

<p>Reference: 19/00617/FUL</p>	<p>Site: Thurrock Council Civic Offices New Road Grays Essex RM17 6SL</p>
<p>Ward: Grays Riverside</p>	<p>Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings and external wall on the corner of High Street and New Road and refurbishment and extension of Council offices comprising a 3 storey building with raised parapet to the west of existing building (CO2), to provide 147 sq m (GIA) of Class B1 (a) office space on the ground floor as a registry office and 2,163 sq m of Sui Generis floor space on part of the ground floor providing new public service points, meeting rooms and an ancillary cafe and on the upper floors providing a Council Chamber, Committee Rooms and Members Services, together with cycle parking, roof plant and plant enclosure, hard and soft landscaping, seating areas and benches, infrastructure and associated works.</p>

Plan Number(s):		
Reference	Name	Received
18124-LSI-A1-01-DR-A-1201 Rev B	Existing Site Layout	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-01-DR-A-1301 Rev A	Proposed Plans	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-02-DR-A-1202 Rev B	Existing Site Layout	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-02-DR-A-1302 Rev A	Proposed Floor Plans	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-B1-DR-A-1179 Rev B	Existing Floor Plans	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-B1-DR-A-1180 Rev B	Proposed Floor Plans	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-B1-DR-A-1199 Rev B	Existing Site Layout	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-GF-DR-A-1200 Rev B	Existing Site Layout	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-GF-DR-A-1300 Rev A	Proposed Floor Plans	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-R2-DR-A-1316 Rev A	Proposed Plans	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-RF-DR-A-1315 Rev A	Proposed Plans	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-ZZ-DR-A-1170 Rev B	Location Plan	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-ZZ-DR-A-1175 Rev B	Existing Site Layout	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-ZZ-DR-A-1176 Rev B	Proposed Site Layout	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-ZZ-DR-A-1177	Site Layout	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-ZZ-DR-A-1250 Rev A	Existing Elevations	3rd May 2019

18124-LSI-A1-ZZ-DR-A-1350 Rev A	Proposed Elevations	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-ZZ-DR-A-1355 Rev A	Proposed Elevations	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-ZZ-DR-A-1356 Rev A	Proposed Elevations	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-ZZ-DR-A-1357	Proposed Elevations	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-ZZ-DR-A-1358	Proposed Elevations	3rd May 2019
18124-LS1-A1-ZZ-DR-A-1370 Rev A	Sections	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-ZZ-DR-A-1371 Rev A	Sections	3rd May 2019
19007_BT3	Landscaping	3rd May 2019
ASU-THU-LA-L100	Landscaping	3rd May 2019
2018/4416/001	Proposed Plans	19th June 2019

The application is also accompanied by:

- Planning Statement
- Design and Access Statement
- Acoustic report
- Arboricultural Assessment and Method Statement
- Daylight and Sunlight Report
- Ecological Impact Assessment
- Energy Report
- Geo-environmental Site Investigation Report
- Heritage Statement
- Landscape Design Strategy and Landscaping Plan
- Manual for Managing Trees on Development Sites
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Sustainability Report and BREEAM Assessment
- SUDs Statement and Addendum
- Transport Statement and Addendum
- Travel Plan

Applicant:

Thurrock Council

Validated:

3 May 2019

Date of expiry:

23 August 2019 [Time Extended]

Recommendation: Approve subject to conditions

1.0 BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

1.1 This application seeks planning permission for the demolition of the existing buildings and external wall on the corner of High Street and New Road to allow

for the extension of the Civic Offices. The key elements of the proposal are set out in the table below:

Site Area [Gross]	0.18 ha		
Height	16.5m		
Uses and Floorspace	Use Class	Maximum Floorspace [m²]	
	Sui Generis including new public service points, meeting rooms, a Council Chamber, Committee Rooms and Members Services, and an ancillary cafe	2,163	
	B1 – Office floorspace	147	
	Total [All Uses]	2,310	
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pedestrian Access via the new main entrance to the High Street - Pedestrian Access for the registrar office via an access along the northern elevation of the building from the High Street - Pedestrian Access from the existing CO2 building via the new link extension at ground floor, first floor and second floor level. 		
Car parking	Two new disabled parking bays to the High Street		

- 1.2 The ground floor area would comprise of a customer service hub, meeting rooms, registry office and a café. The registry office would comprise a ceremony garden on the north eastern side of the building and the café would include an outdoor seating area on the south side of the building. To utilise the building effectively areas of the ground floor have been designed to allow for the exhibition of public art.
- 1.3 As a result of the proposal, the main entrance to the Council building would be located on the western elevation of the extension, fronting onto the High Street.
- 1.4 The first floor would comprise of the Council Chamber, three committee rooms, including one that can also be used as a larger ceremonial room. The second floor would comprise of three areas for rooms associated with political groups.

