

APPLICATION: MA/14/0308 Date: 21 February 2014 Received: 24 February 2014

APPLICANT: Mr Graeme MacLennan, Parkwood Leisure

LOCATION: HAZLITT THEATRE, EARL STREET, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME14 1PL

PARISH: Maidstone

PROPOSAL: Listed building consent for the attachment of new purple backing to existing fascia sign and alteration of lettering within the front elevation as shown on application form and supporting information received 24th February 2014.

AGENDA DATE: 20th March 2014

CASE OFFICER: Kevin Hope

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

- The Council has an interest in the application.

1. POLICIES

- Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan 2000: N/A
- Village Design Statement: N/A
- Government Policy: National Planning Policy Framework 2012

2. HISTORY

- 2.1 MA/11/0912 - Introduction of a plant room and associated equipment and staircases to the roof – Approved with conditions
- 2.2 The proposal site has an extensive planning history, in respect of applications for planning permission, listed building consent and advertisement consent, most of which are not directly applicable to the current proposal. The most recent application is listed above.

3. CONSULTATIONS

- 3.1 **Conservation Officer:** Raises no objections with the following comments:-

"The proposed new backing is acceptable in its impact on the listed building and conservation area. I raise no objections to this application on heritage grounds".

4. REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 No representations have been received.

5. CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Site Description

5.1.1 The application site is located within the town centre of Maidstone to the south east of Earl Street, the north east of Market Buildings and the south west of Rose Yard. The site comprises the Hazlitt Theatre which forms part of a group of Grade II listed two storey mid nineteenth century buildings of classical form, including a Corn Exchange, with later twentieth century additions and alterations to the rear (Rose Yard).

5.1.2 The site is located within the Maidstone Centre Conservation Area, and within the secondary retail area of Maidstone.

5.1.3 The surrounding properties are in mixed commercial uses, and there is no residential development immediately adjacent to the site of the proposed development.

5.2 Proposal

5.2.1 Listed building consent is sought for the attachment of new purple backing to existing fascia sign and alteration of lettering within the front elevation.

5.2.2 The principle fascia sign on the front elevation would be subject to the proposed change to purple colour backing. The lettering on this sign would remain unchanged.

5.2.3 The existing fascia above the doorway on the front elevation would be subject to the proposed change to purple colour lettering. The white backing on this sign would remain unchanged.

5.3 Assessment

5.3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework highlights the importance of the conservation of the historic environment and that consideration is given to the impact upon the appearance and character of a heritage asset as well as its setting. There are no policies within the Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan 2000 which are applicable in this case, however, the key issues for evaluation

are the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the listed building and conservation area which will be assessed below.

5.4 Visual Impact

5.4.1 In terms of visual amenity, the proposed purple backing to the main fascia sign on the building would extend across the full width of the sign retaining the existing white lettering. This would be consistent with the corporate colour scheme of the Hazlitt Theatre which is used internally and within external advertisements as proposed under MA/14/0175 (also under separate consideration of the planning committee). I consider this would be acceptable with regard to the appearance and character of the building and would be an appropriate alteration to the existing fascia sign respecting the conservation area location of the building.

5.4.2 With regard to the proposed lettering change, this is proposed to the existing fascia above the entrance on the front elevation and again would comprise the purple corporate colour. The existing white backing would remain and I consider this would achieve an acceptable overall appearance to the building. The conservation officer has been consulted and considers the proposed alterations to be acceptable raising no objections. I therefore do not consider there would be detrimental harm to the character or appearance of the building and surrounding conservation area.

5.5 Public Safety

5.5.1 The alterations to the signs proposed would not alter the overall scale or projection of the sign and consequently there would be no detrimental impact upon public or highway safety.

5.5.2 Due to the nature of this proposal and its proximity to the surrounding buildings, there would not be any detrimental impact upon neighbouring residential amenity.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 Taking all of the above into account, it is considered overall that the proposals comply with Development Plan policy and the Central Government guidance as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. I therefore recommend conditional approval as below.

7. RECOMMENDATION

Refer the application to THE SECRETARY OF STATE recommending that LISTED BUILDING CONSENT BE GRANTED with the following 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.

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

Application form and supporting information received 24th February 2014.

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

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 there are no overriding material considerations to indicate a refusal of planning consent.