

APPENDIX C

Slough Town Hall

Erected 1934-1936. Architects: C H James, Bywaters and Rowland pierce, the architects of Norwich City Hall which was opened in 1938. Although wings were also not completed, Norwich City Hall is a statutorily listed building. It is in a similar style to Slough Town Hall which is almost exactly contemporary, even with a copper clad cupola. Both buildings are described as 'Neoclassical in the Swedish way' by Pevsner. Indeed Norwich City Hall is described in Pevsner as 'the foremost public building of between the wars'.

Slough Town Hall has a pedimented centrepiece of three bays which includes the council chamber and is crowned by a graceful bell turret. To the east is an eight bay wing with a cross wing projecting both north and south with an east front consisting of a central set forward entrance bay and five bays each side. Originally it was intended to build a similar wing to the west of the pedimented central block which was to include an assembly hall. Instead only one bay was constructed but, unlike Norwich City Hall, this bay has a finished west elevation, rather than an abrupt stop with a 'temporary' rendered wall as at Norwich.

The architecture is of high quality with a red brick and extensive stone dressings used below copper clad roofs while the interior of the central block and corridors is relatively unaltered and carefully designed and finished in a style characteristic of the 1930s. The forecourt is marred somewhat by parking but a green buffer remains along with a significant cedar tree, providing a valuable green gap and a dignified and spacious setting for the Town Hall's frontage. This effect is heightened by the presence of Salt Hill Park opposite which gives longer views of this important civic building and thus an improved open setting. To the rear modern council office extensions are of no historic interest and have effectively destroyed the building's southern setting.

Slough Town Hall is currently on Slough Borough Council's Local List.

In my professional judgement the building is worthy of Statutory List status by current standards, not only for its undoubted architectural quality but also as an important civic reflection of the acquisition of Borough status in the 1938 for which the Town Hall was erected. It is thus a significant building for Slough and its loss would remove a key link to the past of a town that grew rapidly from the 19th century onwards. Norwich City Hall has a similar resonance, is statutorily listed and is a major work by the same architects working in a distinctive style found in town and city halls both in this country and in northern Europe.

Regards

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