- 1.5 To the east of the new building a link would be created allowing access to the ground, first and second floor levels of the existing Council Offices. All floor levels would include two lift areas, stairwells, toilet facilities, store and servicing facilities. The roof of the building would include a plant room, an area for potential photovoltaics and an area for a sedum/brown roof.
- 1.6 The extension would take the form of a 3 storey [16.5m high] building of a contemporary design which would align with the orientation of the High Street. Joining the extended building to the existing Council offices would be a link extension. The proposed extension would use brick as one of the main building materials for the façade of the building in different forms with large areas of glazing to allow natural light into the building.
- 1.7 The main entrance to the building would be from the High Street on the west elevation. A separate registrar service entrance would be provided to the northern side of the building accessed from the High Street. Staff would continue to access the building via the existing New Road entrance.
- 1.8 There is no basement car park or extension to the existing basement car park proposed beneath this development. The proposal would result in the loss of 3 car parking spaces from basement car park, which would still provide 172 spaces, which alongside other allocated staff car parking within the multi-storey car in the town centre would ensure adequate provision remains available. Two disabled parking bays would be provided on the eastern side of the High Street immediately outside of the building's western elevation.
- 1.9 New hard and soft landscaping is proposed to enhance the scheme and the wider area. Paving materials would match the surrounding area. Soft landscaping would be used to the north and east of the building as part of the ceremonial area to the registry office to create a woodland garden feature. To the south of the building soft landscaping would be used to surround an outside seating area to the café use.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site of the proposed extension measures 0.18 hectares. The existing buildings fronting New Road and the High Street are two storey traditional formed buildings which have commercial uses on the ground floor comprising of a news agent, a take-away, a barber, and a café use. Mulberry Square to the north of these, within the site, is an area of open space comprising of seating areas and surrounding grassland with several trees. Mulberry Square has two

pedestrian entrances, one onto New Road and one onto the High Street, and this route provides a pedestrian route from New Road to the High Street.

2.2 Just outside the northern boundary of the site are a mix of buildings including traditional two storey buildings, in use as a dentist surgery and a former public house and flatted development. To the east is the existing Council Office building. To the south is the South Essex college building and public square. To the west of the High Street is the Grade II listed St Peter's and St Paul's church.

2.3 The site is in close proximity of Grays railway station to the west and in close proximity to the bus station and the shopping area of the High Street, which is to the northern side of the railway line and can be accessed via the existing pedestrian crossing.

3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 The following table provides the relevant planning history:

Reference	Description	Decision
89/00866/FUL	Development of new five storey civic offices	Approved 08.06.1990

4.0 CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 Detailed below is a summary of the consultation responses received. The full version of each consultation response can be viewed on the Council's website via public access at the following link: www.thurrock.gov.uk/planning

4.2 PUBLICITY:

This application has been advertised by way of individual neighbour notification letters, press advert and public site notice which has been displayed nearby.

Ten written representations have been received raising the following:

- Loss of amenity;
- Overlooking properties;
- Possible excessive noise;
- Loss of views of church;
- Loss of sunlight;
- Loss of privacy;
- Loss of views

- No benefit to the community;
- Out of character;
- Construction work will result in excessive noise;
- Impact on traffic with future congestion;
- Additional traffic;
- Increased pollution;
- Environmental pollution;
- Loss of heritage to Grays through loss of the public gardens/memorial gardens;
- Wildlife habitat destroyed;
- Devalue property;
- Waste of public money.

The following comments have been made by Grays Riverside Ward Councillors (Councillor Fish, Councillor Kerin and Councillor Jane Potheary):

- Loss of Grays Heritage through loss of old High Street buildings
- Loss of local independent businesses
- Loss of amenity space – Mulberry Square
- Better protection is needed for residents of Pullman Court

4.3 ANGLIAN WATER:

No objection subject to condition.

4.4 CADENT GAS:

No objection subject to condition.

4.5 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH:

No objection subject to condition.

4.6 ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL ARCHAEOLOGY:

No objection subject to conditions.

4.7 FLOOD RISK ADVISOR:

No objections subject to conditions.

4.8 HIGHWAYS:

No objections subject to conditions.

4.9 LANDSCAPE AND ECOLOGY ADVISOR:

No objections subject to conditions.

4.10 LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION ADVISOR:

No objection subject to conditions.

4.11 PUBLIC HEALTH:

No objection subject to conditions.

4.12 TRAVEL PLAN CO-ORDINATOR:

A revised travel plan is required through a planning condition.

4.13 URBAN DESIGN OFFICER:

No objections subject to conditions

5.0 POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 National Planning Policy Framework

The revised NPPF was published on 19 February 2019 and sets out the government's planning policies. Paragraph 14 of the Framework sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 2 of the Framework confirms the tests in s.38 [6] of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and s.70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and that the Framework is a material consideration in planning decisions. Paragraph 11 states that in assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The following headings and content of the NPPF are relevant to the consideration of the current proposals:

- 2. Achieving sustainable development
- 4. Decision-making
- 7. Ensuring the vitality of town centres
- 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities
- 9. Promoting sustainable transport
- 11. Making effective use of land

- 12. Achieving well-designed places
- 14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

5.2 Planning Policy Guidance

In March 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government [DCLG] launched its planning practice guidance web-based resource. This was accompanied by a Written Ministerial Statement which includes a list of the previous planning policy guidance documents cancelled when the NPPF was launched. PPG contains a range of subject areas, with each area containing several subtopics. Those of particular relevance to the determination of this planning application comprise:

- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
- Design
- Determining a planning application
- Ensuring the vitality of town centres
- Flood Risk and Coastal Change
- Natural Environment
- Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space
- Planning obligations
- Renewable and low carbon energy
- Transport evidence bases in plan making and decision taking
- Travel plans, transport assessments and statements in decision-taking

5.3 Local Planning Policy Thurrock Local Development Framework [2015]

The “Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development Focused Review: Consistency with National Planning Policy Framework Focused Review” was adopted by Council on the 28th February 2015. The following policies apply to the proposals:

OVERARCHING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICY

- OSDP1 [Promotion of Sustainable Growth and Regeneration in Thurrock]¹

SPATIAL POLICIES

- CSSP2 [Sustainable Employment Growth]

