

Subject: North West Tower – Funding request to support the development stage of renovating this building

Report to: Management Team 19th March 2018, Economic Development Committee 3rd April 2018

Report by: Kate Watts, Strategic Director and Darren Barker, Principle Conservation Officer

OVERVIEW & RECOMMENDATION

This paper outlines an opportunity to lever in funding from the Architectural Heritage Fund to support the development stage of any future renovation of the North West Tower, which will include exploring the existing architectural sketch scheme and concept for conversion, considering the options and business case for reuse and future funding opportunities.

It is therefore recommended that a contribution of £9,250 is made from the Council's special projects reserve to support an application to the Architectural Heritage Fund to enable development work which will progress the full repair and reuse of the North West Tower.

This application would be developed and submitted by the GYPT as a Local Authority is not able to directly access this funding.

1. BACKGROUND – NORTH WEST TOWER

- 1.1 The North West Tower is a scheduled ancient monument and part of the mediaeval town wall. The wall and towers were mostly constructed in the 13th century, the upper sections rebuilt in the 15th and 16th centuries.
- 1.2 The North West Tower now stands isolated adjacent to the River Bure after the section of wall from the tower along Rampart Road was demolished in 1902.

- 1.3 The building was last used as the office for a firm of surveyors and has been vacant and under maintained since 2004. The buildings condition is considered poor and likely to worsen.
- 1.4 Great Yarmouth Town Wall and Towers are important heritage assets and considered to be of international significance. During a 2017 community consultation undertaken by Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust the Town Wall, Towers and Rows were considered by the community to be the town most important heritage assets and most in need of preservation.
- 1.5 The tower is in the ownership of the borough council. Alongside this there is currently an annual budget of £30,000 to maintain, repair and consolidate the town wall and towers. This budget is used as efficiently and effectively as possible and prioritises sections of wall considered to be at risk.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 In 2014 following council approval a budget of £110,000 was provided to fully repair and converted for holiday accommodation the South East Tower. The project secured the buildings extremely important and vulnerable historic fabric and provided a viable and sustainable end use. Revenue generated from the offer is ring fenced to maintain the tower and the surrounding section of wall.
- 2.2 This has proved successful creating revenue and supporting the boroughs cultural tourism aspirations. It not only provides unique holiday accommodation but is used by Norfolk Museum Service visits by school children as part of the national curriculum.
- 2.3 The project devised and delivered by Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust on behalf of the borough council has re-used a key asset, supports tourism and promotes Great Yarmouth's cultural offer. It contributes to shaping the town as a cultural destination.
- 2.4 In addition to this successful renovation this paper sets out a proposal to explore options for the repair and reuse of the North West Tower. This will

involve architectural, structural engineering and business advice to formulate the most appropriate and sustainable approach to reuse.

- 2.5 There is an opportunity to secure an Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF) grant to support this work, under the AHF's Development Grant Program. The boroughs conservation officer met with officers from the AHF and inspected the tower and the AHF would very much welcome an application.
- 2.6 The AHF do not offer grants to local authorities but have supported a number of Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust projects including the Time and Tide and St Johns Church. The AHF would accept a grant application from GYPT to undertake development work at the North West Tower.

3. ALIGNMENT OF PROJECT AGAINST COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The project meets council Local Plan Priorities:

Policy CS10- Safeguarding local heritage assets

- a. Conserving and enhancing the significance of the boroughs heritage assets.
- b. Promoting heritage-led regeneration and seeking appropriate beneficial use.
- c. Ensuring access to historic assets is maintained and improved

Policy CS6- Supporting the local economy

- g. Supporting the local visitor and retail economies in accordance with policies
- h. Supporting the provision of small scale business units

Policy CS8- Promoting tourism, leisure and culture

- a. Encourage and support the upgrading expansion and enhancement of existing visitor accommodation and attractions to meet changes in consumer demands and encourage year round tourism.
- h. Seek to support the role of the arts creative industries and sustainable tourism sectors in creating a modern and exciting environment.

- i. Support proposals for new tourist attractions and educational visitor centres that are related to the boroughs heritage, countryside and coastal assets.
- j. Ensure that all proposals are sensitive to the character of the surrounding area and are designed to maximise the benefits for the communities affected in terms of job opportunities and local services.

Policy CS9- Encourage well design distinctive place

- a. Respond to, and draw inspiration from the surrounding area's distinctive natural, built and historic characteristics, such as scale, form, massing and materials, to ensure that the full potential of the development site is realised; making efficient use of land and reinforcing the local identity
- b. Consider incorporating key features, such as landmark buildings, green infrastructure and public art, which relate to the historical, ecological or geological interest of a site and further enhance local character
- c. Promote positive relationships between existing and proposed buildings, streets and well lit spaces, thus creating safe, attractive, functional places with active frontages that limit the opportunities for crime
- g. Conserve and enhance biodiversity, landscape features and townscape quality

Policy CS17- Regenerating Great Yarmouth's waterfront

- a. Transform Great Yarmouth's arrival experience by developing a network of attractive, vibrant and well-connected neighbourhoods to create a new gateway to the town
- h. Utilise the heritage assets of the area, such as the historic townscape and important historic buildings, converting buildings to other uses where appropriate

- 3.2 Furthermore, the project will provide significant training and employment opportunities. The project also supports the Plan 2015-2020, Economic

Growth. Neighbourhoods, Communities and Environment. Tourism, Culture and Heritage. Great Yarmouth Town Centre.

- 3.3 Importantly the proposal aligns with the corporate plan and priorities set out in The Plan 2015-2022. Tourism, Culture and Heritage, *Achieving national recognition for the boroughs extensive heritage will act as a big stimulus to attracting new visitors and providing upmarket attractions.*

4. SCOPE OF DEVELOPMENT WORK

- 4.1 The development work includes exploring the existing architectural sketch scheme and concept for conversion and considering the options and business case for reuse and future funding opportunities.
- 4.2 It will develop the preferred option to the appropriate RIBA stage to secure Ancient Monument Consent and Building Regulations. It will also prepare project costs through the advice of a quantity surveyor.
- 4.3 The development work will enable applications to be made to a range of potential funders including the Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic England and The European Walled Towns Group.

4.4 Development Work Costs

Professional Fees	architect, structural engineers, QS	£18,000
Consultant Costs	business analyst, activity plan	£3,000
Consultant Costs	conservation plan	£2,500
Total		£23,500

5. FUTURE OPTIONS

- 5.1 There is an option for an asset transfer of both the SE Tower and the NW Tower to Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust. This option would reduce council liability in terms of repair, maintenance, operating cost and insurance. It would allow a clear distinction between the roles and responsibilities over the towers between the two organisations. GYPT is currently managing the holiday let at the SE Tower.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The AHF grant is offered at 50% match funding. The total cost of the development works totals £23,500 so the funding would total £11,750. In addition to this funding, GYPT have also offered to put £2,500 towards this project.
- 6.2 This leaves a shortfall of £9,250 which is being requested from the Council to support this grant application.
- 6.3 A contribution of £9,250 is made from the Council's special projects reserve to support an application to the Architectural Heritage Fund to enable development work which will progress the full repair and reuse of the North West Tower.
- 6.4 This application would be developed and submitted by the GYPT as a Local Authority is not able to directly access this funding

Area for consideration	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	N/A
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	N/A
Existing Council Policies:	N/A
Financial Implications:	In report
Legal Implications (including human rights):	N/A
Risk Implications:	N/A
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	N/A
Crime & Disorder:	N/A
Every Child Matters:	N/A

North West Tower

