

REFERENCE NO - 19/505310			
APPLICATION PROPOSAL			
Demolition of existing cafe building and erection of 'New Mote Park Centre' with associated terraces, bin storage and car parking; and The erection of storage, mess and welfare building for park maintenance team.			
ADDRESS Mote Park Maidstone, Willow Way, Maidstone, ME15 7RN			
SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION - APPROVE SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The visitor's centre is considered to be of high quality and the low harm caused to the historic park (Mote Park) and setting of Mote House, through the introduction of a new building, would be outweighed by the clear public benefits of providing a modern visitor's facility and café for Mote Park. • The existing café would be removed and replaced by a much better designed building within the historic park. • The storage, mess and welfare building causes no harm to the historic park or local amenity. • Permission is therefore recommended. 			
REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE			
The applicant is Maidstone Borough Council.			
WARD Shepway North	PARISH COUNCIL N/A	APPLICANT Maidstone Borough Council AGENT Hazel McCormack Young LLP	
DECISION DUE DATE 21/01/19		PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE 06/12/18	
RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY			
App No	Proposal	Decision	Date
18/502327	Demolition of existing cafe building and erection of new Mote Park Centre with associated terraces, bin storage area and car parking.	APPROVED	20/08/18
18/502656	Erection of storage, mess and welfare facilities for park maintenance team.	APPROVED	20/08/18
16/506505	Creation of an adventure zone to include high rope/wire climbing equipment, climbing wall, and adventure golf enclosed by 2.44m high fencing with associated ancillaries including a kiosk, footpaths, planting and overflow car	APPROVED	14/07/17

	parking.		
--	----------	--	--

1.0 DESCRIPTION OF SITE

- 1.01 The application relates to two separate sites within Mote Park, one for a proposed 'Mote Centre' visitor's building and the other for a maintenance building.
- 1.02 The site for the visitor's centre is a grassed area in the northwest corner of the Park and includes the existing café and grounds keeper's buildings where there are a number of mature trees. The site is just to the east of the car park and north of the existing children's play areas, and is immediately north of the 'adventure zone'.
- 1.03 The site for the maintenance building is part of the car park to the rear of the Leisure Centre. There is a large bund immediately to the south of the car park and a metal clad building to the west used by the indoor bowls club.
- 1.04 Mote Park is a Grade II Registered Park and Garden and Mote House is a Grade II* listed building which is around 700m to the east of the visitor's centre site and around 900m east of the maintenance building site. The visitor's centre site falls within the registered park with the maintenance building site outside but immediately adjacent.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.01 Permission is sought for the 'Mote Centre' to provide a visitor's centre which is split into two buildings of similar size. The western building nearest the car park would provide toilets, a 'changing places' room, and meeting room space. The eastern building would provide a kitchen and café including a servery hatch. They would be positioned side by side in a line from west to east. The buildings would be surrounded by permeable resin bound gravel with an outdoor seating area to the south and new paving would link the site to the car park to the west, where bicycle parking would be provided. New steps down towards the lake to the north are proposed and the existing café building would be demolished here. A bin store to the northwest of the building is also proposed which would be surrounded by metal fencing and hedging. The site has a very slight slope to the north and so levelling works for the buildings would be limited. The appearance and design of the buildings will be assessed and discussed in more detail below.
- 2.02 The storage, mess and welfare building for the parks maintenance team would replace the existing building which is to the east of the existing café. The building would have an L-shaped footprint with a simple pitched roof and be finished with green metal sheet cladding. Two entrance doors would be on the east side to the car park and new security fencing would enclose a compound on the south side.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

3.01 Permission was granted in August 2018 for both a new visitor's centre and maintenance building under separate applications and both buildings were in the same location as now proposed.

3.02 The approved visitor's centre was also within two buildings but with one much larger flat roof building providing the café and other facilities, and a smaller building providing toilets. The maintenance building was of very similar size, form and appearance.

4.0 POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2011-2031): SS1, SP1, SP18, DM1, DM2, DM3, DM4, DM8, DM21, DM23
- Kent Waste and Minerals Plan 2016
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- MBC Public Art Guidance

5.0 LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

6.01 **Local Residents:** No representations received.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

(Please note that summaries of consultation responses are set out below with the response discussed in more detail in the main report where considered necessary)

6.01 **Historic England: No comments** and defer to Conservation Officer.

