

REPORT SUMMARY

REFERENCE NO - 14/506681/FULL			
APPLICATION PROPOSAL The proposal is to widen the existing gated opening to provide vehicular access.			
ADDRESS Masters Tower The Old College College Road Maidstone Kent ME15 9YQ			
RECOMMENDATION Approve			
SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION The proposals would result in a minimal loss of historic fabric, and would not cause harm to visual impact, residential amenity, highways and landscaping, and therefore the development is considered acceptable.			
REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE The applicant is Maidstone Borough Council			
WARD High Street Ward	PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL	APPLICANT Mr Tom Hayes AGENT	
DECISION DUE DATE 13/04/15	PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE 13/04/15	OFFICER SITE VISIT DATE 25/02/2015	
RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY (including appeals and relevant history on adjoining sites):			
App No	Proposal	Decision	Date
14/505200/LBC	Listed building consent for widening of existing gated opening including demolition of an existing section of wall.	Approve (Recommended)	TBC
MA/01/1417 & MA/01/1418	'Old College' - An application for listed building consent and planning permission for the installation of a new metal vertical bar railing fence on the existing brick wall and gate across central stairs, at the rear of the property.	Approved	18.01.2002
MA/05/2438	An application for listed building consent for the removal of softwood gates and section of ragstone wall at The Masters House	Approved	13.04.2006
MA/07/2323	Construction of new railings and gates at The Masters House	Approved	11.02.2008

MAIN REPORT

1.0 DESCRIPTION OF SITE

- 1.01 The application site is located within the town centre as outlined on the Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan Proposals Map, adopted December 2002. The Masters Tower is Grade II listed, and is located within the All Saints Church Conservation Area, and the College of All Saints is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The immediate area of the site has a collection of historical buildings including the Archbishops Palace.

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- 1.02 A public car park is located between the site and College Road, and there is a further private car park located between the boundary of the site and the nearby The Masters House.
- 1.03 The Master's Tower is a two storey building made from Kentish ragstone, with a pyramidal tiled roof, which was originally used as the main entrance gateway to the College from the river.
- 1.04 The application refers an alteration to existing gated opening on the east elevation of the building which is currently used by The Sea Cadets to gain access to the River Medway. The existing gate is visible from the east and west elevations of the site, and from the public car park off College Road.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.01 The applicant is seeking planning permission for alterations to an existing gated opening adjacent to The Master's Towers.
- 2.02 This will include demolition of a small section of Kentish ragstone wall to accommodate the proposal for the widening the existing gate. A 1m section of the wall will be removed to accommodate the widened gate. This will leave a 1.1m gap along the existing wall before the edge of The Master's Towers.
- 2.03 The gates will be in the same style as the existing gate, made from iron, in black with a decorative design. They will cover a width of 3.1m rather than 2.1m as existing.

3.0 POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): Paragraphs 126 – 141
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
Development Plan: N/A

4.0 LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

- 4.01 The site notice was displayed on a lamp post along College Road, next to the car park adjacent to the site. No comments have been made by members of the public.

5.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 5.01 English Heritage, 30.12.14

"We do not have specific comments to make regarding the Listed Building Consent in relation to the widening of the gateway, however we note that the ground underneath the gate and wall are part of the scheduled monument known as The College of All Saints (National Heritage List no 1011029). It is not clear from the plans submitted with the application whether any groundwork's will be required, for example for insertion of a new gatepost or wall foundation, but if groundwork's are required, then the applicant will also need to obtain Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) for this modification."

- 5.02 Conservation, 23.12.14

"This access has been altered a number of times since the 1950s and the section of wall now proposed for removal seems largely to consist of modern work which blocked a

pedestrian gate which existed in 1955. There would therefore appear to be minimal loss of any historic fabric involved in these proposed alterations.

RAISES NO OBJECTION to this application on heritage grounds subject to a condition requiring the submission of large scale drawings to show the design of the proposed gates and details of their fixing to the wall.”

6.0 APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

- 6.01 There are no specific policies in the Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan which refer to the demolition of wall affecting a listed building. Chapter 12 of the NPPF ‘Conserving and enhancing the historic environment’ outlines the importance of heritage assets and how planning applications should be determined. The applicant has applied for listed building consent (ref 14/505200/LBC) which is recommended for approval as the impact on the heritage assets would be minimal.

The principle of development for the widening of the gate is considered acceptable.

Visual Impact

- 6.02 The proposals will widen the existing gated opening at The Masters Tower, involving the demolition of a 1m section of ragstone wall. The gates will be replaced with gates of the same design or a black decorative design iron gate. The change in visual impact would be minimal, not causing significant harm to any users of this area, nor would it harm the character or setting of the Grade II listed building or conservation area. In terms of visual impact the proposal is acceptable.

Residential Amenity

- 6.03 The proposals would have no impact on residential amenity.

Highways and Access

- 6.04 The proposals alter an existing gate within the site, used to access the River Medway by the Sea Cadets to improve the ease of access for their boat. It would have a negligible impact upon the buildings users, or public car park users. It would no impact on the public transport network or highways.

Landscaping

- 6.05 The proposals will have no impact on landscaping of the site.

6.06 Impact on Heritage Asset

This point of access has been altered a number of times since the 1950’s and this section of wall largely consists of modern work which blocked a pedestrian gate which existed in 1955. Therefore the loss of this section of wall would result in a minimal loss of historic fabric.

A 1m gap between the widened gate and The Masters Tower will remain, and the proposed gate is proposed to match the existing gate, I would not consider that the

proposals cause significant harm to the heritage of The Master's Towers, other nearby listed buildings or to the character of the conservation area.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.01 For the above reasons it is recommended that planning permission is granted.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION – GRANT Subject to the following conditions

CONDITIONS to include

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission;

Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. Prior to the commencement of the development, submission of large scale drawings showing the design of the proposed gates and their fixing to the wall must be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the appearance and the character of the listed building and conservation area is maintained.

3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Proposed Elevations, Proposed Plan View both received 22nd December 2014.

Reason: To ensure the quality of the development is maintained and to prevent harm to the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

INFORMATIVES

Case Officer: Corinna Griffiths

- NB** For full details of all papers submitted with this application please refer to the relevant Public Access pages on the council's website.
The conditions set out in the report may be subject to such reasonable change as is necessary to ensure accuracy and enforceability.