

APPLICATION: MA/10/0691 Date: 23 April 2010 Received: 23 April 2010

APPLICANT: John Foster, Maidstone Borough Council

LOCATION: TOWN CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT, HIGH STREET & KING STREET, MAIDSTONE, KENT

PARISH: Maidstone

PROPOSAL: Planning application for the provision of new ramps, steps and landing areas on the south side of Bishops Way to improve pedestrian connection from the High Street to the Bridge and the closure of one existing subway, relocation of the cannon and its placement on a new plinth, removal of 3 existing Plane Trees and 1 Field Maple and their replacement with 8 Cherry and 7 Hornbeam Trees, provision of illumination for the Queen's Monument, the relocated cannon and other listed buildings and ancillary works thereto, in connection with other works (which do not require the benefit of planning permission) including the realignment and re-paving of carriageways and pedestrian areas and crossing points, the relocation of 'bus stops and shelters, taxi ranks, loading bays and disabled parking bays and the removal/relocation and/or provision of new street furniture including benches, lighting, leaning-posts, telephone boxes, removal of planters and shrubs and the relocation of the existing CCTV pole by the cannon in accordance with plans numbered 100A; 009A; 010; 011; 012; 013; 014; 015; 001; 006A; 110; 728-004; lighting proposal; drainage strategy; and design and access statement received on the 23 April 2010.

AGENDA DATE: 1st July 2010

CASE OFFICER: Chris Hawkins

The recommendation for this application is being reported to Committee for decision because:

- The Council is the applicant

1. POLICIES

Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan 2000: ENV6, ENV7, T13
South East Plan 2009: BE1, BE6, MA1, SP2, SP3, AOSR7
Village Design Statement: N/A

Government Policy: PPS1, PPS5, PPG13

2.0 HISTORY

MA/10/0254 High Street and King Street, Maidstone. Application for the provision of new ramps, steps and landing areas on the south side of Bishops Way to improve pedestrian connection from the High Street to the Bridge and the closure of one existing subway, relocation of the cannon and its placement on a new plinth, removal of 4 existing Plane Trees and their replacement with 8 Cherry and 7 Hornbeam Trees, provision of illumination for the Queen's Monument, the relocated cannon and other listed buildings and ancillary works thereto, together with other works including the realignment and re-paving of carriageways and pedestrian areas and crossing points, the relocation of 'bus stops and shelters, taxi ranks, loading bays and disabled parking bays and the removal/relocation and/or provision of new street furniture including benches, lighting, leaning-posts, telephone boxes, removal of planters and shrubs and the relocation of the existing CCTV pole by the cannon. Withdrawn.

MA/10/0255 High Street and King Street, Maidstone. Application for listed building consent for the relocation of the cannon and its placement on a new plinth together with installation of lighting to illuminate the Queen's Monument, the relocated cannon and other listed buildings and ancillary works thereto. Withdrawn.

2.0.1 There have been a significant number of other planning applications within the High Street and King Street, however, none of these are considered to be relevant in the determination of this planning application.

3.0 CONSULTATIONS

EXTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

3.1 English Heritage have been consulted and advise that this application should be determined in accordance with the policies within the Development Plan and following the Councils 'in house' Conservation advice.

3.2 The Environment Agency were consulted and have raised no objections to this proposal.

3.3 Southern Water were consulted and have raised no objections to this proposal.

3.4 Kent County Council Archaeology were consulted and have raised no objections to this proposal subject to the imposition of a suitable condition requiring the provision of an archaeological assessment – a condition has been suggested within this report.

3.5 Kent Police were consulted and no comments have been received to date. If received, these will be included within the urgent update.

3.6 EDF Energy were consulted and no comments have been received to date. If received, these will be included within the urgent update.

3.7 Scottish Gas were consulted and no comments have been received to date. If received, these will be reported within the urgent update.

3.8 Kent Highway Services were consulted and have made the following comments: -

3.8.1 'The High Street scheme, involving only works to an existing highway and within the highway boundary will not need planning consent for the highway works, just a S278 agreement. I have no objection to the principle of the scheme, however we still need to approve the Stage 1 technical and safety audit to progress the works.'

3.9 The Disabled Advisory Group were consulted on 27 April 2010 and no comments have been received to date. If received, these will be reported within the urgent update. It should be noted that the applicant has consulted with this Group directly, and amendments have been made to the scheme accordingly – such as the provision of disabled parking bays within the High Street (which would be used as loading bays in evening hours).

