

REPORT SUMMARY

REFERENCE NO: - 23/503347/LBC		
APPLICATION PROPOSAL: Listed Building Consent to replace an existing stairway with a flexstep platform lift.		
ADDRESS: Maidstone Corporation Museum And Art Gallery St Faiths Street Maidstone Kent ME14 1LH		
RECOMMENDATION: Grant – subject to planning conditions set out in Section 8.0 of the report.		
SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION: The works would preserve the significance and special interest of the listed building, any harm would be of a very low level and outweighed by public benefits and the proposal complies with development plan policy and the aims of the NPPF.		
REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE: The Council is the applicant.		
WARD: High Street	PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL: Not Applicable	APPLICANT: Maidstone Borough Council AGENT:
CASE OFFICER: Louise Welsford	VALIDATION DATE: 25/07/23	DECISION DUE DATE: 19/09/23
ADVERTISED AS A DEPARTURE: NO		

Relevant Planning History

None specifically relevant.

MAIN REPORT

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE

- 1.01 This application site relates to Maidstone Museum, a grade II*, multi-phased listed building. The museum is located within Chillington House conservation area, within Maidstone town centre.
- 1.02 The core of the building contains the remains of the medieval manor, Chillington Manor, with subsequent alterations and extensions, most notably in the Victorian period.

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.01 Listed Building Consent is sought for the replacement of an existing internal stairway with a flex step platform lift. This is proposed to enable access for all, as this area of the building is currently not accessible to all.

3. POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2011-2031): SP18, DM4

Emerging Local Plan : The Regulation 22 Local Plan Review submission comprises the draft plan for submission (Regulation 19) dated October 2021, the representations and proposed main modifications. It is therefore a material consideration and attracts some weight. However, this weight is limited as although

Stage 1 and 2 Hearings have recently concluded, the Plan is still in Examination.
Policy LPRSP15 (B) – The Historic Environment
Policy LPRENV 1 – Historic Environment

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
IHBC Toolbox Guidance Note – Guidance on Alterations to Listed Buildings (January 2021)

4. LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS : None received.

5. CONSULTATIONS

Historic England:

5.01 Do not wish to engage.

6 National Amenity Societies:

5.02 No response.

MBC Conservation Officer:

5.03 No objection.

6. APPRAISAL

The key issue is the impact upon significance and special interest of the listed building.

Impact on the significance and special interest of the Listed Building

6.01 The proposal relates to a 1970s set of steps. The existing steps themselves are modern and not of any significance. Their loss would therefore not result in harm.

6.02 The new lift would have a greater visual impact, but in this location, and in the place of the existing modern steps, this would be very limited. There is no assessment of the age of the wooden door surround within the application, but the application does confirm that it would be retained, so there would be no loss of historic fabric. A condition can be imposed to seek details of the attachment of the lift to ensure a satisfactory relationship with the door surround and no harm to its fabric.

6.03 In conclusion therefore, any harm is considered of a very low level indeed, much less than substantial.

6.04 Where harm is identified, the NPPF requires this to be balanced against public benefits, including securing the optimum viable use of the heritage asset. In this case, the purpose of the lift is to provide disabled access. This is a public benefit, as it would ensure inclusivity, so that this part of the museum can be accessed by all. Although significant weight and importance must be attached to any harm to a listed building, in this case, the level of harm is very, very low. Therefore, in this particular case, the public benefit to provide more inclusive access to this building which is used by the public is considered to outweigh the very minimal level of harm. The proposal therefore complies with development plan policy and the aims of the NPPF.

PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

6.05 Due regard has been had to the Public Sector Equality Duty, as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It is considered that the application proposals would not undermine objectives of the Duty.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.01 The proposal would result in only an extremely low level of harm, if any. The proposal would improve disabled access and inclusivity which is a significant public benefit and the public benefit is considered to outweigh the very minimal level of harm. The proposal therefore accords with development plan policy and the aims of the NPPF.

8. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT Listed Building Consent subject to the following conditions

with delegated powers to the Head of Planning and Development to be able to settle or amend any necessary planning conditions in line with the matters set out in the recommendation and as resolved by the Planning Committee.

CONDITIONS:

- 1) The works to which this consent relates must be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent;

Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.Plans
- 2) The works hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Drawing numbers 1a (Southgate Stairs Proposed), PBP1 A3 (Proposed Block Plan) and BP1 A3 (Block Plan) received on 25/07/23 and a site location plan received on 18/07/23;

Reason: To clarify which drawings have been approved and to preserve the character, appearance and special interest of the listed building.
- 3) The works shall not commence until full details of how the lift would be attached in relation to the adjacent wooden door surround, have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority and the works shall be completed in accordance with the approved details;

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance and that the historic significance of the listed building is maintained.

Case Officer: Louise Welsford

NB For full details of all papers submitted with this application please refer to the relevant Public Access pages on the council's website.