6.02 **Natural England: No objections.**

6.03 **Conservation Officer: Raises no objections**

6.04 **Landscape Officer: Raises no objections** subject to pre-commencement/demolition conditions in accordance with BS5837: 2012 and the submitted AIA, which include details of the site storage/compound area. Landscape conditions are also required.

6.05 **KCC Highways:** No objections.

6.06 **MBC Environmental Health:** No objections

6.07 **Kent Gardens Trust:** Do not wish to comment

7.0 APPRAISAL

7.01 The principle of a visitor's centre and maintenance building within Mote Park are acceptable and have already been approved but of slightly different design. The main considerations are as follows:

- Design and appearance

- Impact upon Mote Park and Mote House
- Landscaping & Trees
- Highways & Parking

Design & Appearance

Visitor's Centre

7.02 The buildings are single storey with pitch roofs and ridge heights of approximately 4.8m. They would have a simple form with interest provided through the use of materials. The materials are of a more contemporary style with dark zinc standing seam cladding used as the main facing material (as was the case for the previously approved building). This would be broken up with large amounts of glazing, particularly on the café building, and the use of ragstone piers between windows and the cladding to provide a vernacular material alongside the zinc. Guttering would be concealed so the zinc panels would seamlessly link with the roof to provide a quality finish. Aluminium windows would be provided to match the more contemporary style and there would be a black coloured brick plinth to provide a 'clean' joint with the ground. On the outside ends of both buildings there would be a large roof overhang with timber cladding on the inside to contrast with the external materials. The west gable flank of the building would mainly feature glazing to provide an active frontage to visitor's approaching from the car park.

7.03 Overall, the building is considered to be of a high design quality with the use of good quality materials that would complement one another, and it would provide a simple but a clean finish through the linking of cladding from the walls into the roof. A 'BREEAM Very Good Standard' will be secured by condition in line with policy DM2.

7.04 The bin store area would be enclosed by metal railings and new hedging that would screen/soften its appearance. Surface materials would include resin bound gravel and paving between which would provide a high quality setting to the buildings.

7.05 For the above reasons, the proposals are considered to present a high quality development in accordance with policy DM1 of the Local Plan.

Maintenance Building

7.06 As was previously approved, the building is utilitarian in its design and appearance, similar in appearance to the indoor bowls club building, grouped close to the leisure centre, and would be substantially screened by the existing tall bunding from the park. Such a design is acceptable for this type of building and bearing in mind its well screened location. PV panels (18) are proposed to the roof to provide a renewable source of energy and minimise the carbon footprint of the building which is welcomed.

Impact upon Mote Park and Mote House

Visitor's Centre

7.07 The proposal would introduce new buildings into an area that is currently open and undeveloped and has historically been so. The buildings are limited in height and grouped near to existing development being the car park, paths and the play area. The existing café would also be demolished so open up an area here. For these reasons it is considered that the impact upon the historic park and setting of Mote House would be low and any harm to their significance would be less than substantial. The proposals would therefore have some conflict with policy DM14 of the Local Plan as they would not conserve the significance of the heritage assets. The accompanying text to this policy outlines that any harm should be weighed against wider benefits of the development as outlined in the NPPF (paragraph 134). In balancing matters, it is concluded that the clear public benefits of providing a modern visitor's facility and café for Mote Park would outweigh the harm in this case. In addition, the existing café would be removed and replaced by a much better designed building within the historic park.

Maintenance Building

7.08 As stated above, the building would be substantially screened by the existing tall bunding from the park and so would not have any harmful impact upon Mote Park or the setting of Mote House. The removal of the existing buildings by the café would result in an improvement here.

Landscaping & Trees

Visitor's Centre

7.09 The new buildings would require the removal of 3 small trees and their loss would not be objectionable. The bin store would require the removal of a larger hornbeam tree which does contribute positively to the area. It is a category B tree (rather than A) so its loss is not an overriding factor but I consider a replacement should be provided. There are mature trees close to the new building(s) and very close to the existing café to be demolished. The Landscape Officer is satisfied these can be retained subject to a condition requiring an arboricultural method statement.

7.10 Planting is limited to small areas of shrubs but this area of Mote Park is mainly open and grassed and so I consider this is reflective of the character here. I consider a tree to replace the hornbeam is appropriate to mitigate its loss and will require this by condition.

