

**REPORT SUMMARY**

<b>REFERENCE NUMBER:</b> 24/500999/FULL		
<b>APPLICATION PROPOSAL:</b> Erection of a temporary timber log cabin for training of sea cadets.		
<b>ADDRESS:</b> The Master’s Tower College Road Maidstone Kent ME15 6YF		
<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b> <b>GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION</b> subject to planning conditions in Section 8 of this report.		
<b>SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:</b> The proposed temporary timber log cabin for training of sea cadets would be acceptable and would not cause significant visual harm, harm to neighbouring amenity the timber log cabin would be acceptable in terms of any other material planning considerations. The proposed development is in accordance with current policy and guidance.		
<b>REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE:</b> Application submitted by an elected member (Cllr Fay Gooch)		
<b>WARD:</b> High Street	<b>PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL:</b> N/A	<b>APPLICANT:</b> Mrs Fay Gooch
<b>CASE OFFICER:</b> Chloe Berkhauer-Smith	<b>VALIDATION DATE:</b> 02/04/24	<b>DECISION DUE DATE:</b> 28/06/24
<b>ADVERTISED AS A DEPARTURE:</b> No		

**Relevant Planning History**

75/0964: Extension to existing quarter deck building to provide an additional workshop and classroom involving listed building consent – **Permitted** 12/11/1975

75/1519: Extension to existing quarter-deck building to provide additional workshop and classroom involving listed building consent as amended by the plan received 12/01/76 – **Permitted** 26/02/1974

**MAIN REPORT**

**1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE**

1.01 The application site is in the Maidstone Town Centre boundary with the River Medway to the west and College Road public car park to the east. The site is the base for Maidstone Sea Cadets.

1.02 The Sea Cadets' ethos is in three parts: values, mindset, and customs and traditions of the Royal Navy. The ethos is underpinned by the Sea Cade values which are: Courage, Commitment, Discipline, Respect, Loyalty, Honesty, and Integrity. These are taught by staff throughout the time cadets are with a unit. Young people can be in the Sea Cadets between 9 and 18 years old. Junior Sea Cadets (9 – 12 years) have their own training programme and uniform. Young people aged 12 to 18-year-olds are Sea Cadets and work their way up through the training programme.

- 1.03 The site is in The College of All Saints Scheduled Monument and in the All-Saints Church Conservation Area. There are listed buildings to the north (The Master's House - grade II\*) and to the south (Cutbush Almshouses - grade II) of the site.
- 1.04 The part one, part two-storey The Master's Tower (grade II listed) is located on the application site. The Master's Tower is adjacent to the College Road car park with the building set back from College Road (A229) by approximately 39m. A private car park and storage area for the sea cadets immediately to the rear of The Master's Tower is accessed to the north of the building.
- 1.05 A single storey hall is in the middle of the site (approximately 11m by 14m) with a further small single storey storage building in the open area on the west side of the site. A gate in the west boundary provides pedestrian access to the River Medway (approx. 35m west) via a footpath past The Hermitage Millennium Amphitheatre and across a public right of way (KMX16). The site is situated within flood zone 1.

## **2. PROPOSAL**

- 2.01 The application seeks the erection of a temporary timber log cabin for training of sea cadets.
- 2.02 The proposed log cabin would have an approximate width of 5.5m and depth of 3.5m. It would have a mono-pitched roof with an eaves height of approximately 2m and maximum height of 2.4m. The proposed building would be situated approximately 1m to the rear (west/ River Medway side) of the existing single storey hall. It would be constructed of timber with a green roof material.
- 2.03 The submitted planning statement sets out that the proposed building would provide an additional temporary building for the training needs of the increasing number of sea cadets.
- 2.04 The proposed building would be sited on the existing rear area of gravel finished hardstanding and it would sit on a fully levelled black painted steel channel frame. The building does not require any footings or other intrusion into the existing ground level/finish.

## **3. POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review 2024  
LPRSS1 – Maidstone borough spatial strategy  
LPRSP1 – Maidstone town centre  
LPRSP11 – Economic development  
LPRSP14(B) – The historic environment  
LPRSP15 – Principles of good design  
LPRENV1 – Development affecting heritage assets.

All Saints Conservation Area Appraisal

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG):

## **4. LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS**

Local residents

No representations received.

## 5. CONSULTATIONS

(Please note that summaries of consultation responses are set out below. Comments are discussed in more detail in the appraisal section where necessary)

### Historic England

- 5.01 No objection There will be no negligible harm to the scheduled monument, and the applicant has made decisions to ensure this. (Concern about the brevity of the submitted heritage statement but Scheduled Monument Consent has been granted)

### KCC Archaeology

- 5.02 No objection subject to a pre commencement planning condition requiring methodology of construction and how services are installed (Concern about the brevity of the submitted heritage statement)

### MBC Conservation

- 5.03 No objection. No harm to the setting of the listed building or the character of the conservation area.

