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29 October 2020

Dear Ric

Thank you for your letter dated 27 October 2020. With regards to the County Council's vision, it is first important to clarify that the context of our vision is for the culture of the whole county not just one building.

The supersite model as clearly described in our Detailed Business Case, including the proposed development of The Collection Museum, is about creating an improved and wider offer, across the whole of Greater Lincolnshire, providing more reasons for more people to visit more frequently, for a wider range of exciting experiences.

As explained previously, the creation of art galleries in The Collection Museum will open up all art collections to new audiences, a greater number of visitors (the museum is visited by five times as many people as the Usher Gallery), in spaces that are created to engage with modern audiences with the appropriate levels of environmental management and security.

By developing the Usher building as a combined gallery with other attractive service offerings, in addition to the development of art galleries in the museum, we can achieve not only this but ensure that we retain the stories of James Usher in the building created with his bequest to the city and in a sustainable way.

We have never said that the celebratory and registrars was a requirement for multi-use as your letter infers. We believe that a more flexible offering from the Usher building will also enable you to be able to fulfil the lifetime bequest of James Usher by displaying his collections in the building his bequest funded.

Thank you again for the offer to host the Registration Service at City Hall but we do not believe that it is a suitable venue for ceremonies and we feel that all ceremonies should be offered in the same place.

I sincerely hope that you can appreciate the advantages inherent in the use of the Usher building for multiple, sensitive community benefits alongside the development of the adjacent museum, including additional art galleries, as a part of a wider vision for the Greater Lincolnshire cultural offer.

I absolutely share your desire to come to an agreement over these issues which would be very desirable for all parties.

Fortunately, I do not believe that in reality there is much disagreement between us, to recap:

1. We would agree to continue to use a substantial part of the Usher Gallery for display of part of the Usher Collection.
2. We would commit to display more of the Usher Collection, for example the watches, using The Collection building in conjunction with the Gallery.
3. We would continue to care for and protect the Usher Collection and building at no charge to the City of Lincoln Council.
4. This would be on condition that the County Council would be allowed much more flexibility on the use of the Usher Gallery and the agreement of City of Lincoln Council to establish a new collections management agreement with LCC. We would be happy to pay rent commensurate with a new collections management agreement.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Martin Hill OBE
Leader of the Council