3.10 INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

3.11 Maidstone Borough Council Conservation Officer was consulted on 27 April 2010 and supports this application. His comments are as follows: -

3.11.1 'This scheme is the result of a winning architectural competition entry and wide negotiation and discussion and should result in a major enhancement of the Conservation Area. Key to its success is its simplicity and lack of clutter, enabling the fine spaces and buildings to be readily appreciated to a degree not currently possible. The loss of existing trees is acceptable as in many cases these are inappropriately sited and cause visual and practical conflict with buildings. The lighting scheme will enable the buildings and spaces to be enjoyed at night in a dramatic way, and although in one or two cases this results in quite a significant number of light fittings attached to individual buildings, the fittings

themselves are small and should not impact unduly on the character of the buildings involved.'

3.12 **Maidstone Borough Council Landscape Officer** was consulted and made the following comments on this application: -

'The only difference between the two schemes (this one and the previously submitted application) is that the 3 fastigate Hornbeams to be planted at the eastern end of the High Street are shown to be planted opposite the bus stops.

In addition, the recent Arboricultural Implications Assessment provides further information, including a tree survey and photographs of the trees to be removed. The BS587:2005 grading system has been cited but all the trees have been classed as 'B' grade (moderate) except the Field Maple, which has been classed as 'A' (high quality). As stated in my previous comments I consider the majority of the trees on the High Street are of limited amenity value and, therefore I would not necessarily agree with the condition assessment provided. The tree with the greatest value, in my view, is the Plane tree in front of the Town Hall. However, whilst this tree is in a prominent position, it is evident that the surrounding pavement has been severely disrupted due to root activity. This has resulted in a health and safety hazard and would make it very unlikely that the tree could be retained within a new paving scheme.

Whilst the removal of so many trees may initially have an adverse impact on the appearance of the Conservation Area, I consider the planting proposal which consists of fastigate Hornbeams and 8 Cherries (*Prunus avium Plena*) will provide, in the long term, a more structured and sustainable scheme which is appropriate to the setting and will enhance the Conservation Area.

For clarification, the 4 no. Plane trees proposed to be removed are in fact 3 no. Planes; and one Field Maple.'

Following on from this response, I requested the Landscape Officers view on the loss of the existing tree outside of the Town Hall. The response was as follows: -

'The Plane tree outside the Town Hall, I agree is a prominent specimen given its location on the High street. In addition to my comments dated 27/04/2010 there are additional points regarding the Plane Tree outside the Town Hall.

1. It is of no historical or cultural relevance to the High Street.
1. It is a semi mature in age which means that it still has a number of years of growth to reach its maximum size, given its close proximity to the Town Hall will result in branches encroaching onto the building. This usually results in works being carried out to alleviate associated problems (i.e. leaf litter in gutters etc).

2. Plane trees are usually reduced, this results in excessive regeneration at the point of the cut. If this work is carried out then it necessary for a regular program of re-pollarding to be undertaken on a 3-5 year basis, which is an additional cost. For an example there are two plane trees near the entrance of Fremlins Walk, Earl Street I think, which have been severely reduced recently resulting vigorous re-growth.
3. If it were integrated into the scheme then it would be necessary to lower the ground level to accommodate the disruption to the surrounding pavement which is a result of tree root activity. This would result in a disjointed look to the High Street.

With regards to the quality of the replacement trees. Generally speaking trees in a highway environment will always have a limited life expectancy, this is due to harsh growing conditions underground; compacted soil, services and contaminated soil. I would suggest that advance heavy standard specimens are planted which will have an immediate impact on the high street. Also it may be worth as part of the condition, a method statement is supplied on how they will be planted and a detailed maintenance program is submitted guaranteeing replacement tree are planted in the event of trees failing to establish.

The new scheme shows more trees will be introduced and will be evenly distributed along the High Street. The proposed trees, Hornbeam and Cherry, are considered appropriate species for an urban setting; they will require little maintenance and produce minimal leaf litter. Furthermore the proposed location of the trees as shown on the site layout will ensure that the traditional spatial constraints associated with street tree planting; such as close proximity to buildings, signs and street furniture is avoided. In addition, location of the trees will ensure that the buildings and spaces will be appreciated by the general public.

It is, therefore, recommended that on landscape/arboricultural grounds the application should be approved subject to suitable conditions.'