Maintenance Building

7.11 No trees would be lost as a result of the development. The previous decision by Planning Committee required native shrub planting on the bund to break up and soften the outline of the development and so this will be required once more.

Highways & Parking

- 7.12 No additional parking is proposed from the visitor's centre. Whilst the visitor's centre would provide meeting space, which does not currently exist, I do not consider this warrants any increase in parking and ultimately there would be no highway safety issues on public highway. Kent Highways have raised no objections. Cycle parking is proposed which can be secured. Sixteen existing parking spaces would be altered to provide disabled parking bays, in addition to two existing.
- 7.13 For the maintenance building, the proposals would result in the loss of five disabled parking bays but these would be replaced in the main car park (either using existing spaces or new provision), which can be secured by condition.

Other Matters

- 7.14 The submitted assessments conclude that there would be no harmful ecological impacts and some enhancements are proposed in the form of four bat boxes for the visitor's centre and also for the maintenance building. In view of the visitor's centre design featuring much zinc and the unified wall and pitched roof profile, installing boxes on the building would compromise the design, and so installation in trees would be more appropriate in this case. Boxes could be incorporated into the maintenance building. Lighting details can be provided by condition to ensure they are appropriate for bats. Surface water from the roofs will be attenuated by the use of soakaways. The Council's public art guidance seeks art for significant public buildings, which I consider the visitor's centre is. A condition will therefore be attached requiring a Public Art Delivery Plan for the centre.
- 7.15 The visitor's centre is a significant distance from any houses so would not cause any harm to amenity. The nearest houses to the maintenance building are some 110m to the west and at this distance and with the indoor bowls building between, there would not be any harmful impacts upon amenity in terms of outlook, privacy, or noise.
- 7.16 It is appropriate to require removal of both the existing café and parks maintenance building and as they are positioned between mature trees an arboricultural method statement is necessary to ensure no harm to trees.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.01 For the reasons outlined above the visitor's centre is considered to be of high quality and the low harm caused to the historic park and setting of Mote House would be outweighed by the clear public benefits of providing a modern visitor's facility and café for Mote Park. Permission is therefore recommended.
- 8.02 For the reasons outlined above the maintenance building is considered to be acceptable and would cause no harm to the historic park or setting of Mote House and is in accordance with the Development Plan. Permission is therefore recommended.

8.0 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.

Visitors Centre Conditions

2. No development in connection with the visitor's centre shall take place until an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) in accordance with the current edition of BS 5837 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The AMS shall detail implementation of any aspect of the development that has the potential to result in the loss of or damage to trees, including their roots, and take account of site access, demolition and construction activities, foundations, service runs and level changes. It should also detail any tree works necessary to implement the approved scheme and include a tree protection plan in accordance with the current edition of BS 5837. No equipment, machinery or materials shall be brought onto the site prior to the erection of approved barriers and/or ground protection except to carry out pre commencement operations approved in writing by the local planning authority. These measures shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Nothing shall be stored or placed, nor fires lit, within any of the protected areas. No alterations shall be made to the siting of barriers and/or ground protection, nor ground levels changed, nor excavations made within these areas without the written consent of the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of landscape, visual impact and amenity of the area and to ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development.

3. No demolition of the existing café or parks maintenance building (as outlined in blue on drawing no. 1010 RevP02) shall take place until an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) in accordance with the current edition of BS 5837 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The AMS shall detail implementation of any aspect of the demolition that has the potential to result in the loss of or damage to trees, including their roots, and take account of site access, demolition and construction activities, foundations, service runs and level changes. It should also detail any tree works necessary to demolish the building and include a tree protection plan in accordance with the current edition of BS 5837. No equipment, machinery or materials shall be brought onto the site prior to the erection of approved barriers and/or ground protection except to carry out pre commencement operations approved in writing by the local planning authority. These measures shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Nothing shall be stored or placed, nor fires lit, within any of the protected areas. No alterations shall be made to the siting of barriers and/or ground protection,

nor ground levels changed, nor excavations made within these areas without the written consent of the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of landscape, visual impact and amenity of the area and to ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development

4. No development above slab level in connection with the visitor's centre shall take place until details of the materials and colours to be used for the hard surfaces have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details before the first occupation of the buildings and maintained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure a high quality external appearance to the development.

