

**Application No:** 2006/525

**Application Type:** Full

**Proposal:** Conversion of offices to Council Chamber, Mayors Parlour & associated meeting & office facilities

**Location:** Mill Suite, Hardman Business Centre, New Hall Hey, Rawtenstall

**Report of:** Team Manager Development Control

**Status:** For Publication

**Report to:** Development Control Committee

**Date:** 7<sup>th</sup> November

**Applicant:** Rossendale Borough Council

**Determination Expiry Date:**  
13<sup>th</sup> November 2006

**Agent:** Tweeds

## REASON FOR REPORTING

## Tick Box

### Outside Officer Scheme of Delegation

#### Member Call-In

Name of Member:

Reason for Call-In:

### 3 or more objections received

Other (please state)

Rossendale Borough Council is the applicant.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

The relevant provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Convention on Human Rights have been taken into account in the preparation of this report, particularly the implications arising from the following rights: -

### Article 8

The right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence.

### Article 1 of Protocol 1

The right of peaceful enjoyment of possessions and protection of property.

## APPLICATION DETAILS

### 1. The Proposal and the Site

The applicant seeks consent for the conversion of an office suite to a Council Chamber, Mayors parlour and associated meeting and office facilities. The site is located within the urban boundary and town centre boundary and is designated as an employment area.

### 2. Relevant Planning History

1993/609 - Proposed conversion of existing redundant single storey building to form an office unit at Heart of the North, Hardmans Mill, New Hall Hey, Rawtenstall. APPROVED

### **3. Policy Context**

#### Rossendale District Local Plan

Policy DS1 (Urban Boundary)  
Policy HP2 (Listed Buildings)  
Policy DC1 (Development Criteria)  
Policy DC4 (Materials)  
Policy J2 (Service Industries)  
Policy J3 (Existing Employment Areas)

#### Joint Lancashire Structure Plan

Policy 1 (General Policy)  
Policy 2 (Main Development Locations)  
Policy 7 (Parking)  
Policy 24 (Flood Risk)

#### Other Material Planning Considerations

PPS 1 (Delivering Sustainable Development)  
PPG 13 (Transport)  
PPG 25 (Development and Flood Risk)  
Revised Preferred Options Rawtenstall Area Action Plan  
Disability Discrimination Act 1995

### **4. CONSULTATIONS**

#### County Highways

The proposal to conduct Council meetings in the evenings, when parking in the area would be unlimited and only officer or committee meetings during the day, which could make use of the dedicated nine parking bays, would attract no highways comments.

Should the number of meetings increase, it may be necessary to consider a Traffic Regulation Order to limit the amount of Parking on the highway.

#### County Planning Officer

To date, no response has been received.

#### RBC Forward Planning

It is acknowledged that the site is not in the most sustainable location in respect of access, though measures to improve accessibility are included in the

proposals. Furthermore, it is recognised in the Revised Preferred Options Rawtenstall Area Action Plan, that the preferred location for the civic facilities, including a Council Chamber is either the Heritage Arcade or the site of the Police Station/Liberal Club, or the Kay Street Car Park, with the Heritage Arcade or the Police station/Liberal Club sites appearing to offer the greatest benefits.

However, at the present time, there are no locations within the town centre, which are available or suitable for the proposed use. Therefore, on balance the proposed development is considered appropriate for a temporary period, while the proposals contained within the Revised Rawtenstall Area Action Plan are progressed.

#### RBC Estates

No objections.

#### Police – Crime Prevention Officer

No objections

### **5. REPRESENTATIONS**

Site notices and a press notice were published. All of the businesses located within Hardmans Mill and any other properties within the locality were notified by means of a letter. To date, no responses have been received.

### **6. ASSESSMENT**

The main issues to be considered in the determination of this application are the principle of the development including the policy implications, the impact upon neighbouring uses, the impact upon the character of the listed building, highway issues and flood risk.

#### Principle & policy implications

The location for the proposed development is within the urban boundary and therefore, the proposal is in accordance with Policies DS1 of the Rossendale District Local Plan and Policies 1 and 2 of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan.

