

**Old Royal Court Building,
Shared Lobby between
Courts 5 & 6
(Improvement of Acoustic Insulation)**

Statement of Significance

July 2020

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Entrance Lobby :

A. Historic Significance:

1. **The Old Royal Court Building** is the seat of Government for the Island of Guernsey.

The stone on the pediment of the current Royal Court building bears the legend "GIIIR 1799" recording the fact that the façade was completed in that year of the reign of King George III. It took several years for the building to be completed and records from the time appear to indicate that the first sitting of the new Court took place on 17th January, 1803.

The building is a pitched slate roof 2 storey flat fronted 5 bay pedimented grey granite building with in-line unequal wings with mainly tall arch head Regency windows. - 3 bays curving into the north end and 6 bays with projecting central oriel window to the south. It is set on a projecting paved first floor plinth with stone balustrading descending 2 flights of steps to each end.

2. **Lobby:** In the central area of the building, at main concourse level, is the former main entrance of the building. (The current main entrance is in the 2005 section of the building). It is floored with what is thought to be Portland stone and the colour and polished appearance of the surface would support this. The masonry walls are simply finished with smooth render and paint. The junction between wall and floor has been formed in a sand and cement skirting.

The opening to the former Greffe is surrounded by an aedicule with rectangular pediment. The reveals are clad with painted timber panels. The adjacent door opening has a carved architrave and the reveals are also panelled.

On the south side of the lobby, the doorway into court 5 is also surrounded by pilasters with a rectangular pediment in a similar style to the (former) Greffe. All three doors comprise 5 panel, hardwood construction.

3. **Court 5:** From the interior of Court 5, the opening reveals have been lined with moulded panels and the whole surrounded by moulded architraves.
4. **Court 6:** The interior of court 6, has the 5 panel doors with a moulded architrave. There is a dado rail some 1100mm high with wainscoting below. A relatively chunky skirting covers the floor/wall joint. This is similar to the rest of the

B: Background to Application:

Over the years the building use has evolved and changed. The need for additional court space and requirement for better archiving for the Greffe led to a major extension and refurbishment which commenced in 2005. During these works the public desk of the Greffe was incorporated into the new extension and its original location remodelled into a court room. The Office of the Deputy Greffier was also remodelled into Court 5.

There is a sound transference problem between the Court rooms and the waiting lobby. Persons sat in the waiting area can hear the court proceedings with some clarity. Various attempts have been made over the years to alleviate the problem by fitting seals and strips to the rebates and closing edges of the doors. None of these have proved efficient enough to reduce the sound transference to an acceptable level.

C: Historical Significance of Fittings:

It is thought that the doors into Court 6 may be original from the construction of courthouse in 1803. The door into Court 5 appears to be a little later. All of the skirtings, architraves and mouldings are of a similar period.

D: Design Solution (See drwgs. Sk 01 & Sk 02):

In order to achieve a dB reduction of around 43dB it will be necessary to replace the existing door and frame and to fabricate an acoustic partition in the opening for the old Greffe entrance. Various attempts to ease adjust and modify the existing doorsets have proved unsuccessful and in order for these rooms to continue as courtrooms with an appropriate level of confidentiality it is proposed to carefully strip off the architraves, panels and mouldings and adjust them to suit the new door frame. The new doors will have mouldings applied to give the appearance of 5 panel doors and will be decorated to closely match the remaining panels etc.

It is proposed to store the existing doors on site, suitably labelled, so that if the room uses revert in the future, the original doors and frames can be reinstalled.

D: Planning Policies:

This Statement of Significance analyses the alteration considerations associated with the conversion of the fabric of this high profile protected building in the Urban Conservation Area of St Peter Port, to address the requirements for change.

It attempts to address the Urban Area Plan Policy GP4: Conservation areas and GP5 Protected Buildings.

The alterations attempt to respect the special qualities of this historic building, in terms of its internal detailing and materials, so retaining its character and appearance.

The proposal tries to protect as many of the historic elements of the building as possible while allowing the fundamental functions of the Court to continue to meet the current demand.