THEMATIC POLICIES

- CSTP6 [Strategic Employment Provision]
- CSTP7 [Network of Centres]
- CSTP8 [Viability and Vitality of Existing Centres]²
- CSTP20 [Open Space]
- CSTP22 [Thurrock Design]
- CSTP23 [Thurrock Character and Distinctiveness]²
- CSTP24 [Heritage Assets and the Historic Environment]
- CSTP25 [Addressing Climate Change]²

POLICIES FOR MANAGEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT

- PMD1 [Minimising Pollution and Impacts on Amenity]²
- PMD2 [Design and Layout]²
- PMD3 [Tall Buildings]³
- PMD4 [Historic Environment]²
- PMD5 [Open Spaces, Outdoor Sports and Recreational Facilities]³
- PMD7 [Biodiversity, Geological Conservation and Development]²
- PMD8 [Parking Standards]³
- PMD10 [Transport Assessments and Travel Plans]²
- PMD12 [Sustainable Buildings]²
- PMD13 [Decentralised, Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation]
- PMD16 [Developer Contributions]²

[Footnote: 1New Policy inserted by the Focused Review of the LDF Core Strategy. 2Wording of LDF-CS Policy and forward amended either in part or in full by the Focused Review of the LDF Core Strategy. 3Wording of forward to LDF-CS Policy amended either in part or in full by the Focused Review of the LDF Core Strategy].

5.4 Thurrock Local Plan

In February 2014 the Council embarked on the preparation of a new Local Plan for the Borough. Between February and April 2016 the Council consulted formally on an Issues and Options [Stage 1] document and simultaneously undertook a 'Call for Sites' exercise. In December 2018 the Council began consultation on an Issues and Options [Stage 2 Spatial Options and Sites] document.

5.5 Thurrock Design Strategy

In March 2017 the Council launched the Thurrock Design Strategy. The Design Strategy sets out the main design principles to be used by applicants for all new

development in Thurrock. The Design Strategy is a supplementary planning document [SPD] which supports policies in the adopted Core Strategy.

5.6 The Grays Town Centre Framework

The Grays Town Centre Framework was published in 2017 and its purpose is to 'provide a spatial concept for the town centre that will guide development and enhancement in the future'.

6.0 **ASSESSMENT**

6.1 The material considerations for this application are as follows:

- I. Principle of the Development
- II. Loss of Existing Buildings and Uses
- III. Loss of Open Space
- IV. Design and Layout and Impact upon the Area
- V. Heritage Impact
- VI. Traffic Impact, Access and Car Parking
- VII. Drainage
- VIII. Ecology and Biodiversity
- IX. Noise
- X. Effect on Neighbouring Properties
- XI. Energy and Sustainable Buildings
- XII. Land Contamination and Ground Works

I. PRINCIPLE OF THE DEVELOPMENT

6.2 The site falls within the town centre area of Grays as defined on the LDF Proposal Map but is located outside of main 'shopping areas' on the map and is not identified for any specific use. Policy CSSP2 identifies Grays as a 'Key Strategic Economic Hub' and seeks to expand, inter alia, public sector services. Policy CSTP7 supports the regeneration of Grays town centre and identifies that the town centre 'will become the focus for cultural, administrative and education functions whilst providing retail development complementary to the Lakeside Basin'. Policy CSTP8 for existing centres encourages 'diversification and improvement of the range and quality of facilities including retail, employment, leisure and entertainment, community, culture and education'. Through policy CSTP10 'the Council will support the provision of high quality, accessible community facilities to serve new and existing communities'.

6.3 The Grays Town Centre Framework (GTCF) was published in 2017 and its purpose is to 'provide a spatial concept for the town centre that will guide development and enhancement in the future'.

- 6.4 The GTCF includes a Concept Plan for the site including land allocated for new Civic Centre development and within the Concept Plan the framework states: *“The momentum generated with the building of the South Essex College should support further the growth of the town centre along the High Street towards the riverside. One of the greatest opportunity sites in this area is Mulberry Square to the west of the Civic Offices. Development here could create a new frontage on to the High Street and animate the route to the River. The Council is currently looking at options for this site - which could include an extension of the Council’s own premises to create improved public services in the very heart of the town centre”*.
- 6.5 In light of the above there are no objections to the principle of re-development of this site which would be reflective of the Council’s vision through the Grays Town Centre Framework, and through policies CSSP2, CSTP7, CSTP8 and CSTP10 which all support employment growth and diversification of uses with specific reference to Grays as a Key Strategic Economic Hub, the site’s location within the town centre, and the requirement to support the provision of high quality accessible community facilities to serve the community.

II. LOSS OF EXISTING BUILDINGS

The proposed development would involve the loss of retail and commercial space through the demolition of the existing buildings located on the north east corner of the High Street and New Road. A single residential flat would also be lost as part of the proposal.

- 6.6 The loss of these buildings and uses has to be balanced against the wider benefits of the development. It is recognised that the proposal would include a new café which would offset the loss of the Angel Café and the policy position is clear that through policies CSSP2, CSTP7, CSTP8, CSTP10 and the Grays Town Centre Framework the proposed development is supported. On balance, the loss of these buildings and their associated uses is considered acceptable.

