

REPORT SUMMARY

REFERENCE NO - 14/0723			
APPLICATION PROPOSAL Two storey extension and lobby to existing Oast House with alterations to single storey outbuildings to form education/activity room, home office storage and garages and demolition of existing garages			
ADDRESS Bridgehurst Oast, Howland Road, Marden, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 9EP			
RECOMMENDATION – APPROVED SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS			
SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION – WILL NOT HARM CHARACTER OF HERITAGE ASSET, COMPLIES WITH RESIDENTIAL EXTENSIONS POLICY, WILL NOT HARM OUTLOOK OR AMENITY OF NEARBY DWELLINGS			
REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE – CONTRARY TO THE VIEWS OF MARDEN PARISH COUNCIL			
WARD Marden And Yalding Ward	PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL Marden	APPLICANT Mr Simon Townshend AGENT Emmott Page Architects	
DECISION DUE DATE 25/06/14	PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE 25/06/14	OFFICER SITE VISIT DATE 28/05/14	
RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:			
App No	Proposal	Decision	Date
MA/13/1293	Two storey extension and lobby to existing oast house with alterations to existing single storey extension.-		
MA/11/1153	Change of use of agricultural land to residential use and the formation of a new access and driveway with timber gates on brick piers	Approved	15/12/2011

MAIN REPORT

1.0 DESCRIPTION OF SITE

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- 1.1 The site is occupied by a converted oast building with detached single storey outbuildings site in close proximity to the north east.
- 1.2 Access to the site is a gained via a narrow unmade track running along the west side of the site which is also used as a public right of way with the main Tonbridge- Ashford railway line a short distance to the north of the site.
- 1.3 In a wider context Bridgehurst Oast forms part of a loose scatter of dwellings fronting this part of Howland Road and lying just outside the settlement boundary of Marden to the west with the adjoining area being wholly rural in character.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.01 The proposal is a revision of application ref: MA/13/1293 (described above). The amended scheme seeks to address the concerns raised in connection with this application in relation to the size, design and siting of the proposed addition to the oast in order to meet the special needs of the applicant's son who has autism. The applicant has submitted a confidential statement setting out the special needs of his son and which is attached as an Exempt item.
- 2.02 The proposal has two main elements to it as follows:
 - (a) Attaching to an existing single storey addition projecting from the south west face of the oast storage building a two storey addition having a hipped and tiled pitched roof. This will provide a lounge attached to the existing kitchen with a bedroom and ensuite bathroom at first floor.
 - (b) The proposal also affects existing single storey outbuildings sited in close proximity to the former oast storage building to the north east. These are currently used for garaging and storage purposes and the intention is to extend these on the track frontage to provide an activity/education area while closing off the existing access onto the track.

The remaining single storey buildings to the south east will be converted to a washroom, workshop and garaging while an existing garage is to be demolished and reinstated as a home office but in a slightly different location. A walled courtyard and access are also proposed which will link to the access onto Howland Road approved under application ref: MA/11/1153.

- 2.03 The remaining element of the proposal is the erection of porch facing towards the track currently providing access onto Howland Road.
- 2.04 The following has been submitted in support of the application:
 - The lounge/education facilities are required to provide a separate work/education/recreation area for the applicants son while remaining accessible to the main house.
 - The orientation of the dwelling will be changed with the existing access closed off in favour of the approved access onto Howlands Road representing an improvement in both traffic and site security terms.

3.0 PLANNING CONSTRAINTS

- 3.01 The site lies within open countryside. The oast is considered to be a Non Designated Heritage Asset falling within the provisions of the NPPF 2012.

4.0 POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan 2000: ENV28, H33
Draft Local Plan: SP5, DM30,DM33
Residential extensions SPD adopted 2009
Government Policy: NPPF 2012, NPPG 2014

5.0 LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

- 5.01 2 neighbours consulted – no representations received

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 6.01 **Marden Parish Council:** Object on the grounds that the proposal is contrary to the emerging Local Plan policy DM33, in particular points 7 and 8 as being unsympathetic and not well designed in relation to the existing dwelling resulting in the development being visually unacceptable in the countryside.
- 6.02 **MBC Heritage:** The proposal involves substantial additions to this converted oast and it is longstanding Council policy to resist extensions to converted agricultural buildings in order to preserve their character and to minimise built mass within open countryside.

However, there are mitigating circumstances in this case. These revolve partly around the special family needs of the applicant and that the existing oast conversion is of some age and exhibits features which would no longer be considered appropriate, e.g. masonry chimneys and rooflights. It also features an extension at right angles to the main axis of the building attached to the kiln and other single storey structures. The character of the oast has therefore already been compromised to a considerable degree.

The proposal represents a second attempt to achieve the desired accommodation to meet the special family needs with a previous scheme having been withdrawn.

The revised proposals are the result of pre-application consultation and represent a considerable reduction in the scale of the additions and an improvement in the design. These taken together mean that the impact of the scheme on the character of the former oast is now much reduced. As the character of the oast has already been compromised by previous extension any additional harm caused by the current proposal is minor.

As such taking into account the applicants family circumstances, on balance, no objections are raised to the proposal.

- 6.03 **Kent Highway Services:** Permission has previously been granted for the new access onto Howland Road. As the proposals are for the private use will not be likely to lead to any significant intensification of traffic movements and as such raise no objection.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PLANS

- 7.01 Drawing nos: 1572.E.01, P.201 rev C and P.202 rev C and Design and Access statement dated April 2014.

8.0 APPRAISAL

- 8.01 The key issues raised by the proposal are considered to be its impact on (a) the character and setting of this non designated heritage asset (b) impact on the rural character and setting of the wider area and (c) impact on the outlook and amenity of nearby dwellings.