The comments from the Forward Planning section are acknowledged, in that the location for the proposed development is not very sustainable, particularly in relation to public transport and that a site within the immediate town centre would be preferable. However, the applicant had agreed to contribute £5000 towards improvements to bus services serving the site to be expended over the period of 2 to 3 years the site is in use as a Council Chamber, as defined by a Green Travel Plan. This coupled with the site being located within the town centre boundary, as defined by the Rossendale District Local Plan, it is considered that the proposed development is in accordance with government guidance in the form of PPG 13.

The location for the proposed development is designated as an employment area and specifically for office use within the Revised Preferred Options Rawtenstall Area Action Plan. However, it is considered that the proposed development would represent a small proportion of the floorspace available within the mill that on balance the proposed change of use from an office (B1) to a Council Chamber (sui-generis) is appropriate for an employment area, as it will be providing a service to the public. Therefore, the proposed development is in accordance with Policies J2 and J3 of the Rossendale District Local Plan.

#### Impact upon neighbouring uses

As the majority of Council meetings will take place during the evening, it is considered that the proposed development will not have an adverse impact upon the occupiers of the adjacent buildings, as the majority of which will be empty. Any meetings which will take place during the day will involve a small amount of people and this will not have an adverse impact upon the occupiers of adjacent buildings. Therefore, the proposed development is in accordance with the criteria of Policy DC1 of the Rossendale District Local Plan.

#### Impact upon the character of the listed building

The proposed internal alterations will not have an adverse impact upon the character of the listed building. It is considered that the proposed ramp, which will provide access for disabled people to the Council Chamber, is of an acceptable design and will not look out of place within the locality, subject to conditional control. Therefore, the proposed development is in accordance with Policies DC1, DC4 and HP2 of the Rossendale District Local Plan.

#### Highway Issues

It is considered that the proposed development is mainly accessible by car and nine spaces have been allocated for use by visitors to the proposed Council chambers. Additional information in the form of a letter from the owners of the building has stated that for evening meetings additional parking facilities will be available on the main Hardmans Mill car park, the overspill car park (located at the end of New Hall Hey) and the bottom section of the "Cobblers Inn" car park. The highways authority is of the opinion that providing public civic meetings take place during the evening and officer meetings during the day; there are adequate parking facilities for a building such as this. Therefore, the proposed development is in accordance with Policy 7 of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan.

The proposed ramp, which will provide access to the building for disabled people, is not compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, which is considered to be contrary to government guidance in the form of PPS1, which states that all buildings must be accessible to all people. As a result, the plan has been amended and it is considered that the amended ramp is of a gradient of 1:12, which is compliant with the criteria of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed ramp is in accordance with the criteria of Policy DC1 of the Rossendale District Local Plan and government guidance in the form of PPS 1.

## Flood Risk

The site for the construction of a ramp for access by disabled people is located within flood zone 1. It is considered that the proposed development will not have an adverse impact upon flood risk within the area, as the land is currently used as a hardstanding and the proposed ramp will not have a more adverse impact upon surface water run off. **The proposed use (Council Chamber) will not have a more adverse impact than the existing use of offices, which was considered acceptable.** Therefore, the proposed development will not have an adverse impact upon flood risk and is in accordance with Policy 24 of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan and government guidance in the form of PPG 25.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

The proposed development is located within the urban boundary and at the current time is considered an appropriate use for an employment area. The proposed development will ensure that the building is accessible to all people and is in accordance with the Council's adopted car parking standards. The proposed development will not have an adverse impact upon the amenity of the occupiers of the adjacent buildings and will not impact adversely upon highway safety. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed development is in accordance with policies DS1, DC1, DC4, HP2, J2 and J3 of the Rossendale District Local Plan; Policies 1, 2, 7 and 24 of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan and government guidance in the form of PPS1,

## **8. RECOMMENDATION**

That permission should be granted, subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: Required by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase 2004 Act

2. Notwithstanding any indication on the approved plans or application forms, no development shall be commenced until full details of the external materials to be used in the development have been submitted to and first approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development and to accord with Policy DC4 of the Rossendale District Local Plan

3. The building shall not be occupied until the proposed parking areas have been laid out in accordance with details to be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; the parking areas shall not thereafter be used for any purpose other than the parking of vehicles.

REASON: To ensure adequate off-street parking, in the interests of amenity and highway safety and to comply with the criteria of Policy DC1 of the Rossendale District Local Plan.