III. LOSS OF OPEN SPACE

- 6.7 Policy CSTP20 seeks ‘to ensure that a diverse range of accessible public open spaces...is provided and maintained to meet the needs of the local community’. PMD5 seeks to ‘safeguard all existing open spaces, outdoor sports and recreational facilities. Development proposals that would result in their complete or partial loss or cause or worsen a deficiency in the area served by the space or facility will not be permitted unless:

- i. Conveniently located and accessible alternative facilities of an equivalent or improved standard will be provided to serve current and potential new users; or improvements to remaining spaces or facilities can be provided to a level sufficient to outweigh the loss;
 - ii. Proposals would not negatively affect the character of the area and/or the Greengrid’.
- 6.8 Although not formally allocated in the Core Strategy the development would result in the loss of open space in Mulberry Square. To compensate for this loss it is proposed to provide public seating and outdoor space to the south of the building in two areas: towards the corner of the High Street and New Road and through a seating area to the café use with surrounding landscaping. Additional landscaping and an area of open space would be located to the north east of the building associated with the proposed registry office use as a ceremony garden.
- 6.9 These proposed landscaped areas would offer improved areas of open space which would compensate for the loss of Mulberry Square. The improved open areas in and around the site would be usable for residents and visitors and would also improve the quality of the street scene. On the opposite side of the High Street an existing area of open space and to the front of the college building there is a public square with seating. Further to the south there are seating areas along the River Thames at Grays Town Wharf. Accordingly, in this regard the proposal is acceptable.

IV. DESIGN AND LAYOUT AND IMPACT UPON THE AREA

- 6.10 Policies CSTP22 and CSTP23 both seek to secure high quality design, character and distinctiveness for new developments, and policy PMD2 requires proposals to respond to the sensitivity of the site and its surroundings.
- 6.11 The proposed development has been subject to two formal Design Reviews which took place in August 2018 and in February 2019. Over the course of the Design Reviews the scheme has evolved and developed. A summary of the February 2019 Design Review states:

“The extension to Thurrock Council’s office building in Grays presents an important statement on the ambition for quality design in Thurrock and the initiation of the regeneration and enhancement of Grays Town Centre. It is crucial that this project delivers demonstrable public benefit to residents, workers and visitors to Grays. We consider the brief and location of the site to

be a once in a life time opportunity to deliver a truly civic building and ensure that the final place is the best it can be”.

- 6.12 The proposed demolition of the existing buildings on the corner of the High Street and New Road allows for the proposed building to be sited so it would be set back from the New Road street frontage in a similar alignment to the existing Council Offices on the northern side of New Road. This arrangement would also allow for vistas of the church to be opened up so the church is more visible when heading west along New Road. The proposed western elevation would allow for the façade to front onto the High Street and appear as a distinctive building in this part of the High Street and from the nearby railway station as a key arrival point to Grays.
- 6.13 The proposed building would be set away from the northern and eastern boundaries which reduces the impact upon neighbouring buildings and uses and would allow for a more private space to be created for the registry ceremonial garden to the north east corner of the building.
- 6.14 In terms of scale and massing the proposed building reflects the overall character of the area. Importantly, in terms of height, it would be lower than, and would not compete with the historic church building to the western side of the High Street.
- 6.15 The architectural approach to the building strikes the correct balance between contemporary urban design and civic presence. One light buff brick type would be used as the main material to this building but would be applied in a range of styles from a traditional brick laying stretcher coarse to soldier coarsing, banding and projecting features. The choice of brick colour is to reflect existing development within the area and the quality of the brick is essential to the success of the design. The size and pattern of the proposed floor to ceiling windows would articulate the building and contrast well with brick façade. Other design features, including chamfering and colonnade brick piers would provide rhythm to the building. A jettied first floor element to the Council chamber on the west elevation, coupled with increased levels of glazing at this point would serve to highlight the chamber as a central feature of the new civic building.
- 6.16 In conclusion under this heading, subject to conditions controlling the use of high quality finishing materials, it is considered the proposal would serve to create a high quality, distinctive landmark civic building in Grays. The proposed development is considered acceptable with regard to policies CSTP22, CSTP23 and PMD2, and the NPPF.

V. HERITAGE IMPACT

- 6.17 Policy PMD4 seeks to ensure that the fabric and setting of heritage assets are appropriately protected and enhanced in accordance with their significance. Through chapter 16 of the NPPF guidance is provided to ensure the significance of heritage assets are sustained and enhanced, and that proposed development makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 6.18 The Grays Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul is a heritage asset as it is a grade II listed building and has a significant presence in Grays town centre. The applicant's Heritage Statement considers the church to have 'a medium-high aesthetic value and medium historic, communal and evidential value'. The Heritage Statement recognises that the setting of this listed building has changed significantly since its original construction through the development of the existing Council Offices and the South Essex College building. The Heritage Statement accompanying the application considers that the development 'would not result in harm to its setting or significance and the impact upon be neutral'.
- 6.19 The Council's Listed Buildings and Conservation Advisor recognises that the proposed development would have an impact upon the setting of the Listed Building 'narrowing the scope of vistas to and from the church, particularly up and down the High Street'. Whilst these comments are noted it should be recognised that demolition of the existing buildings and siting the proposed development in line with the front building line of the existing Council Offices would open up vistas of the church along New Road, and with regard to the High Street the proposed development would set back when compared to the existing development so is not considered to impact vistas to and from the church. It is therefore considered that the improved vistas towards the church would help enhance the significance of this listed building in regard to the requirements of policy PMD4
- 6.20 In accordance with paragraph 196 of the NPPF the Council's Listed Buildings and Conservation Advisor considers the impact upon the church and assesses the impact to be 'less than substantial harm to the significance of the church'. The NPPF requires 'this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use'. The improved vistas of the church are considered to be of public benefit. Similarly, the introduction of a civic building of high architectural standard in close association with the Church is considered appropriate in terms of the townscape hierarchy. In applying this balancing exercise it is considered that the public benefits from the proposal would outweigh the less the substantial harm identified by the Council's Listed Buildings and Conservation Advisor but

overall it is considered that the proposal would have neutral impact upon setting of the church.