4.0 REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 Neighbouring properties within the High Street and surrounding area were notified and in addition, 10 site notices were erected around the town centre to publicise this planning application. In response, to date, 4 letters of objection have been received. The concerns raised within these letters are summarised below: -

- The loss of the existing tree adjacent to the Town Hall would be to the detriment of the character of the area;
- The tree is a place that people meet, and this facility would be lost;
- The proposal would have an impact upon the existing businesses;

- The loss of the other trees within the locality, would be detrimental to the locality;
- Concern over noise and disturbance during works;
- Concern over the future road layout.

A petition has been received containing 647 signatures. This petition seeks to ensure that the tree outside of the Town Hall is retained within any redevelopment of the High Street.

One letter of support has been received. The letter states that proposal will enhance the High Street.

5.0 CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Site Description

- 5.1.1 The application site covers the full length of the High Street from its junction with the A229 Fairmeadow, running up through the High Street to the junction of King Street and Wyke Manor Road. This covers a total of 1.2 hectares. The most westerly part of the application site forms part of the A229, at the junction of Fairmeadow and Bishops Way. At present a subway runs beneath this road for pedestrian movements, as well as a pelican crossing at road level. The trees to be removed are located outside the Town Hall and the 'Muggleton Inn'.
- 5.1.3 As one moves eastwards into the core town centre the pavements follow the line of the existing buildings which splay out on the southern side, producing a wider central area, in which there is a cannon. There are bus stops located on the southern side of the street, and a bus lane on the opposite side of the street running eastwards. The High Street at this point is lined by a mixture of buildings, some of significant age, whilst others are of a more recent construction.
- 5.1.4 A junction with Mill Street results in all through traffic being directed away from the main shopping centre. This is a traffic light controlled junction, with a pedestrian crossing linking into Bank Street. It is at this point that the shopping area effectively 'splits' into two distinct streets – Bank Street running to the south, and the High Street continuing on the northern side. There are small flower beds on the northern side of the High Street at the junction with Mill Street.
- 5.1.5 This area lies within the core of the Maidstone Conservation Area (the Conservation Area ends at the junction of King Street and the High Street to the east, and at the western end of the High Street), and is fronted by a number of historically significant buildings, many of which contain historic shop-fronts or facades. The greatest concentration of listed buildings are clustered around the

Upper High Street area and within Bank Street. This area also contains the Town Hall, a Grade II* listed building, which dates back to the 18th Century. Bank Street contains many buildings dating from between 1500 and 1700, and is considered to be of significant historical importance. At present, this road is part pedestrianised, with limited vehicular movements allowed (subject to time of day, deliveries etc.).

- 5.1.6 There are vehicular movements within the High Street at present – buses and taxis predominantly, as well as providing an element of disabled parking on street. There is a comparatively wide pavement on the north side of the High Street at this point, which is relatively free of clutter.
- 5.1.7 To the north-east of the Town Hall is the Queen Victoria statue, located centrally within the highway in a wider section of the street. This area has a cluster of bus stops on either side of the street. Pedestrian movements at this point of the street are limited to two narrow pavements on either side of the road (whilst not physically narrow, the siting of the bus stops makes them appear as such).
- 5.1.8 Further eastwards, the character of the street changes significantly. There is a pedestrian crossing that links The Mall shopping centre and Week Street (this is constructed of pavers, denoting the change in its use), and beyond this, traffic controls which prevent private cars from entering the area from the east. This area is flanked predominantly by rather unremarkable buildings to the north, and the shopping centre to the south. Much of this area falls outside of the Conservation Area.
- 5.1.9 Overall, it can be seen that the site contains areas which vary significantly in their appearance and character.

5.2 Proposal

- 5.2.1 This application forms part of a regeneration project for alterations to be made to this part of the town centre, to create a more 'pedestrian friendly' environment. The plans submitted show all aspects of the proposal, however, not all elements of the works require the benefit of planning permission. As such, I will outline the elements that require planning permission, and thus are for consideration.
- 5.2.2 The only elements of the scheme that require planning permission, and **are** for consideration are as follows: -
- The provision of new ramps, steps and landing area on either side of Bishops Way;
 - The closure (i.e. the physical blocking up) of the existing subway underneath Bishops Way;

- The relocation of the existing cannon, and its placement upon a new plinth;
- The removal of the existing trees and their replacement with 14 new trees
These trees are to be located to the south-east of the road in the lower High Street – 8 cherry trees - within a relatively informal line, to the north east of the Town Hall – 3 hornbeam - within a regular line, and on the south side of King Street – 3 hornbeam - again set out in a regular pattern;
- The provision of lighting upon the Queen Victoria monument. This lighting would be up lighters set both within the ground, and placed within the monument.

