

APPLICATION: MA/11/1802 Date: 19 October 2011 Received: 17 November 2011

APPLICANT: Maidstone Borough Council

LOCATION: MOTE PARK MAIDSTONE, WILLOW WAY, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME15 7RN

PARISH: Maidstone

PROPOSAL: Erection of 2no. 8m high CCTV poles and 1no. 6m high CCTV pole shown on drawing numbers 10111301-K-609 and PL/1/11 received on 17/11/11, specifications received on 21/10/11, a kiosk general arrangement plan and a Heritage Statement received on 13/02/11.

AGENDA DATE: 8th March 2012

CASE OFFICER: Louise Welsford

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

- the Council is the applicant.

## **1.0 POLICIES**

South East Plan 2009: BE6.  
Government Policy: PPS1, PPS5.

## **2.0 HISTORY**

2.1 There is extensive history for Mote Park. The most relevant to this application is:

MA/10/1271 Proposed works include new DDA compliant footpath, steps and viewing point adjacent to Cafe area, new enclosed maintenance yard area adjacent to the existing WC/maintenance building, enlargement and formation of new car park facility to Mote Avenue car park, new hardstanding and repositioned model boat platform to the historic boathouse lake edge, new inner and outer circuit footpath, permitting wheelchair access around the park, formation of new car park facility at burning ground, repair

of lake crossing causeway and new bridge construction -  
Approved

### **3.0 CONSULTATIONS**

- 3.1 English Heritage: Does not wish to comment. Recommend that the application is determined in accordance with national and local policy and specialist conservation advice.
- 3.2 Garden History Society: No response.
- 3.3 Maidstone Borough Council Conservation Officer: Initially requested a Heritage Statement and was particularly concerned regarding the proposal at the kiosk location. On receipt of this and amendments to the part of the proposal at the kiosk location stated: "The amendments to the camera pole by the kiosk, which is the most sensitive location, will be a considerable improvement".
- 3.4 Kent Police: No response.

### **4.0 REPRESENTATIONS**

- 4.1 Kent Gardens Trust: Requested a Heritage Statement (now submitted) and are concerned about the urbanising effect of the proposal and quantity of street furniture.

### **5.0 CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **5.1 Site and Situation**

- 5.1.1 This application relates to Mote Park. Mote Park is an important historic park which is listed (Grade II) in English Heritage's register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. It lies within the urban area of Maidstone. The park contains a number of historic features, good tree coverage and fine views. More detail upon the specific parts of the park to be affected by the development is given below.

### **6.0 Proposal**

- 6.1 Planning permission is sought for the installation of three closed circuit television cameras upon poles to provide greater security within the park.

Two of the poles would be 8m high and those cameras would be located at the main car park and the newly created car park known as "The Burning Ground". The third pole would be 6m high and would be located adjacent to the ice-cream kiosk, where its function would be combined with an existing lamp standard, in order to facilitate the removal of the lamp standard.

## **7.0 Planning Considerations**

- 7.1 The key issue relates to the visual impact of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the Historic Park.

## **8.0 Impact upon Historic Park**

### Main Car Park Site

- 8.1 In my opinion, the main car park, with its hard-surface and concrete kerbing, is one of the most urban parts of the park. It is a functional area, which is not of any high historic value and in such a location, the addition of one item of street furniture, which is not of any significant mass, would not be out of keeping with what one might expect to see.

### Kiosk Site

- 8.2 The kiosk is a building of utilitarian appearance and it is not a positive visual feature of the park. It occupies a prominent location at the junction of paths, in a generally open area. A lamppost is sited adjacent to the kiosk.
- 8.3 Initially, the scheme sought to site an additional pole adjacent to the lamppost, and that pole was to be of increased height. However, negotiations with the applicant have now secured an amended scheme, which seeks a reduced height of the pole (from 8m to 6m) and to combine its function with that of the lamp standard, such that the existing lamp standard can be removed. This would therefore ensure no net additional items of street furniture and the lower height would be more in keeping with the height of the existing lamp standard.
- 8.4 Also, the original scheme showed that three trees (species: Tree of Heaven) were to be planted adjacent to the site for the pole, and due to their species, they were likely to have impeded the functioning of the

camera, which would have resulted in pressure for their removal. Negotiations have now secured their relocation still close to the kiosk, where they would not impact upon the functioning of the camera, but where they would still be prominent and therefore would still make a valued positive contribution to the quality of the landscape. Another group of three new trees to be planted adjacent to the kiosk have been slightly relocated, also to a suitable position.

### Burning Ground Site

- 8.5 This area is generally devoid of street furniture, although it is close to the dwellings and built development within the walled garden. There is mature tree coverage around the edges of this site, which is protected by Tree Preservation Order 7 of 2008.
- 8.6 This area, currently including a large gravel hardstanding, is to be resurfaced (under planning permission MA/10/1271) to form a new car park, with a self binding gravel surface.
- 8.7 The CCTV pole would be located adjacent to the mature tree coverage at the edge of the area, where it would not be prominent in any key views. Again, it is a structure of limited mass and would not appear out of place in a car park setting. It would not result in a proliferation of clutter, as only one pole is proposed and there is a low quantity of street furniture in the surroundings.
- 8.8 The CCTV pole would be located sufficient distance from the central planting area to ensure that trees within that area could be managed to a height which would allow them to make a positive contribution to visual amenity without significantly impairing the use of the camera. None of the protected trees are required to be removed to implement the development, nor would they be harmed, due to the nature of the proposal, its limited mass and foundations.

## **9.0 General Considerations**

- 9.1 In general, the poles would be of simple design, appropriate to their function. As demonstrated above, their siting would be appropriate and they would not be overly prominent or harmful to key views of the park.

- 9.2 They would not significantly urbanise the park, because they would be structures of minimal mass and would only be of a very small number in comparison to the scale of the park. Their colour, Maidstone Borough Council's corporate blue, would not be obtrusive or render them overly prominent.
- 9.3 They would not affect the setting of buildings of heritage importance, such as Mote House and the Volunteer's Pavilion. I note that the Conservation Officer is happy with the amended scheme.
- 9.4 The proposal would be of positive benefit to the functioning of the park in terms of added security, which is considered important in such a well used public space.
- 9.5 The plans show that the viewing windows of the cameras would be directed over the car parks and Kiosk area, which would ensure no loss of privacy, for example to residential properties in the Walled Garden.
- 9.6 There would be no significant ecological issues, because no trees or important habitat would be lost. These would be structures of limited mass and foundations.

## **10.0 CONCLUSION**

- 10.1 The proposal would preserve the visual amenity and the historic significance of the park. It would have positive public safety benefits in terms of security and it complies with the Development Plan. I recommend approval.

## **11.0 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 hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: drawing numbers 10111301-K-609 and PL/1/11 received

on 17/11/11, and a Heritage Statement received on 13/02/11.

Reason: To ensure the quality of the development is maintained and to preserve the Historic Park in accordance with Policy BE6 of the South East Plan 2009 and PPS5.

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 the South East Plan 2009) and there are no overriding material considerations to indicate a refusal of planning consent.