- 6.21 The buildings that are to be demolished have no statutory listing and are not locally listed. Whilst they are historic, there would be no reason to object to the loss of those buildings.
- 6.22 There are no objection to the Council's Listed Buildings and Conservation Advisor recommendations for conditions for building recording purposes. The Essex County Council Archaeology Officers also advises of the need for archaeology conditions. Subject to conditions the proposed development is considered acceptable with regard to policy PMD4 and would have 'less than substantial harm' when applying the necessary tests from the NPPF.

VI. TREES AND LANDSCAPING

- 6.23 Policy CSTP20 seeks 'to ensure that a diverse range of accessible public open spaces, including natural and equipped play and recreational spaces is provided and maintained to meet the needs of the local community'. Policy PMD2 seeks to protect natural landscape features such as trees for their landscape and wildlife value.
- 6.24 None of the existing trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. The results of the Tree Survey accompanying the application shows that none of the trees of considered to be of 'high quality' [category A] trees. Two of the trees are of 'moderate quality' [category B] and the rest are considered to be of 'low quality' [category C]. Only the Maple tree would remain to the front of the south west corner of the existing Council Offices.
- 6.25 Despite the removal of tress to facilitate the building, the proposal illustrates a number of replacement trees and planting which would mitigate the loss of the existing trees. The landscaping scheme submitted with the application would introduce a landscaped bund around the outdoor café area to the south of the proposed building and ceremony garden area to the north east of the proposed building. The hard landscaping includes brick paviers, gravel and public seating areas. Presently the area on this corner of the High Street has a hard frontage. The proposed soft planting on the southern side of the building would vegetate this area and the high quality paviers on the western side would bring the visual appearance of the area up to modern standards.
- 6.26 The Council's Landscape and Ecology Advisor raises no objections subject to the landscaping scheme being implemented with details agreed though a planning condition, to accord with the policy requirements of PMD2.

VII. ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY

- 6.27 Policy CSTP19 seeks measures to contribute to biodiversity in the Borough through positive biodiversity management. Policy PMD7 requires development proposals to retain local biodiversity value and enhance on site to mitigate any loss of biodiversity.
- 6.28 The applicant's Ecological Impact Assessment confirms 'the site supports common and widespread habitats of low ecological value and has low suitability for foraging and community bats and breeding birds'. The assessment recommends the installation of bat tubes in the fabric of the building, bird nesting boxes and the provision of native planting, which can all be secured through a planning condition.
- 6.29 The Council's Landscape and Ecology Advisor raises no objections subject to an ecology enhancement condition to allow for swift nest boxes and ensure the recommended mitigation measures in the Ecological Impact Assessment are carried out. The proposed mitigation measures accord with the objectives of policies CSTP19 and PMD5.

VIII. TRAFFIC IMPACT, ACCESS AND CAR PARKING

- 6.30 Given the site's location within Grays town centre it is considered a highly accessible location, within close proximity to the rail station and bus station for public transport services. Vehicular access to the site would remain as existing, which allows for some staff to park within the basement car park. A separate registrar access is proposed to allow for drop off for ceremonial services. Pedestrian access to the site would be via a level threshold through the main entrance from the High Street. An internal link extension would provide access to the existing Council Offices. The proposed access arrangements are acceptable with regard to policy PMD9 and paragraph 108 of the NPPF.
- 6.31 The Council's Highway Officer raises no objection subject details of proposed improvements to New Road and the High Street being agreed through a planning condition.
- 6.32 The proposal would result in the loss of 3 car parking spaces from the existing basement car park, retaining 172 spaces. Two disabled parking spaces would be provided along the High Street in close proximity to the front entrance of the building. Although the development would provide additional floorspace a

number of staff would be relocated from the existing Council Offices building. The Council's Highway Officer raises no objection on parking grounds.

- 6.33 The proposal would result in a total of 52 cycle spaces for staff [in the basement, including existing and new provision] and 26 for visitors [to south west of the Council Offices]. The Council's Highway Officer raises no objection to proposed cycle provision.
- 6.34 The applicant's Travel Plan aims to actively encourage sustainable travel to and from the site by promoting sustainable transport options and initiatives including car sharing, use of public transport, cycle parking on site, the provision of information via a transport notice board/travel information point, as well ongoing monitoring. A revised Travel Plan will be secured through the use of a planning condition.

IX. DRAINAGE

- 6.35 The site is located in a low risk flood area [Flood Zone 1] based on the Environment Agency flood maps. However, the proposal needs to adequately deal with drainage and a Sustainable Urban Drainage System strategy [SUDS] is proposed using techniques such as soakaways, permeable paving and attenuation tanks which will restrict flow and reduce surface run off. The Council's Flood Risk Advisor raises no objection, although planning conditions are needed for full details of the surface water drainage system to be agreed. Anglian Water have no objections subject to detailed being agreed for surface water management through a planning condition; the proposal is acceptable with regard to policies CSTP27 and PMD15.

