

## DEDDINGTON TOWN HALL AND MUSEUM - feasibility study

The Trustees of Deddington Charity Estates, owners of Deddington Town Hall, are of the opinion that the Town Hall could be much improved in appearance and made to play a more important part in the life of Deddington, Clifton and Hempton.

2. The Trustees, advised by a Working Party, believe that the primary use of the Town Hall should be as a museum. The idea has support in the community, and several exhibits have already been donated or promised.
3. On the advice of the Working Party, the Trustees wish to commission a study on the feasibility and likely cost of each of the following:
  - A. refurbishment of the exterior of the Town Hall and restoration to its original state (Appendix A);
  - B. refurbishment and development of the first floor interior into a museum environment, capable of displaying smaller exhibits of the kind already acquired, or likely to be (Appendix B);
  - C. refurbishment and development of the ground floor interior and exterior areas into a museum environment capable of displaying larger exhibits of the kind likely to be acquired (Appendix C);
  - D. installation of security arrangements which are functionally effective, aesthetically in keeping with the character of the building, visitor-friendly and which satisfy insurance and police requirements (Appendix D)
  - E. provision of storage capacity within the building for documents etc not normally on display but accessible to bona-fide inquirers on request;
  - F. provision of toilet facilities to meet the needs of bona-fide visitors but not accessible to the public at large.

### Background note

1. At present, the main uses of the Town Hall interior area are
  - a. monthly meetings of the Parish Council, usually lasting 2-3 hours. The Parish Council has a formal, 20-year, rental agreement with the Trustees at £75 per year;
  - b. Sunday morning meetings of the Children's Church, with the permission of the Trustees and the Parish Council;
  - c. very occasional events eg arts and craft shows, which form part of community-wide celebrations such as the Country Fayre.
2. With the permission of the Parish Council, local societies use the ground floor exterior area for fund-raising events such as cake stalls, on several Saturday mornings during the year.
3. Heating, lighting, cleaning and decorating of the Town Hall is paid for by the Parish Council out of the parish precept.

APPENDIX A

1. Deddington Town Hall was rebuilt in 1806 to replace an earlier structure, dating before 1611, which had shops and stalls under and adjoining. Repaired in 1832, the Town Hall was used for vestry meetings, petty sessions (until 1874), as a polling booth (in 1837, 1852 and 1862), reading room and library. It stood on open arches, beneath which were three stalls used by butchers on market days. Some arches were bricked up in 1858 to form a shelter for the parish fire engine (see APPENDIX C), formerly kept in the parish church and, for a time, in a building on Goose Green. The fire engine was still housed at the Town Hall in 1933. A weekly corn market was started there in 1870, but failed. The Town Hall well supplied the town pool before it was filled in around 1880.

Sources:

Mary Vane Turner *The Story of Deddington*, Smart & Co (Northants) 1933  
 H M Colvin *A History of Deddington, Oxfordshire*, SPCK (London) 1963  
*Victoria History of the Counties of England: Vol XI, Oxfordshire*, OUP 1983 (chapter drafted by Colvin in 1960 and revised by A Crossley in 1980).

2. Extract from registry of listed buildings, 1988:-

	DEDDINGTON	MARKET PLACE
SP4631		
B/184		Town Hall
GV		ii

Town hall. Rebuilt 1806, probably incorporating part of the former early-C17 structure. Brick with marlstone dressings, and rendered timber-framing; Welsh-slate roof with brick gable stack. Rectangular plan of 3 by 2 bays on an island site. 2 storeys. Ground floor has an arcade of segmental arches on square brick piers with stone bases and impost blocks; the bay at the northern end is built up but the rest is open. Rendered upper floor rising from a rendered band has renewed casements: a pair of 2-light windows in the south gable wall, a 3-light window to north with a similar window in the gable, and two 3-light casements in the east wall. Steep-pitched roof. Interior: intersecting chamfered beams and lateral beams morticed for braces relate to an earlier wholly timber-framed structure and appear to be insitu; first-floor walls and roof have no visible work earlier than C19. Early-C19 joinery and benches in council chamber.

(Buildings of England: Oxfordshire: p571; VCH: Oxfordshire: Vol XI, p87)

## APPENDIX B

Among the small exhibits so far acquired are

- \* photographs, maps, scrapbook, copies of indentures, posters, souvenir programmes
- \* scythe, turf lifter, auger, butcher's hooks, horsecollar
- \* souvenir mugs, kitchen utensils, camera, football boots
- \* book case, carved panels, enamel sign

## APPENDIX C

The largest exhibit so far located is too big for display in the upstairs room of the Town Hall. It is an old fire engine that once belonged to Deddington (see APPENDIX A) and is now held by the County Museum. It is hoped to negotiate the return of the engine to Deddington.

It is reasonable to assume that other large exhibits, such as agricultural machinery, may be on offer at some stage.

## APPENDIX D

The Trustees recently drafted the attached note on a wrought iron front door to the Town Hall. The feasibility study, in taking account of this note, should treat it as a suggestion only, and not a definitive specification. (See page 1, para 3D)