



Experience Barnsley; A new entrance.
Heritage Impact Statement & Design & Access Statement.
Version 01 - Feb 2013.



BARNSELEY
Metropolitan Borough Council



Introduction

Barnsley Town Hall is seen as the town's major landmark building. As a striking decorated classical building, its white Portland stone facades set it apart from the local sandstone and red brick buildings. This, along with the buildings commanding position and scale characterise its special civic role in the community.

The building opened in 1933 and is a building of significant architectural quality and an appropriate setting to the events taking place within it, whether these are royal visits, formal receptions, political decision making, civil weddings or a solid and stable backdrop to the war memorial. The nature of the building and the functions held within, place it at the heart of the Barnsley community and define its strong social value.

In 1986 the building was listed (Grade 2) as being 'of special architectural and historic interest' and is accompanied by a number of other listed features in its immediate setting including the war memorial and the piers and railings of the memorial gardens.





Context

The public open space to the south of the building makes up the Town Hall Gardens site. It lies within the Regent Street/Church Street/Market Hill Conservation Area close to Barnsley town centre. The building itself sits in a raised position above the town centre with the building looking out in a south easterly direction towards the shopping area of Market Hill. The southeast corner of the Town Hall has therefore become a key view which must be respected.

The Town Hall site is in close proximity to several other listed buildings within the wider context of the conservation area including period architecture on Church Street and Regent Street, which underlines the civic importance of the area for Barnsley as a whole.



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Visual of proposed new Museum Entrance > Redman Design



Original window example and approved replacement.

The Future

Barnsley Town Hall has recently undergone a significant package of works, which has improved the fabric and supporting infrastructure of the building to ensure it continues to be able to deliver its civic functions well into the future.

The carefully co-ordinated package of works centers on the introduction of a new public museum to the Town Hall, '*Experience Barnsley*'. The Museum which will open in 2013 will house galleries, exhibition space, a cafe, local studies centre and the towns archive. The public spaces of the museum will be housed mainly on the ground floor with the basement being re-formatted to provide storage and workshop space for the museum.

Further works have been undertaken to improve the upper floors. The first floor is dominated by the Council chamber with a range of Committee Rooms and Ceremony Rooms along the front elevation. It has been developed as the 'democratic floor' with working and meeting spaces for the elected members of the local authority.

The second floor, which is mostly out of date office accommodation, has been reorganized to provide best practice office and meeting facilities for the Council staff as well as some conference facilities to serve the Council and surrounding business community.

As part of the scheme, essential maintenance aspects relating to the external fabric have also been addressed. The Portland stone has been carefully cleaned using approved methods and the original steel frame windows replaced. Great attention has been paid to these elements as their original character is fundamental to the aesthetic quality of the facades.



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Visual of proposed new Town Hall Gardens > Estell Warren Ltd

