

**Signing Off Form**

**Planning Application Number:**LCC/2023/0038

	<b>Cleared By</b>	<b>Date Cleared</b>	<b>Date Forwarded</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Case Officer – Forward to Head of Development Management	HA	20/12/2023		
Head of Development Management for signing by other	JMH	20/12/23		
<b>Signing Off</b>			<b>Tick</b>	
<b>Director of Environment &amp; Planning</b>			✓	
<i>A Mullaney</i>				
<b>Date:</b> 20 December 2023				
	<b>Date</b>	<b>By</b>		
Decision Notice Issued	<b>21/12/23</b>	<b>SH</b>		
Notifications completed	<b>21/12/23</b>	<b>SH</b>		



## Development Management Planning Application Delegated Report

Electoral Division affected: Preston City
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Date app.valid	Dec. due by
15 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2023	10 <sup>th</sup> January 2023

**Preston City : application number. LCC/2023/0038**  
**Demolition of existing (not original) flat roof dormers on the north and west existing elevations and replacement with pitched slate roof to match existing. County Hall, Pitt Street, Preston**

Contact for further information:  
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### Executive Summary

Application - Demolition of existing (not original) flat roof dormers on the north and west existing elevations and replacement with pitched slate roof to match existing .County Hall, Pitt Street, Preston

### Recommendation – Summary

That planning permission be **granted** subject to conditions controlling approved plans and protected species.

### Applicant's Proposal

This application proposes the removal of existing flat roof dormers on the north and west facing roof slopes of the old County Hall building. The roof would be re-instated with natural slate to match the existing.

### Description and Location of Site

The proposal is located on the north and west facing roof slopes of the old County Hall building in the County Hall Complex, Preston. The complex is bounded by Fishergate to the south, Bow Lane to the west, Arthur Street to the north and Pitt Street to the east. The site is surrounded by commercial development, office blocks, the railway line and station and a number of A-roads. The application site is within the city centre boundary as defined in the Preston Local Plan (2012-2026) and is also located within the Fishergate Hill Conservation Area.



The dormers to be removed are located on the north facing roof slope, which faces towards Arthur Street and the County Hall car parking areas and on the west facing elevation which faces the inner courtyard area and the more modern extension to County Hall known as the Lancashire Point Building.

## **Background**

Planning permission was granted in April 2020 for the replacement of existing flagging with an open textured tarmac across the existing main access path from Bow Lane to the entrance to the County Hall building (LCC/2020/0017).

Planning permission was granted in October 2016 for the construction of new five storey stairwell within the inner courtyard of the council offices (LCC/2016/0066).

Planning permission was granted in April 2012 for the replacement of single glazed steel and timber framed windows with double glazed aluminium framed windows. (06/12/0193)

Planning permission was granted in August 2009 for the erection of railings with access gates for vehicles and pedestrians including hedge planting, tree pruning and other soft landscaping (06/09/0418)

Planning permission was granted in September 2008 for the replacement of 12 roof mounted d-x condenser units with 2 air cooled water chillers at the Treasurers Block. (06/08/0716).

Planning permission was granted in October 2006 for an extension to the existing office entrance to improve accessibility at the Treasurers Block. (06/06/0929)

## **Planning Policy**

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)  
Paragraphs 11 – 14, 131 – 141, 194 and 195 – 214 relevant with regard to the definition of sustainable development, the need for good design and conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Central Lancashire Core Strategy adopted July 2012  
Policy 16 – Heritage Assets  
Policy 17 – Design of New Buildings  
Policy 22 – Biodiversity

Preston Local Plan (2012-2026) adopted July 2015  
Policy AD1  
Policy EN8 – Development and Heritage Assets  
Policy EN9 – Design of New Development  
Policy EN10 – Biodiversity and Nature Conservation

Preston City Centre Area Action Plan adopted June 2016



## Consultations

Preston City Council: no comments received.

Lancashire County Council Ecology: confirm they have no objections to the proposals. It is recommended that conditions are imposed relating to the need to cease work should any protected species be detected during the works, avoidance of works during breeding bird season and the need to review ecological mitigation measures should work not commence within three years.

Lancashire County Council Archaeology: County Hall is recorded on the County Historic Environment Record, PRN19892, and opened in 1882. The Historic Environment Team would not consider the removal of non-original features to have any adverse impact and therefore have no comment to make on this application.

Representations – The application has been advertised by press and site notice, and neighbouring residents informed by individual letter. No objections have been received.

## Advice

County Hall is the headquarters of Lancashire County Council and is situated on Fishergate Hill in Preston city centre. It has two entrances, the main entrance on Pitt Street and a further entrance on Bow Lane. Bow Lane is a pedestrian and vehicular entrance.

The main issues for consideration are design and appearance, impact on heritage assets and ecology issues.