5.2.3 It is only these elements that require planning permission. The General Permitted Development Order, Schedule 2, Part 12, Class A of this Order allows for the following works to take place without the benefit of planning permission:

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5.2.4 *'The erection or construction and the maintenance, improvement or other alteration by a local authority or by an urban development corporation of: -*

(a) any small ancillary building, works or equipment on land belonging to or maintained by them required for the purposes of any function exercised by them on that land otherwise than as statutory undertakers;

(b) lamp standards, information kiosks, passenger shelters, public shelters and seats, telephone boxes, fire alarms, public drinking fountains, horse troughs, refuse bins or baskets, barriers for the control of people waiting to enter public service vehicles, and similar structures or works required in connection with the operation of any public service administered by them.'

5.2.5 In addition, Schedule 2, Part 13, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order allows for the following to take place without the benefit of planning permission: -

5.2.6 *'The carrying out by a local highway authority on land outside but adjoining the boundary of an existing highway of works required for or incidental to the maintenance or improvement of the highway.'*

5.2.7 The following elements of the proposed high street improvements **do not** form part of this application, and **are not** for discussion, or determination as part of this planning application: -

- Re-alignment of the highway;
- Re-paving of the carriageways, pedestrian areas and crossing points;
- The relocation of 'bus stops, shelters, taxi ranks, loading bays and disabled parking bays;

- The removal/relocation and/or provision of new street furniture (including benches, lighting, leaning posts, telephone boxes);
- The removal of planters and shrubs;
- The relocation of the CCTV pole by the cannon.

5.3.8 Conservation Area consent is also being applied for concerning the loss of the existing trees within the site, and listed building consent for the relocation of the cannon and additional lighting upon the Queen Victoria statue.

5.3 Principle of Development

5.3.1 There are no specific policies within either the Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan or the South East Plan which would preclude a development of this nature. However, there are a number of government documents that support improvements to public realm including By Design (CABE - 2000), and Manual for Streets (2007). Policy TC2 of the South East Plan (2009) refers directly to providing '*safe, secure and attractive environments for people to live, shop and work.*'

5.3.2 Furthermore, as stated above, this application assesses only a small number of the overall elements of the High Street improvement plan, and the principle of making such small alterations to public realm is accepted, subject to suitable design. As such, it is not considered that there is any in principle objection to the proposal.

5.4 Visual Impact

5.4.1 Maidstone High Street currently consists of wide areas of highway, with the provision of bus stops and car parking areas (currently used for taxi parking). The majority of the highways are constructed of tar macadam, with a mixture of other materials used for the paving. There is also a significant amount of 'clutter' around the highways (by clutter, I refer to signage, barriers, traffic lights, and other street paraphernalia). The combination of this clutter and the volume of traffic using the High Street has a significant impact on the ability to view (particularly from a long distance) many of the important historical buildings, and monuments within the area. Furthermore, the materials used at present are in many instances unattractive, and utilitarian and do little to address the historic fabric of the buildings that line the streets.

5.4.2 In addition, whilst there are trees within the High Street at present, these are not set out in such a way to best frame these buildings, nor make the most of the spaces that surround these buildings – instead trees appear to be located simply where there is space, rather than having been planted as a continuous framework aligned with the highway as with many tree lined streets.