X. NOISE

- 6.36 Policy PMD1 seeks to safeguard amenity from noise and vibration pollution.
- 6.37 The applicant's Acoustic Report demonstrates that noise surveys were undertaken during October 2018 and the nearest sensitive noise receptors are the residents in the properties at the Pullman Court to the north. The Acoustic Report identifies that there will be 'no impact on neighbouring properties'. The use of the registry garden would result in noise externally from the building but such uses would be for short periods of time during the daytime only and the Acoustic Report considers there would be no impact upon the nearest noise sensitive receptors. The use of external plant would also be below the existing background noise levels.

- 6.38 The Council's Environmental Health Officer raises no objections subject to the recommendation of the Acoustic Report being implemented through a planning condition, and for the construction phase of the development a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) condition is needed. Subject to conditions, it is considered that the proposal would with policy PMD1.

XI. EFFECT ON NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES

- 6.39 Policy PMD1 seeks to minimise impacts upon amenity from new development. The nearest buildings to the site is the dentist surgery directly to the north and the nearest residential buildings are those associated with flats at Pullman Court to the north and north east of the site. The distance between proposed building and Pullman Court would be approximately 16m, to the dentist to the north approximately 10m, and to the church approximately 35m, which all raise no objection regarding building to building distances in terms of physical proximity.
- 6.40 The applicant's Daylight and Sunlight Report has assessed the impact of the proposed development upon all surrounding properties in regard to the relevant BRE guidelines. The report identifies that whilst the proposal would be different from the existing layout, all the properties would meet the guidelines for daylight and sunlight if the extension were to be constructed. Whilst there would be a slight reduction in sunlight to the communal amenity space, the internal rooms would not be impacted upon, accordingly the proposal would not lead to adverse harm upon the residential amenities of the occupiers of the flats in Pullman Court.

XII. ENERGY AND SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS

- 6.41 Policy PMD13 sets a requirement for the use of decentralised, renewable or low carbon sources for new developments. Policy PMD12 sets a BREEAM 'Outstanding' requirement by 2019. These policies are compliant with the aims of paragraphs 153 and 154 of the NPPF and guidance within the PPG.
- 6.42 The proposed building has been designed to achieve a BREEAM target of 'Outstanding', which would accord with policy PMD12 and the use of photovoltaic panels and heat pumps would accord with policy PMD13.

XIII. LAND CONTAMINATION AND GROUND WORKS

- 6.43 With regard to land contamination, policy PMD1 seeks to minimise pollution and impacts upon amenity and the natural environment with a requirement for

suitable mitigation measures to be imposed through planning condition or obligation.

- 6.44 The applicant's Geo Environmental Site Investigation Report explains that a desk study and subsequent intrusive investigation was undertaken in October 2018 with results identifying that there are no significant risks to controlled waters and therefore no remediation works are required. The report recommends that ground works are monitored for any previously undetected or suspected materials, which can be secured through a CEMP. Subject to the imposition of a CEMP condition the Council's Environmental Health Officer raises no objections with regard to policy PMD1.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR APPROVAL

- 7.1 The proposal would serve to create a high quality, distinctive landmark civic building in Grays. The building would positively respond to the sensitivity of surrounding development, particularly the grade II listed church. The loss of existing buildings and uses is considered, on balance, to be acceptable, given the public benefits that would result from the development. The proposal represents a key regeneration project for Grays and the development is supported by the Grays Town Centre Framework and policies CSSP2, CSTP7, CSTP8 and CSTP10.

Matters of detail concerning noise, sustainability, access, ecology and landscaping are all considered to be acceptable. Where appropriate and necessary, planning conditions are recommended. Taking all material considerations into account, it is considered the proposals are supported by the relevant policies contained within the Core Strategy and the NPPF.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 Approve, subject to the following conditions:

Standard Time Limit

1. The development hereby permitted must be begun not later than the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91[1] of The Town & Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Approved Plans

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Plan Number(s):		
Reference	Name	Received
18124-LSI-A1-01-DR-A-1201 Rev B	Existing Site Layout	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-01-DR-A-1301 Rev A	Proposed Plans	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-02-DR-A-1202 Rev B	Existing Site Layout	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-02-DR-A-1302 Rev A	Proposed Floor Plans	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-B1-DR-A-1179 Rev B	Existing Floor Plans	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-B1-DR-A-1180 Rev B	Proposed Floor Plans	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-B1-DR-A-1199 Rev B	Existing Site Layout	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-GF-DR-A-1200 Rev B	Existing Site Layout	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-GF-DR-A-1300 Rev A	Proposed Floor Plans	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-R2-DR-A-1316 Rev A	Proposed Plans	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-RF-DR-A-1315 Rev A	Proposed Plans	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-ZZ-DR-A-1170 Rev B	Location Plan	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-ZZ-DR-A-1175 Rev B	Existing Site Layout	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-ZZ-DR-A-1176 Rev B	Proposed Site Layout	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-ZZ-DR-A-1177	Site Layout	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-ZZ-DR-A-1250 Rev A	Existing Elevations	3rd May 2019

18124-LSI-A1-ZZ-DR-A-1350 Rev A	Proposed Elevations	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-ZZ-DR-A-1355 Rev A	Proposed Elevations	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-ZZ-DR-A-1356 Rev A	Proposed Elevations	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-ZZ-DR-A-1357	Proposed Elevations	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-ZZ-DR-A-1358	Proposed Elevations	3rd May 2019
18124-LS1-A1-ZZ-DR-A-1370 Rev A	Sections	3rd May 2019
18124-LSI-A1-ZZ-DR-A-1371 Rev A	Sections	3rd May 2019
19007_BT3	Landscaping	3rd May 2019
ASU-THU-LA-L100	Landscaping	3rd May 2019
2018/4416/001	Proposed Plans	19th June 2019

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure the development accords with the approved plans with regard to policies PMD1 and PMD2 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

Materials

- No development (other than site investigation, levelling and ground works) shall take place until samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. In addition details of the brick type, size and bonding method, all surface materials [including those to the public realm outside the site], rainwater goods, and glazing details [in section drawings] shall also be submitted. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to ensure that the proposed development is satisfactorily integrated with its surroundings in accordance

with Policy PMD2 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development DPD [2015].