5. No development above slab level in connection with the visitor's centre shall take place until a sample panel for the ragstone piers have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details as approved shall be fully implemented on site.

Reason: To ensure a high quality appearance to the development.

6. No development above slab level in connection with the visitor's centre shall take place until specific details of the landscape scheme, which shall be designed in accordance with the principles of the Council's landscape character guidance, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include a planting specification, a programme of implementation and a 5 year management plan. The landscape scheme shall specifically address the need to provide robust native hedge planting around the bin store and a replacement tree.

Reason: In the interests of landscape, visual impact and amenity of the area and to ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development.

7. No development above slab level in connection with the visitor's centre shall take place until details of means of enclosure for the bin store hereby approved have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and maintained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of landscape, visual impact and amenity of the area and to ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development.

8. The visitor's centre development shall not be occupied until a written statement of public art to be provided on site in the form of a Public Art Delivery Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. This should include the selection and commissioning process, the artist's brief, the budget, possible form, materials and locations of public art, the timetable for provision, maintenance agreement and community engagement, and the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To comply with the Council's public art guidance.

9. The existing café building as outlined in blue on drawing no. 1956_005 P1 shall be demolished and the resulting materials and debris removed from the site to the satisfaction of the local planning authority within 3 months of the first occupation of the visitor's centre building hereby permitted;

Reason: To prevent an overdevelopment of the site and to safeguard the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

10. The approved details of the cycle parking in connection with the visitor's centre shall be completed before the commencement of the use of the land or buildings hereby permitted and shall thereafter be kept available for such use. No development, whether permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order, with or without modification) or not, shall be carried out on the areas indicated or in such a position as to preclude vehicular access to them;

Reason: In the interests of promoting sustainable travel.

11. The visitor's centre buildings shall achieve a Very Good BREEAM 2018 rating. A final certificate shall be issued to the Local Planning Authority for written approval to certify that a Very Good BREEAM 2018 rating has been achieved within 6 months of the first occupation of the development.

Reason: To ensure a sustainable and energy efficient form of development.

12. The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the visitor's centre building shall be as stated on drawing no. 3000 Rev P02.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development.

Maintenance Building

13. No development above slab level in connection with the maintenance building shall take place until details of the proposed fencing has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and maintained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of landscape, visual impact and amenity of the area and to ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development.

14. No development above slab level in connection with the maintenance building shall take place until details of five replacement disabled parking bays within the Leisure Centre car park have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be implemented prior to the occupation of the maintenance building. Should any replacement spaces be in close proximity to trees, an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) in accordance with the current edition of BS 5837 will need to be submitted to and approved in writing by

the local planning authority and the development carries out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure replacement disabled parking bays.

15. No development above slab level in connection with the maintenance building shall take place until details of a landscaping scheme with native shrub planting on the bund to break up and soften the outline of the development has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include a planting specification, a programme of implementation and a 5 year management plan.

Reason: In the interests of landscape, visual impact and amenity of the area and to ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development.

Both Developments

16. No development above slab level shall take place until details of lighting for both the visitor's centre and maintenance buildings have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Details shall include designs, heights, luminance levels and measures to shield and direct light from the light sources so as to prevent light pollution and limit any impact upon bats and illuminance contour plots covering sensitive neighbouring receptors. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the subsequently approved details.

Reason: To ensure a high quality appearance to the development.

17. No development above slab level shall take place until the location of the bat boxes in connection with both the visitor's centre and maintenance building buildings have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The developments shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and maintained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of biodiversity enhancement.

18. All planting, seeding and turfing specified in the approved landscape details shall be carried out either before or in the first planting season (October to February) following the occupation of the building(s) or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and seeding or turfing which fails to establish or any trees or plants which, within five years from the first occupation of a property, commencement of use or adoption of land, die or become so seriously damaged or diseased that their long term amenity value has been adversely affected shall be replaced in the next planting season with plants of the same species and size as detailed in the approved landscape scheme unless the local planning authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: In the interests of landscape, visual impact and amenity of the area and to ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development.

Planning Committee Report

19. No open storage of plant, materials, products, goods for sale or hire or waste shall take place on the land;

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

20. The developments hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the most recent revisions of the plans as shown on the document register dated 18/11/19.

Reason: For clarify and to ensure the development is undertaken satisfactorily.

Case Officer: Richard Timms