Impact on non designated heritage asset:

- 8.02 Conversion of oasts into dwellings has often been seen as the best means of safeguarding their character and fabric. However the intention was that they should thereafter remain as the principal building on a site. Where not Listed in their own right, as is the case here, given the provisions of the NPPF 2012, they are now often viewed as non designated heritage assets (NDHA) requiring an assessment of any proposal on the character and setting of the building. This building is considered to fall within the definition of an NDHA.
- 8.03 The proposal to extend the oast originally submitted under ref: MA/13/1293, was substantially larger than that currently under consideration. The current submission includes a plan showing the outline of the building originally submitted under ref: MA/13/1293 compared to that now under consideration.
- 8.04 The Council's heritage advisor considers that the character of the oast has already been compromised to a significant degree. As such he considers that the impact of the proposed two storey extension on its character and setting will not result in any further material harm and such raises no objection on heritage grounds.
- 8.05 Regarding the additional work to the elevation fronting the track, alterations and extension to the single storey outbuildings along with the creation of an internal courtyard, these are considered to have positive impact on the character and setting of the oast by improving the appearance of these buildings while maintaining the integrity of the oast as the principal building on the site.
- 8.06 In the circumstances no objection is identified to the proposal on heritage grounds and consideration turns on whether the proposal will result in an unacceptable increase in built mass harming the openness and rural character of the area.

Impact on rural character and setting of the area.

- 8.07 The proposal needs to be assessed against the tests set out in policy H33 of the adopted local plan and the adopted extensions SPD. These recommend that extensions to dwellings in the countryside should, amongst other things, be modest in size, subservient to the original dwelling and not overwhelm or destroy its original form and should cause no adverse impact on the character or openness of the countryside. There is also the concern that the extension should not be capable of being occupied on a separate and self contained basis independent of the main dwelling.
- 8.08 Dealing first with the design of the proposed addition to the oast, given its design and reduced size it is considered to represent an acceptable example of heritage architecture in keeping with the character of the oast.

- 8.09 Regarding whether the extension can be considered to be modest, the extensions SPD recommends that additions on their own or in conjunction with previous additions should result in no more than a 50% volume increase over the original dwelling. On its own the proposed addition results in a volume increase of just under 45% compared to that of the original oast and storage building. However when existing additions are taken into account this figure rises to 60% exceeding the SPD guidelines.
- 8.10 Given this, consideration needs to be given as to whether are any mitigating or other special circumstances which might balance against such a cumulative bulk increase in affecting the character, setting and openness of the adjoining countryside.
- 8.11 In this respect, the key consideration is that the site is so well enclosed that the visual impact of the proposed extension to the oast will be contained wholly within the site. In these circumstances and given the relatively modest scale of the oast extension, (which in its own falls well within the policy guidelines), it is considered that it would be difficult to argue that it will so adversely affect the character, setting and openness of the adjoining countryside such as to justify refusal.
- 8.12 Regarding whether the proposed addition is capable of being occupied on a separate and self contained basis, given the reduced size of the extension and high degree of dependence and interaction with the main house, it is considered that this is now highly unlikely to occur. However in order to ensure that this remains the case a condition securing this should be imposed.
- 8.13 Works to the single storey outbuildings along with the creation of a new internal courtyard, apart from minor cosmetic changes to the appearance of the buildings, raise no material issues in terms of additional built mass. The erection of a wall and entrance gates, which could be carried out as permitted development in any event, are considered equally minor in their impact.
- 8.14 There is also the impact of the proposed ancillary uses of the buildings. The proposed home office is of modest size and it is likely this could have been carried out as permitted development. Similarly use of the education/activity room and workshop in supporting of the applicants son is unlikely to result in any material noise or activity harmful to the character of the area.

Residential amenity:

- 8.15 There are no nearby houses directly overlooking or abutting the site and as such no harm to residential amenity is identified.

Special Circumstances:

- 8.16 For the reasons set out above it is considered that the substantial reduction in size while altering the design and internal layout of the proposed two storey addition compared to the original submission, now results in the proposal representing acceptable development in its own right.
- 8.17 Nevertheless if Members still consider that the proposal represents a material breach of policy, it is considered that the health and treatment requirements of applicant's son set out in the confidential statement represent material factors weighing significantly in favour of the proposed development.

9.0 CONCLUSION

9.01 Given the reduced size, revised design and internal layout of the proposed two storey addition to the oast it is considered that the proposal now respects the heritage character and setting of the existing oast, will have no material impact on the character, setting and openness of the adjoining rural area while the outlook and amenity of nearby dwellings will not be affected.

9.02 As such the proposed development is considered to be acceptable and it is recommended that planning permission should be granted as a consequence.

10.0 RECOMMENDATION – GRANT 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 approved shall be carried out in the external materials specified.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

3. The accommodation hereby approved shall only be occupied ancillary to the residential use of Bridgehurst Oast and at no times on a separate or independent basis.

Reason: To retain control over the development in the interests of amenity.

4. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans nos:1572.E.01, P.201 rev C and P.202 rev C.

Reason: To ensure the quality of the development is maintained in the interests of visual amenity.

INFORMATIVE:

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure, before the development hereby approved is commenced, that all necessary highway approvals and consents where required are obtained and that the limits of highway boundary are clearly established in order to avoid any enforcement action being taken by the Highway Authority. The applicant must also ensure that the details shown on the approved plans agree in every aspect with those approved under such legislation and common law. It is therefore important for the applicant to contact KCC Highways and Transportation to progress this aspect of the works prior to commencement on site.

Note to Applicant

In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the NPPF, Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. MBC works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by:

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Offering a pre-application advice and duty desk service.

Where possible, suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome.

As appropriate, updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.

In this instance:

The application was acceptable as submitted.

Case Officer: Graham Parkinson

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.