Brick Panel Sample

4. No development (other than site investigation, levelling and ground works) shall commence until a brick panel no less than 1m² showing a sample of the brickwork, colour, patterning and joint profile of mortar courses, has been constructed and made available for inspection on site. The details shall be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any part of the development is begun and the development shall be carried out in accordance with the details as approved.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to ensure that the proposed development is satisfactorily integrated with its surroundings in accordance with Policy PMD2 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development DPD [2015].

Landscape Protection

5. Prior to the commencement of any works on the site the Maple tree identified as tree T10 in the 'Arboricultural Assessment and Method Statement' dated 25 April 2019 shall be protected by chestnut paling fencing or heras fencing for the duration of the construction period at a distance equivalent to not less than the spread from the trunk. No materials, vehicles, fuel or any other ancillary items shall be stored or buildings erected inside this fencing; no changes in ground level may be made or underground services installed within the spread of any tree or shrub [including hedges] without the previous written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To secure appropriate landscaping of the site in the interests of visual amenity and the character of the area in accordance with policies CSTP18 and PMD2 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

Landscaping Scheme

6. No development (other than site investigation, levelling and ground works) shall take place until there has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority a detailed scheme of landscaping, which shall include details of all proposed trees, shrubs, planting details, level changes, lighting furniture, a programme of maintenance and a programme

of implementation. The landscaping details shall include details of type and species of replacement trees for the trees to be lost as a result of the development. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved scheme shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following commencement of the development or in accordance with the agreed programme of implementation. Any trees, shrubs or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority otherwise agreed in writing.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development is satisfactorily integrated with its immediate surroundings and provides for landscaping as required by policy PMD2 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development DPD [2015].

Ecology Mitigation and Enhancements

7. Prior to first occupation of the development permitted the ecological effects and mitigation/compensation/enhancement measures as detailed within the 'Ecology Impact Assessment' dated May 2019 shall be implemented and shall be maintained and retained at all times thereafter.

Reason: In order to ensure that the interests of ecology and biodiversity or protected species are addressed in accordance with policy PMD7 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

Programme of Historic Building Recording

8. No demolition shall commence until a programme of historic building recording has been secured on the buildings at 81 and 83 High Street and 1 and 2 New Road with details of the programme of historic building recording to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The programme of historic building recording shall only commence in accordance with the details as approved.

Reason: In the heritage interests of the site in accordance with policy PMD4 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

Submission of historic building recording

9. Within 6 months following completion of the programme of historic building recording an approved historic building report shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for record keeping purposes.

Reason: In the heritage interests of the site in accordance with policy PMD4 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

Programme of Archaeological Work

10. No demolition/development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall include a mitigation strategy detailing the excavation/preservation strategy following the completion of this work.

Reason: To ensure that investigation and recording of any remains takes place prior to commencement of development in accordance with Policy PMD4 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

Archaeological Post Excavation Assessment

11. Within 3 months following completion of fieldwork a post-excavation assessment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This post-excavation analysis shall include preparation of a full site archive and report ready for deposition at the local museum, and submission of a publication report.

Reason: To ensure that investigation and recording of any remains takes place prior to commencement of development in accordance with Policy PMD4 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

Proposed Highway Improvements

12. No development shall commence until details of the proposed improvements to New Road and High Street have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include the layout, surface materials, any security measures, dimensions and construction specification of the proposed improvements. The highway

improvements shall be implemented in accordance with the details as approved and shall be maintained and retained as such thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and efficiency in accordance with Policy PMD9 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

Disabled Parking Provision

13. The development hereby permitted shall not be first occupied until such time as the two disabled vehicle parking spaces shown on the approved plans, have been hard surfaced, sealed and marked out. The vehicle parking area(s) shall be retained in this form at all times thereafter. The vehicle parking area(s) shall not be used for any purpose other than the parking of vehicles that are related to the use of the approved development.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to ensure that adequate car parking provision is available in accordance with policies PMD8 and PMD9 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

Drop off access details

14. Prior to first occupation of the development hereby permitted details showing the layout, dimensions and construction specification of the proposed access to the highway for the drop off zone has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The access to the drop off zone shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to occupation of the development hereby permitted and shall be maintained and retained as such at all times thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to ensure that adequate car parking provision is available in accordance with policies PMD8 and PMD9 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

Travel Plan

15. Prior to the first operational use of the development hereby permitted, a Travel Plan shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The Travel Plan shall include detailed and specific measures to reduce the number of journeys made by car to the building and shall include specific details of the operation and management of the

proposed measures. The commitments explicitly stated in the Travel Plan shall be binding on the applicants or their successors in title. The measures shall be implemented upon the first operational use of the building hereby permitted and shall be permanently kept in place unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Upon written request, the applicant or their successors in title shall provide the Local Planning Authority with written details of how the agreed measures contained in the Travel Plan are being undertaken at any given time.