The Future

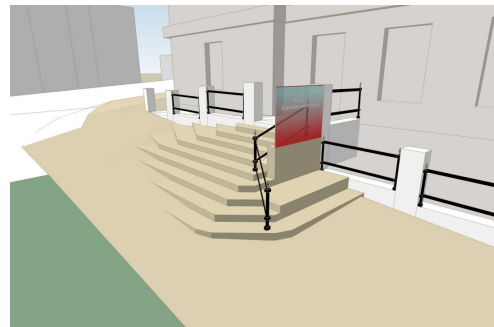
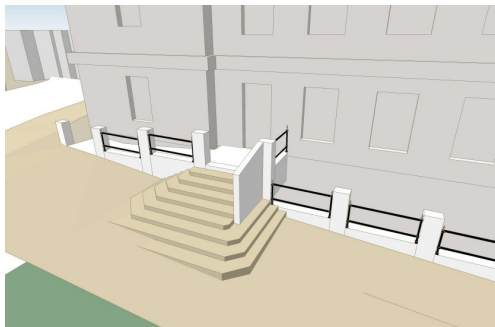
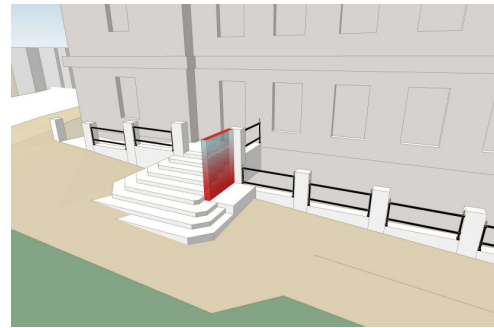
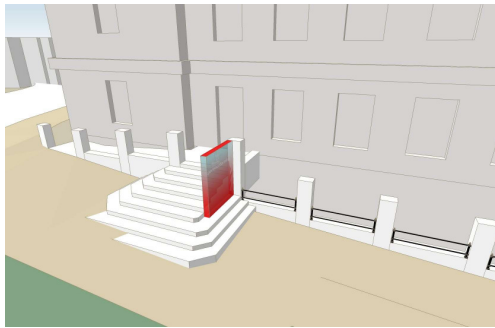
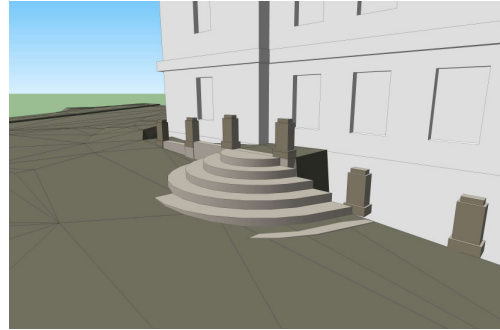
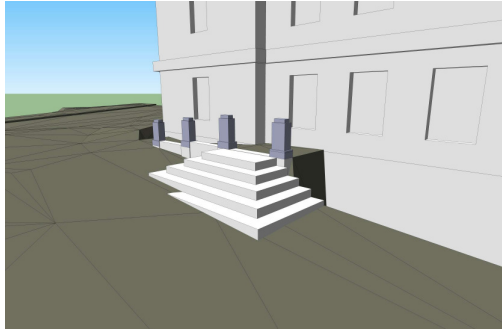
The existing public realm surrounding the building is also being addressed and construction is currently underway for the *'Town Hall Gardens Project'*.

In particular the southern frontage of the Town Hall was dominated by a surface car park which detracted from the overall setting of the southern elevation. Unattractive raised beds and structures at the south east corner of the site will be removed and replaced with a series of Yorkstone terraces, creating a visual 'platform' for the Town Hall in the key view from Market Hill.

The proposed scheme is designed to respect and enhance the current heritage setting, creating an improved context for the Town Hall and relating it better to the overall wider space within the Regent Street/Church Street/Market Hill Conservation Area. The overall effect of the proposed scheme will be to open out a significant space on the southern side of the Town Hall, de-cluttering the existing scene and allowing an improved appreciation of the southern Town hall elevation.

The proposed scheme retains the existing Yorkstone pavements and kerbs along the eastern frontage of the Town Hall and makes use of the existing green/grey granite setts. The use of new Yorkstone, bands of granite and careful use of Portland stone blocks will help tie the scheme into the immediate setting of the Town Hall and wider character of the conservation area and creating an attractive open space fronting onto the south elevation of the Town Hall. Key views of the Town Hall from Market Hill and The Shambles will be retained and enhanced in the proposed scheme. Views to the Town Hall from The Shambles would be filtered by proposed trees but would retain clear sightlines to the southern Town Hall elevation when entering the town centre from the west.





