

# **FORMER POLICE BUILDING AND MAGISTRATES COURT CIVIC CENTRE, SOUTHAMPTON**

## **Written Scheme of Investigation for Building Recording**

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#### 1 INTRODUCTION

##### 1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 The former Police Building and Magistrates Court forms the westernmost of four interlinked contemporary buildings which together comprise the Southampton Civic Centre, on Civic Centre Road, Southampton, SO14 7LS. The buildings are listed, Grade II\*.
- 1.1.2 A competition for the design of the new civic centre was held in 1928, and won by the architect Ernest Berry Webber. Construction began in 1930, when the construction of the south (Municipal Offices) block was laid, and completed with the opening of the Art Gallery in 1939. The former Police building and Magistrates Court was the second building to be constructed, and was opened for use in November 1933.
- 1.1.3 The building comprises two main floors; the lower ground floor is largely sub-divided into a series of small spaces providing police offices and custody suites, with internal courtyards providing prisoners exercise yards. The upper ground floor, accessed via a flight of steps at the centre of the west elevation leading to a large central hall, houses three large and two small courtrooms, and further police offices.
- 1.1.4 The Magistrates Courts vacated the building in 2001, and the police station and offices were vacated in 2010. The building is to be converted to a new use as the city's heritage centre as the Sea City Museum.
- 1.1.5 The Civic Centre as a whole has been the subject of a *Conservation Management Plan* (Capita Symmonds, 2009), which provides detail of the architectural competition and subsequent construction of the Civic Centre as a whole. Volume 2 of the *Conservation Management Plan* also provides detailed data sheets for individual rooms and circulation spaces within the building, but does not provide a detailed description of the building as it currently survives. It would appear, however, that only modest, localised alterations have been made to the interior of the building since its original construction.
- 1.1.6 The conversion of the building will necessitate a modest degree of internal demolition, mostly affecting the police offices and circulation spaces in the northern half of the building, but also removing some of the architectural detail from four of the five courtrooms. The principal impact in areas considered to be of High Heritage Merit are:
  - The removal of sections of the panelling and magistrates bench in Courtroom 3; the closure of the two existing doors and the creation of a new central opening in the south wall



- The removal of the defendant's dock in Courtroom 3
  - The removal of the witness box and alterations to the north-east corner of Courtroom One
  - The removal of the magistrates benches from Courtrooms 4 & 5
- 1.1.7 In order to mitigate the loss of these elements of architectural detail, and to provide a record of the original form, scale and detail of the areas of the building to be affected, the Planning Archaeologist at Southampton City Council has determined that a programme of historic building recording be carried out to record the information that will be lost, or affected by the development works.
- 1.1.8 A *Brief* has been prepared and issued by the Planning Archaeologist, for the recording work to be carried out both in the Police building and Magistrates Courts, and in other parts of the Civic Centre which are to be developed within a separate project. The Brief requires that areas considered by the *Conservation Management Plan* to have High Heritage Merit should be recorded to Level 4 (comprehensive analytical record), as defined in *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage, 2006). This includes the Grand Hall and three principal courtrooms, and the bridge linking this western building with the Municipal offices to the east. The Brief additionally requires those areas considered to have Medium to Low Heritage Merit should also be subject to a minimal amount of recording work.
- 1.1.9 Although not assessed in terms of Heritage Merit by the *Conservation Plan*, the steps providing the principal access to the building from the Havelock Road frontage are considered to be of considerable significance to the original architectural scheme, and will also be recorded to Level 4.
- 1.1.10 This WSI sets out the means by which Wessex Archaeology would carry out the Building Recording in accordance with the requirements of the Southampton City Council *Brief*, and the guidance provided by English Heritage.
- 1.1.11 A visit was made to the site on 10<sup>th</sup> August by one of Wessex Archaeology's Built Heritage team, to discuss and assess the scope and detail of the required recording work with the Southampton City Planning Archaeologist, and the method statement and fee quote provided are therefore based on a clear understanding of the requirements.
- 1.1.12 The recording work as discussed with the Planning Archaeologist will necessarily comprise two distinct phases: a main phase of recording prior to the commencement of development works, and a programme of archaeological monitoring to record additional constructional detail during the progress of the development. As the timing and progress of this second phase of work (watching brief) is not possible to accurately determine at this stage, a day rate will be provided for both the on-site recording and additional reporting of evidence recorded during the watching brief.



