows will be in RAL 7016 Anthracite Grey colour. The existing windows on the southwest elevation at first floor have been temporarily secured, however they are in a state of disrepair and require urgent replacement.

- New PVs to improve sustainability and help the building's energy demand.

- Some internal changes to improve accessibility.

- Replacing the external ramp on the southwest with a new checkered aluminum ramp and new railings in RAL 9005 Black to provide a secondary fire escape route out of the large meeting room. The existing ramp is corroding and needs replacing for health and safety reasons.

- Replacing the existing large windows on the lower ground floor with by-fold doors to open the space towards the back of the building and on to the canal by improving access.

- Forming level access to the south entrance on the canal.

- New external signage to improve wayfinding.

5. Impact

The proposed works will greatly increase the offering that the centre can provide to the local community by improving accessibility and will therefore improve the longevity of the centre. The works planned will improve the aesthetics of the building and the street scene along New Street by providing a welcoming and accessible new main entrance through contemporary materials and design intent. The proposed works will have a positive impact on the setting of the existing Civic Hall within the Conservation Area. The new extension windows will meet the current Part L Building Regulations, improving thermal heat loss and reducing the energy demand of the building.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is considered that the modern and crisp design of the main entrance, which is set back and subservient to the main building, will provide access for all. The main entrance and all associated works have been carefully designed and adequately consider the setting of the building within the Slaithwaite Conservation Area. The introduction of thermally insulated double glazed windows will significantly improve the thermal properties in line with sustainability aspirations.