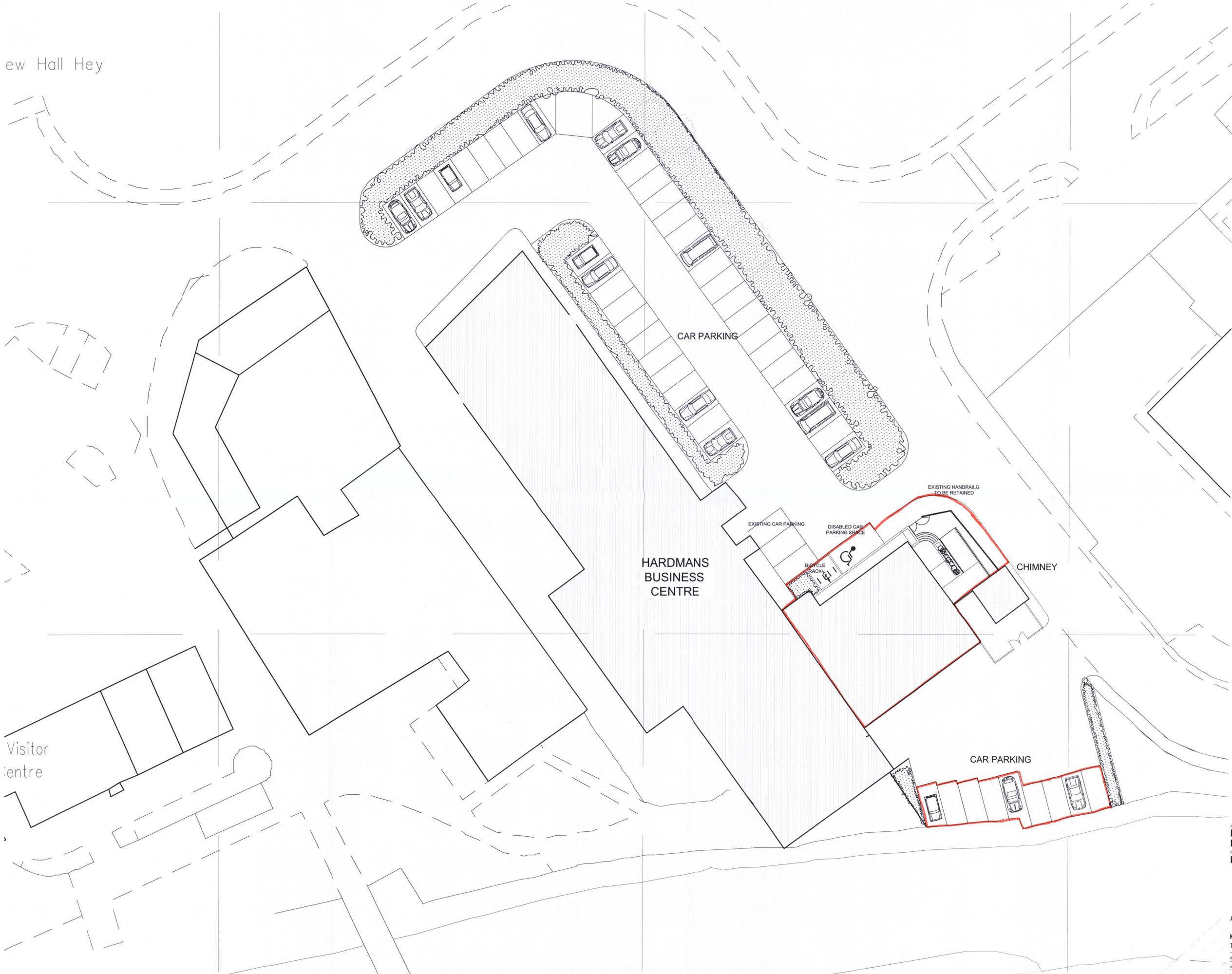
4. A Green Travel Plan will be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, prior to the first occupation of the building.

REASON: To cater for alternative modes of transport, in the interests of sustainability, in accordance with Policy 1 of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan and government guidance in the form of PPG 13.

**NOTE:** This consent does not give permission for the installation of air conditioning within the building.

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contract  
**NEW COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
 HARDMAN BUSINESS CENTRE**  
 drawing  
**PROPOSED SITE PLAN**

20 SEP 2006



Architects Planners Project Managers Interior Designers Planning Supervisors

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