

## North Hertfordshire Museum/Community Facility Design & Construction Team Meeting



### Notes of Meeting

Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2014

- Present:** NHDC: Councillor Tony Hunter, David Scholes, Vaughan Watson, Neal Charlton Steve Crowley, Sharon Nahal (Notes)
- Hitchin Town Hall Ltd: David Leal-Bennett, Brent Smith, David Parsley
- Apologies:** John Robinson
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DLB announced that following his recent appointment as Hitchin Area Committee Chairman, he would be resigning as a Director/Trustee of Hitchin Town Hall Ltd as he wanted to focus his attention on the political side of things.

Brent Smith would be resigning as the Chairman of Hitchin Town Hall Ltd and Stephen Pike would take over the role as Chairman. Hitchin Town Hall Ltd were in the process of notifying Companies House.

DLB also stated that he wanted to make it clear that all Directors of Hitchin Town Hall Ltd felt very strongly that they and the community groups in Hitchin, had been let down by NHDC in both the management and handling of the project. Had the detail about electrical boxes, foyer etc been made known before the Development Agreement was signed, they would not have signed.

Councillor Hunter stated that he could argue all of the points related to this statement but, that in the interests of moving the project forward, requested that the meeting proceed.

VW advised that he was acting as Deputy Project Executive in John Robinson's absence. He reminded all participants that this was a meeting of the Design & Construction Team and that issues relating to the agreed specification and build would be discussed. Any other matters outside of this scope would have to be discussed at a meeting of the Negotiating Team as per Annex 5 of the Development Agreement.

Finally, VW confirmed that this meeting could not be recorded.

#### **1. Minutes of the Last Meeting 16<sup>th</sup> April 2014**

In reviewing the minutes of the last meeting, DLB requested that the minutes be amended to reflect that his mobile phone was clearly placed on the meeting table and that he pressed record openly.

There being no other action, the minutes were agreed. There were no items for matters arising. Hitchin Town Hall Ltd confirmed that the agenda items would cover their issues.

## **2. Entrance Hall & Listed Building Consent**

VW advised that NC would be submitting an application for Listed Building Consent for all of the M & E works on site. A copy of the application would be forwarded to Hitchin Town Hall Ltd and, consultation would be part of the normal application process via the Planning Authority

NC advised that both the Planning Officer and Conservation Officer had walked the building twice and were satisfied for Buttress to proceed with the application. Following on from a point that BS raised, NC advised that this element of work could not have been included in the original consent as the work has not been scoped fully.

Along with the application, a comprehensive justification narrative would also be included as part of the application.

DP asked if cornicing would be provided for the foyer and NC advised that this would not be the case as this was not a feature throughout the building i.e only where it was there originally. DP questioned whether it was reasonable to provide cornicing to be 'in keeping' of the building's historical nature and NC confirmed that it would not.

DLB stated that he found the response to be quite 'insulting'. Furthermore, DLB stated that the Town Hall was a beautiful building and that this foyer element of the building was 'sold' to ACF on that basis as it had the 'wow' factor.

DLB questioned why the pipes were fed through the foyer area and not underneath the balcony. NC advised that this was due to the pipes and the foyer area were required for heating and pipes for other services only the front elevation.

DLB stated that he was surprised that both the Planning Officer and Conservation Officer had agreed to this. Furthermore, he stated that there was a huge void beneath the balcony and that anybody with a bit of sense would see that this would be the best option. DLB stated that he thought Buttress was a respected architectural organisation and that they should be aware of issues around cornicing. NC re-confirmed that the pipes were not touching the cornicing in the foyer area.

DP questioned NC what the Listed Building Consent application would include and whether this was routine or a solution to hide?

NC confirmed again that this would cover the internal service installation of the development. The full level of detail will be included in on the plans submitted along with the justification statements.

DP asked why this was not included in the original consent application and NC advised that this element of work could not have been included in the original consent as the work has not been scoped fully.

Whilst NC acknowledged that the situation was not ideal, it was noted that the original planning application was submitted as soon as possible to meet Hitchin Town Hall Ltd's funding requirements.

BS further questioned why the Listed Building Consent was not obtained beforehand and referred to a property in Hitchin whereby the Council has allegedly not permitted any works until this consent had been sought? DS advised that he was not familiar with the property BS was referring to and so could not comment. However, DS advised that he was aware of instances where due to the scale of works, retrospective applications were made from time to time.

DLB asked why Hitchin Town Hall Ltd were not consulted on the installation of pipes in the foyer? NC confirmed that this information was contained in the drawings that were issued to Hitchin Town Hall Ltd.

VW referred to John Robinson's email to DLB of 16<sup>th</sup> May 2014 where he advised that.....' The detail of the location of the pipe work etc was detailed in the Mechanical & Electrical Plans submitted to Hitchin Town Hall Ltd in October 2013 and were subsequently approved without substantive comment being received from Hitchin Town Hall Ltd.....'