Reason: To reduce reliance on the use of private cars, in the interests of sustainability, highway safety and amenity in accordance with Policy PMD10 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

Surface Water Drainage System

16. No development shall take place until a detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydro geological context of the development, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme should include but not be limited to:

- Limiting discharge rates to 3.4l/s for all storm events up to and including the 1 in 100 year rate plus 40% allowance for climate change.
- Provide sufficient storage to ensure no off site flooding as a result of the development during all storm events up to and including the 1 in 100 year plus 40% climate change event.
- Final modelling and calculations for all areas of the drainage system.
- Detailed engineering drawings of each component of the drainage scheme.
- A final drainage plan which details exceedance and conveyance routes, FFL and ground levels, and location and sizing of any drainage features.
- A written report summarising the final strategy and highlighting any minor changes to the approved strategy.

The scheme shall subsequently be implemented prior to occupation.

Reason:

- To prevent flooding by ensuring the satisfactory storage of/disposal of surface water from the site.
- To ensure the effective operation of SuDS features over the lifetime of the development.

- To provide mitigation of any environmental harm which may be caused to the local water environment
- Failure to provide the above required information before commencement of works may result in a system being installed that is not sufficient to deal with surface water occurring during rainfall events and may lead to increased flood risk and pollution hazard from the site.
- In accordance with policies PMD1 and PMD15 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

Surface Water Maintenance Plan

17. No development shall take place until a Maintenance Plan detailing the management and maintenance arrangements including who is responsible for different elements of the surface water drainage system and the maintenance activities/frequencies, has been submitted to and agreed, in writing, by the local planning authority. The Maintenance Plan shall be implemented as approved and retained as such at all times thereafter.

Reason: To ensure appropriate maintenance arrangements are put in place to enable the surface water drainage system to function as intended to ensure mitigation against flood risk in accordance with policy PMD15 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

Surface Water Yearly Logs

18. The applicant or any successor in title must maintain yearly logs of maintenance which should be carried out in accordance with the approved Maintenance Plan as detailed in the above condition. These must be available for inspection upon a request by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the SuDS are maintained for the lifetime of the development as outlined in any approved Maintenance Plan so that they continue to function as intended to ensure mitigation against flood risk. In accordance with policy PMD15 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

Noise Mitigation

19. Prior to the first operational use of the development the noise mitigation and recommendation measures as identified in the 'Acoustic Report' reference 18-0101-0 R02 shall be applied to the operational phase of development

and any noise generating source/use shall be maintained in accordance with the noise mitigation and recommendation measures as identified in the 'Acoustic Report' reference 18-0101-0 R02 shall be retained at all times thereafter.

Reason: To protect the amenities of nearby residential occupiers from noise sources associated with the construction and the operational use of the building in accordance with Policy PMD1 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

Decentralised, Renewable or Low Carbon Technologies

20. Prior to the commencement of development, details of measures to demonstrate that the development will achieve the generation of at least 15% of its energy needs through the use of decentralised, renewable or low carbon technologies shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved measures shall be implemented and operational upon the first use of the buildings hereby permitted and shall thereafter be retained in the agreed form unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that development takes place in an environmentally sensitive way and in the interest of visual amenity in accordance with Policy PMD13 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

BREEAM

21. The development hereby permitted shall be built to a minimum standard of 'Outstanding' under the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM), unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Within 6 months of the first use of any of the building(s) a copy of the Post Construction Completion Certificate for the building(s) BREEAM rating shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the development meets the objectives of energy efficiency in new building design and construction set out in Policy PMD12 of the adopted Thurrock Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)

22. No construction works shall commence until a Construction Environmental Management Plan [CEMP] has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in writing. The CEMP should contain or address the following matters:
- (a) Hours of use for the construction of the development
 - (b) Hours and duration of any piling operations,
 - (c) Wheel washing and sheeting of vehicles transporting loose aggregates or similar materials on or off site,
 - (d) Details of construction any access or temporary access, and details of temporary parking requirements;
 - (e) Road condition surveys before demolition and after construction is completed; with assurances that any degradation of existing surfaces will be remediated as part of the development proposals. Extents of road condition surveys to be agreed as part of this CEMP
 - (f) Location and size of on-site compounds [including the design layout of any proposed temporary artificial lighting systems];
 - (g) Details of any temporary hardstandings;
 - (h) Details of temporary hoarding;
 - (i) Details of the method for the control of noise with reference to BS5228 together with a monitoring regime;
 - (j) Measures to reduce vibration and mitigate the impacts on sensitive receptors together with a monitoring regime ;
 - (k) Measures to reduce dust with air quality mitigation and monitoring,
 - (l) Measures for water management including waste water and surface water discharge;
 - (m) A method statement for the prevention of contamination of soil and groundwater and air pollution, including the storage of fuel and chemicals;
 - (n) Details of a procedure to deal with any unforeseen contamination, should it be encountered during development;
 - (o) A Site Waste Management Plan,
 - (p) Details of security lighting layout and design; and
 - (q) Contact details for site managers including information about community liaison including a method for handling and monitoring complaints.

Works on site shall only take place in accordance with the approved CEMP.

Reason: In order to minimise any adverse impacts arising from the construction of the development in accordance with policy PMD1 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

Positive and Proactive Statement

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application and as a result, the Local Planning Authority has been able to grant planning permission for an acceptable proposal, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Documents:

All background documents including application forms, drawings and other supporting documentation relating to this application can be viewed online: <http://regs.thurrock.gov.uk/online-applications>