- 5.4.3 In determining this application, it is therefore important to assess whether the proposal would improve the visual appearance of the town centre, whilst ensuring that the historic fabric and character is maintained or improved.
- 5.4.4 As set out within the proposal above, some elements of the overall scheme are not for discussion, as they do not require the benefit of planning permission. As such we can only assess the impact of those that do, upon the visual amenity of the area. As such I will address these elements individually, prior to providing an overall assessment of the scheme.
- 5.4.5 The creation of new ramps, steps and landing areas upon the south side of Bishops Way, together with the closure of the existing subway. This end of the High Street is not particularly 'pedestrian-friendly', with a subway provided for pedestrians, together with a number of barriers surrounding the pelican crossing. This proposal would see the loss of the subway – which is not considered to be to the detriment of the character of the area. The subway is a relatively inhospitable environment, and does little to contribute positively to the character of the area. Likewise, the approach to the subway on either sides of the road does not provide high quality public realm. The new ramps, steps and landing areas would not only provide a clear route across the highway, but would also remove the underpass, with a more open space, constructed of granite. This change would also remove a significant level of clutter that currently exists around this junction. Whilst samples of the proposed materials have been submitted, I am aware that these are potentially subject to change, and as such, I recommend that a condition be imposed that requires details of materials to be submitted prior to the development taking place, to ensure a high quality finish to the development.
- 5.4.6 The removal of the existing trees within the application site, would result in the loss of well established trees, in particular the large oak tree in front of the Town Hall. As stated above, no objections have been raised with regards to this proposal from the Borough Councils Landscape Officer, and detailed comments have been received regarding the loss of trees within the High Street (and in particular the aforementioned Oak tree), subject to trees of an species that would be expected within the locality, and that would survive within the environment being planted following their removal. The Landscape Officer has confirmed that the tree is semi-mature, and as such has the potential to grow further, which would lead to greater pressures in terms of maintenance and also, for disruption to the surface of the highway/pedestrian areas in the future. In my opinion it is often regrettable that trees are removed for the sake of development, and as such, it is important to mitigate fully against this loss. Clearly, in this instance, the applicant will not be able to replace the tree with one of equal size and stature, however, I am satisfied that the increased numbers of trees within the location, together with the species suggested, would ensure that the High Street will be maintained with a suitable level of soft

landscaping. In addition, it is the Landscaping Officer's opinion that there would be an overall benefit to the character of the area, on the basis that this would be well managed, with suitable species proposed, within a well considered layout. The trees would help to frame the building, and would also be located in areas that would benefit the end users – i.e. shoppers who may wish to sit under their shade (they are proposed to be located near to seating areas). The Landscape Officer concludes that the proposal would provide, in the long term, a more structured and sustainable scheme which is more appropriate to its setting than the existing landscaping within the town centre.

5.4.7 As stated above, it is proposed that new trees to be planted within the High Street (being six Hornbeam and eight Cherry trees), which would see an improvement in the soft landscaping within this area of public realm. In addition, the trees that are to be planted are species that are indigenous to the area, and reflect much of the character of the surrounding area. The trees that would be lost are currently located to the north-east of the Town Hall, along King Street, On the northern side of the High Street, and at the lower end of the High Street. Additional replacement trees would be located in King Street (3), to the north-east of the Town Hall (3), and within the Lower High Street (8). These would be planted along a relatively regular axis, providing a tree lined 'avenue' effect alongside the proposed highway. This has two effects, firstly it ensures that there is soft landscaping visible throughout the whole development, and secondly, it would provide areas of shading for the three seating areas. In order to ensure an immediate effect of the landscaping, I have suggested the conditions set out below to ensure that firstly, they are of a suitable size, and secondly, they are replaced should they die, or be damaged, within the first ten years.

5.4.9 To conclude, whilst it is regrettable to see the loss of the existing trees, I consider that as there would be a more suitably managed and sustainable landscape scheme that at present, there would be an overall benefit to the character and appearance of the area.

5.4.10 This application also considers the implications of moving the cannon, with the erection of a new plinth. The cannon would be relocated from its existing position, within a lower High Street, closer to 64-65 High Street, Maidstone. The cannon plinth would be some 7.5metres away from these properties. It is proposed that utilities cabinets are also sited within this location, although these would turn their back on the cannon itself. The new plinth is to be constructed on a granite surface, with granite cladding on any vertical elevation. The plinth would step down to the west – towards the river. It would have an overall length of 19metres, with a maximum width of 5.7metres. Visually, the relocation of the cannon will make it a more prominent feature within the High Street. At present, it is in a relatively isolated, and inaccessible position, effectively located on a large traffic island. This existing setting does not give the cannon any real presence within the High Street, and as such it appears somewhat as a forgotten

item. The proposals will raise the profile of this feature, and would make it more prominent within the Town Centre. I see this as a positive contribution to the historic fabric of the High Street.

5.4.11 To conclude, I consider that the changes proposed would have a positive impact upon the character and appearance of the High Street. They would open up the space for pedestrian use, and would provide a better setting to a number of historic buildings. The additional trees planted would further soften the character and appearance of the High Street, and this, together with the additional hard landscaping, would provide a more pleasant area for future users. The alterations to the listed structures and monuments would give them a greater presence within the High Street, emphasising the historic elements of this area, and generating a more attractive setting. I therefore consider that the proposal would accord with the policies within the Development Plan in these respects.