### Design and appearance

The National Planning Policy Framework seeks to ensure that new developments achieve a high standard of design. Policy 17 of the Adopted Core Strategy states that the design of new buildings should take into account the character and appearance of the local area including (but not limited to) scale, design, materials, being sympathetic to surrounding land uses and avoiding demonstrable harm to the amenities of the local area. Policy EN9 of the Preston Local Plan reiterates the need to accord with these policies and that new developments should make a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the area through high quality new design.

The dormers are clearly visible within the wider street scene, particularly from the north and west when on Arthur Street, however due to the height of the building they do not form a prominent or particularly notable feature. The proposed method of reinstatement of the roof is considered to be in keeping with the existing building and would not appear incongruous, either within the context of the County Hall building, or within the wider street scene. It is therefore considered that the removal of the dormers would not cause any harm to either the character and appearance of the



wider County Hall building or the wider environs and should result in an improvement in the appearance of the building,

### Historic Environment

The site is located within the Fishergate Hill conservation area and the adjacent Christ Church Chapel building is recorded as a non-designated heritage asset on the County Historic Environment Record PRN 22713. The chapel is approximately 65 metres from the west facing elevation of County Hall, with the Lancashire Point building intervening between the application site and the chapel. The County Hall building is also recorded in the County Historic Environment Record PRN 19892.

Paragraph 205 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that when considering the impact of proposals on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be applied. This is irrespective of whether any harm is identified as being substantial, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Paragraph 208 of the Framework states that where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the local planning authority can consider the likely level of harm against the public benefits of that proposal.

Policy EN8 of the Preston Local Plan states that proposals affecting a heritage asset, or its setting will be permitted where they make a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of and sustain, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the significance, appearance, character and setting of the heritage asset itself and the surrounding historic environment. Policy 16 of the Core Strategy also seeks to also protect and enhance the historic environment.

The key heritage issues for consideration are therefore whether the proposal would have a detrimental impact on the visual character of the Conservation Area and whether the proposal would cause any loss of character to the Conservation Area. It should also be considered whether the proposals would cause any harm to the significance of nearby non-designated heritage assets. County Hall is not a listed building but is a non-designated heritage asset.

The applicant has stated that the reasons for the works are as follows:

- The dormer windows to the West and North elevations of County Hall are in need of extensive refurbishment / repair.
- Following intrusive investigations into the existing condition of the dormers, it has been established that their condition is worse than originally anticipated.
- the office space formed within the dormer window area is sub-standard by modern office standards, in terms of layout, and accessibility, and for these reasons is unlikely to be used as office space in the future, as it would be cost prohibitive to bring the areas up to modern standards.
- It is therefore proposed to remove the dormers and return the roof area to its original form as a pitched roof covered in natural slate.



The dormers to be removed are not an original feature of the building. Although they are visible within the street scene they do not form a prominent or significant feature, due to their size and location. The proposed restoration works to the roof are considered to be appropriate and sympathetic to the both the building and wider setting of the Conservation Area. The works would restore those roof elevations back to their original appearance. Taking all of these matters into account it is considered that the proposed dormer removal would result in no discernible harm to the setting of the Conservation Area or the significance of County Hall as a non-designated heritage asset. Furthermore, the public benefits of the proposals in terms of the continued repair and maintenance of the County Hall building are significant and weigh heavily in favour of the proposals. A condition should be imposed to require the new slates to match the existing in terms of appearance.

### Ecology

Policy EN10 of the Preston Local Plan states that biodiversity and ecological networks in Preston will be protected, conserve, restored and enhanced.

The application is accompanied by a Building Assessment for Bats. An appraisal of the building and any protected species on site was undertaken. The report found that the dormers to have negligible suitability for roosting bats. There was no evidence of bat roosting. Therefore, there was no reasonably foreseeable likelihood that bats were present in the areas of the building where the proposed works or would be impacted by the work. The conclusions of the report are supported by Lancashire County Council Ecology Service and it is confirmed that there is no requirement for further survey or ecological supervision during the works. The proposals are therefore considered to comply with both national and local planning policy requirements to protect and enhance protected species and habitats.

The County Council Ecologist recommends that a number of conditions are imposed. It is considered that the advice as regards detection of a protected species during the works would be more appropriate as an informative note to any permission.

### Conclusion

The proposed development would not cause any harm to the character or setting of Fishergate Conservation area, or the County Hall Building. It would not give rise to any adverse visual impacts or harm to protected species.

The proposal therefore complies with the relevant policies of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy and the Preston Local Plan 2012-26 and is accordingly recommended for approval.

In view of the size, scale and nature of the proposals it is considered that no Convention Rights set out in the Human Rights Act 1998 would be affected.



**Recommendation**

That planning permission be Granted subject to the following conditions