DLB stated that he was referring to the process and NC reiterated that this information was included in on the drawings sent to Hitchin Town Hall Ltd. DLB responded that he thought that Buttress was 'architectural firm that cares' and this was not the case in terms of the pipes?

VW requested that the meeting be brought back on track to the agenda.

BS queried why the 'air curtain' was being installed in the foyer as this was not a requirement of Hitchin Town Hall Ltd. NC advised that this was included to heat the foyer area and was included in on the drawings.

DP requested confirmation as to when the application would be made available to Hitchin Town Hall Ltd. NC confirmed that this would be by the end of the week.

DLB questioned whether during the consultation period the application could be 'called in' by the Committee? DS that the application would follow normal application processes.

DLB questioned how much it would cost to run the pipes through the balcony area and NC advised that this would in the region of thousands as the balcony floor would have to be taken up. DLB refuted this claim.

DP asked whether there were other areas where false ceilings/bulkhead that Hitchin Town Hall Ltd were not advised of. NC responded that this was a very open question and DP responded by asking whether there was any pipework that would be left exposed? NC confirmed that there would not be.

BS requested clarification as to why the Planning Application consents appeared to be in his name. NC advised that this was BS was the original applicant and that NC was the acting agent discharging the conditions. BS refuted this and requested that this be changed. DLB advised that this had caused Hitchin Town Hall Ltd significant embarrassment and that BS's name be removed. NC confirmed that as the original applicant, this would remain. It was agreed to provide further clarification on this matter at the next meeting following discussion with the Planning Authority.

Action: NC

### **3. Discharge of Conditions**

NC confirmed that all conditions relating to the planning application had been discharged with the exception of pre occupation. NC confirmed that an update on these conditions are provided at meetings of Project Board. Nevertheless, it was agreed to forward a copy to Hitchin Town Hall Ltd.

Action: SC/NC

DLB questioned whether NHDC had to give appropriate notice in terms of consultation in accordance with the Development Agreement on the discharge of conditions. DS advised that in accordance of Schedule 2 of the Development Agreement at 2.2 stated that the 'Council shall keep Hitchin Town Hall Ltd informed as to progress in obtaining requisite consents.....'

### **4. Acoustic Report**

NC confirmed that he had emailed a copy of the report to DP following a meeting to discuss M & E issues in March 2014. Nevertheless, NC apologised if DP had not received the email and provided a hard copy of the report.

### **5. Cold Store Listed Building Consent**

VW reminded Hitchin Town Hall Ltd that it was their responsibility to gain the appropriate Planning and Listed Building Consents for the cold store. BS acknowledged that this was still outstanding and that it could be applied for retrospectively.

NC offered to include this element in to the Listed Building Consent application being submitted at the end of the week. However, if this was to be included, then BS needed to ensure that the information was with NC before Friday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2014.

Action: BS

### **6. Café Layout**

VW referred to John Robinson's email of 16<sup>th</sup> May 2014 to DLB in which he confirmed that '.....broadly speaking, it is Hitchin Town Hall Ltd's responsibility to fit out the café and provide seating and NHDC's responsibility to provide you with the space to do this within the bounds of the Development Agreement.....'

VW confirmed advice provided by the Council's designers Mathers of possible solutions to difficulties we anticipated Hitchin Town Hall Ltd would experience in fitting out the café seating area in accordance with the provisions of the Development Agreement. VW confirmed that within the lease plans, there was a set area of space for the café and it was up to Hitchin Town Hall Ltd to make arrangements for the fit out.

SC advised that plans were being finalised for the foyer and museum and DP requested that these made available to Hitchin Town Hall Ltd. SC confirmed that these would be released to Hitchin Town Hall Ltd once finalised.

Action: SC

Discussion continued around the design of the frontage of the building with Hitchin Town Hall Ltd seeking to change to glazing. DLB asked how much it would cost to change this and NC confirmed that this would be at a significant cost as steelwork had been put in place bricks ordered etc.

Furthermore, it was confirmed that JR had written to BS with a suggested layout of the café to which BS had responded and, at the time writing, JR confirmed, in writing, that further design changes to the front of the building would not be permitted due to a number of reasons.

## **7. Latest Drawings Showing Variations**

DP requested copies of amended drawings and VW referred to John Robinson's letter to BS dated 21<sup>st</sup> March 2014 where he stated ....' The 'Contractor's Project Meeting' minutes are not required to be circulated but we are happy to provide you with a written monthly project update which would include reports on the contract programme, variations, contractor's design information and the drawing register and revised drawings issued. This would not replace the existing provisions of the Development Agreement which require the Council to agree variations to relevant Approved Documents with Hitchin Town Hall Ltd where these do not meet Hitchin Town Hall Ltd's Development Requirements....'.

