

WTC Working Group Terms of Reference

The Town Hall Conservation Project, Development Stage, Jan-May 2025

Restoring dilapidated Grade I listed building and improving amenities for future civic and community benefit

BACKGROUND

- The dilapidation and deterioration of the external and internal condition of the Grade 1 Listed Town Hall has been ongoing over a number of years. Council-commissioned surveys by Richard Oxley and Historic England in 2017 and 2018 recommended urgent repairs. Nothing has been done. The Heritage Asset Working Group, this group's predecessor 2019-2023, obtained costs for the heritage conservation work of a minimum of £1.25 million. Achieving beneficial internal works, including a lift and modern lavatories would add to the total.
- Council resolved on 22 August 2022 to appoint an architect to scope the project. The eventual tenders were reviewed on March 18 2024 and the appointment of James Macintosh Architects was announced 22 April 2024.
- An Expression of Interest to the National Lottery Heritage Fund was successful and we entered the Development phase in July 2024. The whole process takes up to three years and we could be unsuccessful. The work for this stage is to be submitted in May 2025. The Council will have to supply 10% of the total funding required and had previously agreed to apply to the Public Works Loan Board for this (August 2023).
- Essential immediate repairs were agreed on 21 October 2024 and have been carried out.
- Installation of a lightning conductor has been agreed and the work will be carried out soon.

OUTCOME

Fully restored Grade 1 Listed civic and community building, adapted for modern use on three floors plus basement, including wiring fit to support broadband IT, modern toilets, a wheelchair-capable lift, better storage, enhanced and safer Town Information Centre, rentable office space, fitted with regard to a balance of heritage conservation and climate change adaptation. Robust business plan for revenue-

yielding use that will guarantee regular maintenance routines are executed, plus occasional pop-up exhibitions for public occasions.

TIMELINE

Jan-Feb

- A plan for the internal works has been identified that is most likely to obtain SODC ***Heritage Planning Approval***. An ***exhibition and associated consultation***, led by the architect JMA, is planned for January 2025, alongside pre-application Planning discussions. JMA will carry out the consultation analysis.
- ***Full costings*** for the external heritage conservation works and internal work will be provided by JMA during January.
- An investigation by a Fire engineer will determine whether or not the number of people in the building can be safely raised from current 60, in order to make the TH more viable as a wedding or other hireable venue.

Feb-May

- ***Detailed costings*** and a ***business plan for future use*** are required for the Heritage Fund application, as are ***plans for environmental and organisational sustainability***.
- ***Public engagement*** is required as part of the process, currently being discussed with members of Wallingford Museum. The Development stage part of the Heritage Fund process will be ***submitted by 28th May***, subject to sufficient officer support. We should know whether we progress to Delivery stage by the end of September.
- ***Start on the PWLB application***, which will require consultation and a referendum. This may need to be our Plan B for raising the whole funding.
- These consultations will overlap with consultations on the Regal and the Neighbourhood Plan referendum and should help to engender community support and enthusiasm.

DELIVERABLES

- Public consultation and analysis
- Public engagement project focused on the Market Place
- Planning application and permissions
- Full costings of all works proposed
- Business plan for future use of building

- Completed Development Stage application to NLHF
- Initial work on Public Works Loan and preparation for consultation

MEMBERS (Councillors) Cllr Keats-Rohan
Cllr Hendrie
Cllr Sandall

MEMBERS (Non-Councillors) Grants Officer
2-3 from Museum/TWHAS, Garry Elliot, Judy
Dewey, Sue Wright

BUDGET

CONVENOR Cllr Keats-Rohan

NOTE-TAKING/AGENDA To be determined by the Working Group

STAKEHOLDERS Wallingford Town Council
James Macintosh Architects
Community