## 6. APPRAISAL

- 6.01 The key issues are:
- Heritage and design
  - Residential amenity
  - Parking/highways/access

### Heritage and design

- 6.02 Policies LPRSP14(B) and LPRENV1 of the Local Plan Review 2024 relate to the historic environment. These policies require, inter-alia, that "*the characteristics, distinctiveness, diversity and quality of heritage assets are conserved, and where possible, enhanced*" and that "*new development affecting a heritage asset incorporates measures to conserve, and where possible enhance, the significance of the heritage asset and its setting*".
- 6.03 The NPPF (paragraphs 207 and 208) requires the impact on the significance of a designated heritage asset to be assessed as either "*substantial harm*" or "*less than substantial harm*" with NPPG guidance setting out that "*substantial harm*" has a high threshold "Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use".
- 6.04 NPPF guidance (paragraphs 205 and 206) states that when assessing the impact of development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm to significance amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm.

### College of All Saints Scheduled Monument and archaeology.

- 6.05 Nationally important sites and monuments are given legal protection by being placed on a monument 'schedule'. Scheduling is the only legal protection specifically for archaeological sites and the preservation of these sites is given priority over other uses. Destroying or damaging a protected monument is a criminal offence.
- 6.06 The application site is within the College of All Saints Scheduled Monument. The Historic England listing states "*The standing structures date mainly from the late*

*14th century, with some evidence for 16th and 18th century alterations. The monument lies on the eastern bank of the River Medway, to the south of the parish and collegiate church, which is also dedicated to All Saints, and the medieval archbishop's palace. The standing structures include the college gate tower and associated western range, a return wing running from the west end of this refectory range which joins a two-storeyed building known as the Master's House. To the southeast of these buildings is a free-standing structure known as the Master's Tower, while at the south of the complex of medieval buildings is the ruined gateway".*

- 6.07 In addition to the need for planning permission, Scheduled Monument Consent is required from the Secretary of State for Culture, Media, and Sport for any work on a scheduled monument. This Scheduled Monument Consent was granted on the 21 May 2024.
- 6.08 The Scheduled Monument Consent decision letter concludes "...the effect of the proposed works upon the monument..." were found to be "...neutral". The letter sets out "The cabin will not require any foundations and will be installed on a modern gravel surface. Due to this there will be no interventions into the monument to facilitate the installation. The location of the cabin means that it will not be visible from the rest of the monument and will not be detrimental a result of additions within it".
- 6.09 The number and range of buildings associated with this medieval or earlier Minster is not fully understood but it is thought this was also a focus of Anglo-Saxon occupation activity. As such there is potential for sensitive remains to survive both below ground and within current buildings.
- 6.10 In view of this archaeological sensitivity and in line with KCC Archaeology advice, a planning condition is recommended to require submission, approval, and adherence to a log cabin installation method statement. This statement would include arrangements for the delivery and sting of the log cabin and installation of services.
- 6.11 It is concluded that the impact of the proposed log cabin on the College of All Saints Scheduled Monument is acceptable due to the building location and the method of installation. No objection has been received from Historic England, KCC Archaeology or the MBC Conservation Officer.

#### Listed buildings

- 6.12 Any decision on a planning application that potentially affects a listed building or its setting, must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting. Preservation in this context means not harming the interest in the building, as opposed to keeping it utterly unchanged. This obligation is found in sections 16(LBC) and 66(FULL) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (1).
- 6.13 The setting of a listed building is not confined to public land and can include private land and the setting can be in separate ownership. A lack of visual connection does not mean that there is no impact on listed building setting. The setting could form part of a wider estate, or if currently separated by landscaping, this landscaping could be removed or die.
- 6.14 Listed buildings are located outside the application site to the north (i) The Master's House - grade II\*, on the eastern part of the application site (ii) The Master's Tower - grade II listed and outside the application site to the south (iii) Cutbush Almshouses - grade II.

Site context



(i) The Master’s House (grade II\*)

6.15 The Historic England listing for The Master’s House includes the following description:

*"...originally the Master's House to the College. C14 with alterations in C18 and the insertion of modern windows since. Built of Kentish ragstone. Two storeys and attics. Tiled roof with three hipped dormers having casements with small square leaded panes. Moulded wooden eaves cornice and at the south end of the front a gable. On the ground floor there are two windows containing pairs of ogee-headed lights, two narrower single trefoil-headed lancets and one square-headed window containing two obtusely-pointed lights. Modern windows on the first floor. The interior contains a collar-braced roof, a C16 oak staircase, a moulded C16 ceiling and Aumbry cupboard. Some stone fireplaces with spandrels and an early C18 fireplace with ovolo moulding. Plaque to William Grocyn (1446-1519) Master of All Saints College and Renaissance scholar".*

6.16 The existing permanent single storey sea cadet’s hall in the middle of the application site and distance of approximately 16m will separate the proposed temporary log cabin from The Master’s House. In these circumstances the proposed log cabin is found to be acceptable in relation to the impact on the setting of The Master’s House. No objection has been received from Historic England or the Council’s Conservation Officer.