5.5 Highways

5.5.1 The overall proposal would see significant alterations to the way in which traffic flows through the town centre of Maidstone, allowing only buses, taxis, disabled shoppers, and those entering for loading purposes into the High Street. However, the alterations of the traffic flow and the re-alignment of the highway are not for consideration as part of this planning application.

5.5.2 I therefore conclude that there would be no highway safety issues that would arise from the approval of this planning application, and as such, it complies with the policies within the Development Plan.

5.6 Disabled considerations

5.6.1 As set out above, the relocation of the 8 disabled parking spaces from the High Street does not require planning permission. Moreover, the works that require planning permission do not give rise to the relocation of these spaces, therefore the consideration of this planning application does not include this relocation. In any event, I can confirm that the proposal would result in the provision of 9 disabled parking bays within the High Street/King Street, which would not only be a net increase of 1 space, but would spread these spaces along the length of the High Street, make it more accessible than at present. It is noted that no objection has been raised by Kent County Council Highway Services with regards to the proposal. Furthermore, I have discussed this matter with the Highway Authority, who inform me that the matter of the disabled parking will be fully assessed as part of their Stage I Safety audit of the development prior to the commencement of works.

5.6.2 The alterations to the pedestrian crossing at the western end of the High Street would be provided with a shallow gradient ramp, which would allow for access

for all potential users. Furthermore, the alterations to the cannon would make it more accessible for all (although there would be steps up to the cannon, I do not consider the existing location any more accessible for the physically challenged), by virtue of the additional pedestrian space around this feature. With regards to the other proposals set out above, I do not consider that these would prove to make the High Street less accessible for any disabled users.

5.7 Other Matters

- 5.7.1 This proposal would not give rise to any detrimental impact upon the residential amenity of occupiers within the locality.
- 5.7.2 Changes to the street lighting within the High Street will form part of the highway works, and as such does not form part of this planning application.
- 5.7.3 Comments have been received from KCC Archaeology, who have requested a study be produced before the development commences. Due to the sensitive nature of the area – being of some historic importance, should permission be granted, I suggest a suitable condition be imposed.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The small number of changes to the High Street covered by this proposal (which forms part of an overarching plan for the redevelopment of the area) would be of an acceptable standard of design, and would reflect the remainder of the work taking place. These proposals would improve the appearance of the High Street, would provide an overall (long term) improvement in soft landscaping, and would provide a better setting for the existing monuments within the High Street. I therefore see no reason to refuse planning permission.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following conditions:

- 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. The development shall not commence until, written details and samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the development shall be constructed using the approved

materials;

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development in accordance with PPS1 and PPS5.

3. No development shall take place until the applicant or their agent, or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a watching brief to be undertaken by an archaeologist approved by the Local Planning Authority so that the excavation is observed and items of interest and finds are recorded. The watching brief shall be in accordance with a written programme and specification, which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded in accordance with PPS5.

4. Any replacement tree which dies or becomes seriously damaged or diseased within ten years of being planted must be replaced with another of similar size or species within the course of the next planting season, unless the local planning authority give written consent to any variation;

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with PPS1, Kent Design Guide, Policy BE1 of the South East Plan 2009 and Policy ENV6 of the Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan 2000.

5. Any trees planted within the development hereby permitted shall be of a Heavy Extra Standard (14-16cm diameter and an overall height of at least 3.5metres) and shall be of the species as shown on the approved plans.

Reason: To ensure that the proposal is appropriately landscaped from the outset, responding to its important and public location, providing a high quality response to the design constraints, in accordance with PPS1 and the Kent Design Guide.

6. No development shall take place until the proposed means of surface water disposal from the elements of the overall scheme that require planning permission, have been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of ensuring a suitable method of surface water run-off, in accordance with PPS23.

7. No development shall take place until a method statement for the planting of the trees within the development hereby permitted has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the future health of the proposed trees, to ensure that the development has a high quality finish, in accordance with PPS1.

Informatives set out below

You are advised to ensure that the appointed contractor(s) is/are registered with the 'Considerate Constructors Scheme' and that the site is thereafter managed in accordance with the Scheme. Further information can be found at www.considerateconstructorsscheme.org.uk

The proposed development, subject to the conditions stated, is considered to comply with the policies of the Development Plan (Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan 2000 and South East Plan 2009) and there are no overriding material considerations to indicate a refusal of planning consent.