It was noted that this was not actioned as a response from Hitchin Town Hall Ltd to the suggestion was never received. However, it was agreed to provide a 'project update' on a monthly basis for here on in.

Action: JR/SC

## **8. Radiators**

DLB raised a concern about the type of heater being installed in the Lucas Room and to ensure that it was in keeping with the history of the building. SC tabled a picture which clearly showed that the current heater was a typical domestic heater and not a cast iron one. This would be replaced as per the specification sent to DLB earlier that week.

DLB asked whether a heater in keeping with the style of the building could be installed and NC advised that this would not be possible.

DLB further questioned why Hitchin Town Hall Ltd were not consulted on the type of heater being installed. NC advised that this was to the agreed specification and there has been no change to this.

## **9. Original Photo Records**

NC provided Hitchin Town Hall Ltd with a disc of photos taken prior to construction work commencing.

## **10. Listed Building Consents**

This item was considered under item 2 of the agenda.

## **11. Listed Building & Planning Consent Process and Hitchin Town Hall Requirements**

This item was considered under item 2 of the agenda.

## **12. Damage to Entrance Hall**

This item was considered under item 2 of the agenda.

### 13. Ducting Work

SC apologised for the delay in sending this information to DP but confirmed that all outstanding information had not been forwarded and, that many of the items had been discussed at the last Design & Construction meeting in April 2014.

DP requested velocity data and it was agreed that NC would provide this.

Action: SC/NC

### 14. Administration Office Intrusion

VW referred to John Robinson's email to DLB on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2014 where he confirmed that... 'The electrical cabinets he refers to in the administration office were included in the Mechanical and Electrical drawings provided to you in October 2013.'

### 15. Sprung Floor

VW referred to John Robinson's email of 16<sup>th</sup> May 2014 which confirmed..... 'We have received advice from BFAW that the approach to safeguarding the Mountford Hall floor has been not to adjust the tensioning as, to the best of our knowledge, the mechanism has not been operated for a significant period and its effectiveness is not established. The floor has been physically protected and construction contractor instructed not to store heavy items on the surface during construction works. The relatively minor quantities of material which were temporarily held in this area were a very small proportion of the sort loading created by several hundred hall users and for which it was specifically designed. In these circumstances we do not believe that the current approach represents any threat to the integrity of the floor'.

*The position remains the same. In addition I would bring to your attention once again, that Mr Smith's reference to questioning the Borrás representative on site is not something that Hitchin Town Hall Ltd are entitled to do and this is specifically precluded in the Development Agreement. I replicate below more recent advice from BFAW and would remind you that refurbishment of the winding mechanism is not an essential development requirement.*

*'Borrás were shown where items can be stored in compounds externally to the buildings as part of the pre-construction Health and Safety information.*

*They were also told that the Mountford Hall could be used under the following conditions:*

- *Borrás to adequately protect the existing sprung floor throughout the duration of the contract – Pre Start meeting 20<sup>th</sup> September 2013*
- *The floor to the Mountford Hall should be used for light storage – noting that the floor was designed as a live loads for mass assembly.*
- *.....Heavier items were to relate directly to adjacent works (such as blocking up openings and walls etc).*

*To put this into context – BS6399 Part 1 Loading for buildings Code of practice for dead and imposed loads: a design load of 5 kN/m<sup>2</sup> for category C4 Dance Halls and 7.5 kN/m<sup>2</sup> for stages.*

*To put this into context, these are larger design loads than a general warehouse facility.'*

DLB noted that response provided in relation to this but requested that the key for the winding mechanism be located.

Action: SC

## **16. Project Management of Listed Building**

This item was considered under item 2 of the agenda.

## **17. Development Agreement – Essential Requirements**

DLB referred to the statement contained in the Design & Access Statement around restoration documentation and requested that this be followed throughout the process.

## **18. Lucas Room Floor Damage**

DLB referred to an email sent to DS about the way in which floor panels were being lifted in the Lucas Room and Hitchin Town Hall Ltd's wish to retain the original floor boards. NC advised that the room was due to be carpeted. DLB advised that he had spoken with JR and advised him that Hitchin Town Hall Ltd may want to change their mind and not have carpets and instead have the original floorboards. NC confirmed that this was not in the specification.

There was some further discussion around decoration and VW confirmed that Hitchin Town Hall Ltd would be consulted when appropriate on colour schemes etc.

## **19. Email Exchanges re Damage**

DLB confirmed that this was dealt with at the meeting

## **20 Any Other Business**

DLB questioned whether further consideration had been given to installing an extendable stage? NC advised that this was discussed at a previous Design & Construction meeting at which, it was confirmed that this would not be feasible.

DLB confirmed that Stephen Pike would be the main point of contact for Hitchin Town Hall Ltd.

## **21. Future Design & Construction Team Meetings**

- 6th August 2014
- 15th December 2014

Vaughan Watson  
**Deputy Project Executive**

10<sup>th</sup> June 2014