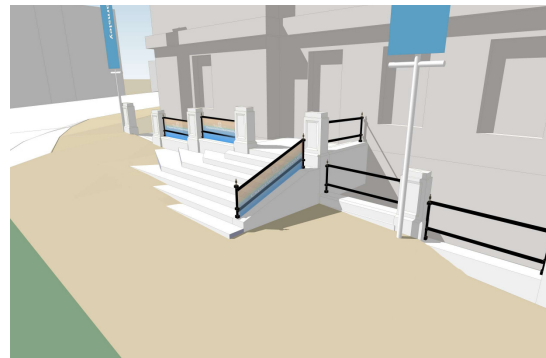
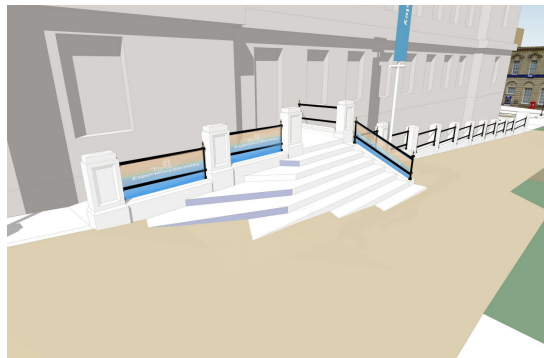
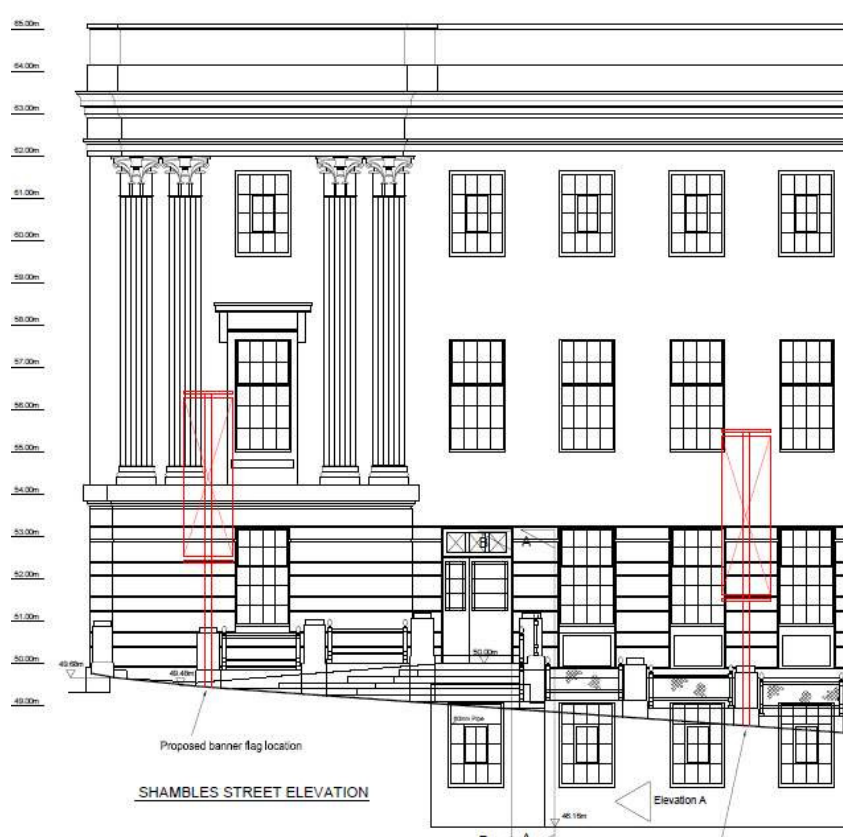
Design Options

The existing public entrance to the Town Hall is accessed from Lancaster Gate will be retained as the principle public access to the building and in particular the new Museum. Also due to the surrounding topography this entrance is the only accessible access point to the building.

Currently the entrance, sited at the western corner of the southern façade has the appearance and feel of a 'side entrance' or 'back door'. However as this is the main public entrance to the building and new museum it is felt that the current solution is not suitable for its setting and purpose. Also as discussed previously much is being done to improve the public realm to the southern aspect of the Town Hall. The *Town Hall Gardens Project* addresses many of the existing issues relating to the public realm and highlights the importance of the southern aspect and public entrance to the building.



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Proposal

In response to this and to raise the profile of the Lancaster Gate entrance it is proposed to add a set of steps which will allow the public to access the building directly from the southern aspect whilst maintaining the existing ramp for accessibility.

Consultation through the design stage with both BMBC Planning and Conservation Officers has influenced the progression of both the brief and final design. The images adjacent show how the proposal has developed from the initial brief to its current position.

As the proposal requires minor alterations to the listed piers and railings, a process has been followed to produce a scheme which is sympathetic to the materials and detailing of both the building and the new works of the *Town Hall Gardens*.

The final scheme has been refined to possibly the most simple of forms but succeeds in opening up the entrance to the widest possible angle of approach. A significant consideration was the approach from the pedestrian route running from the east of the southern elevation. Several of the early proposals were felt to present both a physical and visual barrier to this approach. The removal of the signage element from the steps themselves and the introduction of a simple hand rail to match the existing afford a more transparent and open view from this approach.

The introduction of the two post mounted banner signs set against the piers frame the new entrance and draw the attention from the public areas surrounding the site, in particular the pedestrianized Market Hill Area.



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