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## **2 METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Preliminaries**

- 2.1.1 Prior to the commencement of on-site recording, the Wessex Archaeology Project Manager will prepare a Health and Safety Risk Assessment for the execution of the sub-contract.
- 2.1.2 It is assumed that Wessex Archaeology staff will be given a site safety induction by the main contractor at the commencement of the main phase of site recording.

### **2.2 Documentary research**

- 2.2.1 The background history of the building and its site, including the architectural competition and subsequent construction, is well documented by the Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (PCA, 2009) and the Conservation Plan (Capita Symonds, 2009). The bibliographies contained in these documents suggest that a thorough search has been made of both primary and secondary sources, and of all cartographic resources of relevance to the site.
- 2.2.2 Copies of the original architect's drawings held by the Southampton Archives will be obtained, as will copies of historic maps which demonstrate stages in the development of the site. A limited element of additional research is proposed at the RIBA library, to review contemporary articles published between 1937 and 1939 in journals such as *The Builder*, *Architecture* and *Building News* etc. Contemporary photos of the Civic Centre by A E Kelsey, also held by the RIBA will be accessed and copies made if relevant.

### **2.3 Drawn record**

- 2.3.1 The drawn record of the building as it currently survives will be largely provided by the Wilkinson Eyre Architects set of 'As Existing' drawings. Arrangements will be made for the provision of these drawings in editable AutoCAD format, with the necessary permissions in place for their annotation with archaeological information and use within the historic building record report.
- 2.3.2 Copies of the floor plans and external elevations will be marked up on site to record additional information such as the evidence for phasing or alteration, and with the locations of the photographic record.
- 2.3.3 The panelling behind the Magistrates bench in courtroom 3 will be significantly impacted by the alterations, and, in accordance with Policy B8 of the Conservation Plan, cited in paragraph 1.4 of the *Brief*, it is proposed that this will be subject to a rectified photographic record. However, due to the close proximity of the magistrates bench, it will not be possible to record the lower part of the wall in this way, and it is therefore intended to provide a 1:20 drawn record of this elevation by a combination of rectified images and hand measurement.
- 2.3.4 Detail drawings at a scale of 1:10 (1:20 for large windows) will be made of two examples of each window type, using examples from different elevations where possible. In the main stage of recording, these will record the detailed



internal elevations (and external elevations where accessible without scaffold) and the visible elements of vertical and horizontal sections. Constructional details of each example, showing the relationship between the window and wall fabric, will be recorded during/following their removal for replacement/refurbishment as part of the watching brief by completion of the vertical and horizontal sections.

- 2.3.5 Detailed profile drawings at a scale of 1:5 will be made of all types of coving, including at column, window and door heads. Similarly detailed drawings in both elevation and profile will be made of representative sections of all types of corridor moulding.

## 2.4 Photographic record

- 2.4.1 In accordance with the requirements of the *Brief*, the photographic survey will include, as a minimum:

- general views of the exteriors of the building
- the overall appearance of principal rooms and circulation areas
- internal views of a selected sample of ancillary internal rooms to provide examples of standard room types
- detailed coverage of the exterior detail of the building, particularly where it is to be affected by development works
- external and internal detail, to record the structural and decorative detail of the building and evidence of its development and use, which would not be adequately recorded in general views
- significant bespoke furniture and lighting
- a detailed photographic record of two examples of each type of window, in different constructional situations
- detail of graffiti on columns in Grand Hall
- the building's relationship to its setting

- 2.4.2 All of the above coverage will be recorded in high quality colour digital format at a minimum 6 million pixel resolution. Key spaces and features will also be recorded in 35mm black and white format. Where appropriate, detailed photographs will include a photographic scale.

- 2.4.3 The locations of the photographic views will be recorded using a hand-held HP iPAQ. They will be recorded as point shape files, related to the site plan and appropriate floor plans on pocket GIS with the following attributes: building number, room number (if appropriate), direction of view. This will generate copies of the site plan floor plans marked up with all photographic views, together with a photo gazetteer database.

## 2.5 Proposal for laser scanning

- 2.5.1 Although not specifically identified by the project *Brief* as the necessary method of recording of the principal spaces of High Heritage Merit which are going to be affected by the development, we consider that laser scanning would provide the optimum 3-dimensional long-term record of the most significant spaces. We believe that this would be the most appropriate method of providing a long-term record of the most significant spaces and features of this Grade II\* listed building. The costs of producing a laser scan



of the spaces and features identified below have been separately identified as a contingency sum in the fee quote.

- 2.5.2 We would propose that this method be used to record the north and west elevations, whose form, external appearance and setting will be significantly altered by the construction of the new extension to the building. A detailed scan of the west elevation and the main entrance will also provide a long-term 3-D record of the authentic form of this significant component of the original architectural composition.
- 2.5.3 Laser scans of the interior of courtroom 3 and the north-east corner of courtroom 1 would allow a composite long-term 3-D record to be made of a complete courtroom as originally designed and detailed, as neither of these formerly similar spaces will survive intact.
- 2.5.4 The point cloud data would be presented, at this stage, in the form of a processed and enhanced 3-D model of each space scanned. It would not be proposed to produce drawings of the spaces and elevations scanned, at this stage, but the data captured will provide a long-term record, from which 2-D or 3-D drawings of individual architectural details, or whole interior rooms could be produced in the future. It is anticipated that a 3-D solid model of the interior of an authentic courtroom might be of interest for the preparation of displays or interpretive material in the new museum.
- 2.6 **Watching Brief**
  - 2.6.1 A number of items of recording work required by the *Brief* will need to be undertaken during the development programme, in the form of an archaeological watching brief.
  - 2.6.2 Discussions with the main contractor will agree a scope of monitoring visits at appropriate stages to record information revealed by the demolition and stripping out works.
- 2.7 **Timetable for on-site recording**
  - 2.7.1 The archaeological building recording sub-contract is due to commence on 4<sup>th</sup> October, and to last for nine weeks. We anticipate that the main stage of recording work, prior to commencement of development, will take a maximum of two weeks to complete.
  - 2.7.2 It is important that the photographic record is made before the commencement of the main contract works, including enabling works such as the erection of site hoardings or Heras fencing, or the internal asbestos strip. These would significantly restrict the photographic recording of the exterior of the building, and the building in its current setting, and would compromise the photographic recording of the interior. Similarly, the interior photographic record will need to be made before the introduction of internal scaffold, or the stripping out of any architectural detail.
  - 2.7.3 The timetable for the watching brief visits will be agreed with the main contractor following completion of the main recording phase.



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### 3 REPORT AND ARCHIVE

#### 3.1 Report

3.1.1 The written report will set the former Police Station and Magistrates Court Building in the historical context of its specific building type, and in the context of the Civic Centre as a whole. It will provide a detailed, analytical description of the building, including scale and massing, construction and materials, layout, circulation and architectural style and detail. It will identify all modifications and alterations subsequent to its original construction, and provide a discussion with regard to the reasons for later alteration.

3.1.2 The report will include all elements of information and discussion as required by section 2.5 of the project *Brief*.

3.1.3 The report will be produced in the standard Wessex Archaeology format. It will be illustrated with, as a minimum:

- Site location plan
- Selection of Historic maps
- Selection of historic photographs
- Original architects drawings and historic floor plans of the building
- Set of current floor plans marked up to show modifications to the original building
- Current architects elevations and sections through the building
- Copies of the detail drawings reproduced at an appropriate scale
- A selection from the photographic record
- Site and building plans showing locations of the selection of photographic views included as report plates

3.1.4 Copies of the report will be deposited with the Southampton City Historic Environment Team, Southampton City Archives, Southampton Library Special Collections and the National Monuments Record, on the understanding that it will be made available as a public document after an appropriate period.

3.1.5 A draft of the building record report will be submitted to the client within a period of eight weeks from the completion of the site recording work (watching brief phase).

#### 3.2 Archive

3.2.1 The project archive will also be deposited at the Southampton City Archives. The archive will include:

- Copies of measured survey drawings at the scales identified above
- Photographic record including negatives where appropriate
- Photographic registers of all photographic images
- Site and building plans marked up with the locations of all photographic views
- A copy of the report





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- 3.2.2 A summary account of the work will be submitted to an appropriate journal (most probably the Industrial Archaeology Review) within one year following completion of the fieldwork.

#### **4 STANDARDS**

- 4.1.1 All building recording will be undertaken in accordance with the guidance provided by Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice (English Heritage, 2006).
- 4.1.2 The project will be carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Code of Conduct, and all relevant IFA Standards and Guidance Documents.
- 4.1.3 All work will be carried out in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974; the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992; and all other Health and Safety legislation, regulations and codes of practice in force at the time.
- 4.1.4 A Health and Safety Risk Assessment will be prepared in advance of the commencement of site recording work. The Risk Assessment will have been read and understood by all staff attending the site before work commences.