Cutbush Almshouses (26 College Road) (view southeast from the application site)



(ii) The Master's Tower (grade II listed)

- 6.17 The Historic England listing for The Master's House includes the following description:

*"1396-1398. This was originally the main entrance gateway to the College from the river. Two storeys Kentish ragstone. Pyramidal tiled roof. Pointed archway on the ground floor. Square-headed window on the first floor containing two cinquefoil-headed lights with stone mullion and transom. Small projection on the north side with splayed end, possibly containing the staircase. This front has a single window of one cinquefoil-headed light on the first floor and a gable fronted with weatherboarding, full of pigeon holes".*

- 6.18 The proposed timber log cabin is located at the western (River Medway) end of the application site with The Master's Tower located at the opposite eastern (College Road) end. The log cabin will be separated from The Master's Tower by approximately 24m including the permanent single storey sea cadet's hall in the middle of the application site. In these circumstances the proposed log cabin is found to be acceptable in relation to the impact on the setting of The Master's Tower. No objection has been received from Historic England or the Council's Conservation Officer.

(iii) Cutbush Almshouses (grade II listed)

- 6.19 The Historic England listing for Cutbush Almshouses includes the following description:

*"Late C19 almshouses arranged in groups of three separate buildings on three sides of a courtyard. Nos 2-12 are of two storeys Kentish ragstone. Tiled roof with five clustered chimney stacks. Six gables having fretted bargeboards and pseudo timber-framing and brick finials. Central stone gable with stone finial and initials and kneelers. Windows are four light mullioned and transomed windows. Central stone archway with hood moulding above. Six other mullioned and transomed*

*windows with hood moulding and two doorcases set in the arches. Nos 14-24 and Nos 26-36 are similar but without the central stone archway”.*

- 6.20 The blank side (south) elevation of the log cabin will be located approximately 4m from blank side elevation of the Cutbush Almshouses. As can be seen by the bench visible in the photograph above, the application site ground level is significantly lower than the ground level to the rear of Cutbush Almshouses. The proposed log cabin has a mono pitch roof eaves height of approximately 2m and maximum height of 2.4m and will be separated from the listed building by the existing ragstone wall.
- 6.21 The impact of the log cabin on the setting of the Cutbush Almshouses is found to be acceptable due to the visual separation between the buildings provided by the respective blank elevations, change in ground level and the existing boundary wall. The temporary nature of the log cabin, allowing the site to easily revert to the current situation also alleviates harm to the setting of the listed building. No objection has been received from Historic England or the Council’s Conservation Officer.

#### All-Saints Church Conservation Area

- 6.22 The All Saints Conservation Area Appraisal sets out that development first occurred in the area in the *Anglo-Saxon period and that development “...revolves around the founding of the original minster church of St. Mary, which occupied the same site as All Saints Church”.*
- 6.23 The appraisal advises *“Maidstone was an ancient domain of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the prevalence of listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments within the All Saint’s Conservation Area reflects its archaeological and historical importance. as one of only six palace complexes in Kent used by the Archbishop”.*
- 6.24 *Whilst the existing Sea Cadets Hall (“modern sectional building in unsympathetic materials”) is identified in the appraisal as a negative feature, the appraisal highlights that the hall “...does not from a prominent feature within the Conservation Area”.*
- 6.25 The impact of the log cabin on the All Saints Conservation Area is found to be acceptable due to its relatively small size and the visual separation with the log cabin lower in height and located behind the larger existing Sea Cadets Hall. No objection has been received from Historic England or the Council’s Conservation Officer.

#### Conclusion

- 6.26 The NPPF advises *“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation”* (para 205). Potential impact on a heritage asset is classed as either *“...total loss”, “...substantial harm, or less than substantial harm”.*
- 6.27 It is concluded that the current application will have “less than substantial” harm to the significance of the College of All Saints Scheduled Monument, listed buildings and the All Saints Conservation Area. This conclusion is reached due to the relatively small building footprint and height of the log cabin and the discrete location behind the existing hall and on lower ground to the Cutbush Almshouses.
- 6.28 The NPPF further advises *“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use”* (para 208).

- 6.29 The purpose of the log cabin is to provide additional training space for the sea cadets that currently use the site. The submitted design and access statement sets out that the proposal would make space for sea cadets *"of varying ages and abilities including disadvantaged local Maidstone children, plus in addition, our enthusiastic adult volunteer training and administration staff"*. The proposal would therefore help a local youth project and the public benefit of the proposal is considered to outweigh the low level of harm.

### **Residential amenity**

- 6.30 The closest residential property is part of Cutbush Almshouses (26 College Road) which is situated approximately 4m to the south of the proposed log cabin. All other residential properties are a significant distance from the site.

#### Daylight/sunlight

- 6.31 The boundary between the application site and 26 College Road is a 2m high wall. As highlighted earlier, there is also a significant rise in ground level from the application site to the rear of 26 College Road. With the boundary layout, the log cabin being single storey and the orientation of the site, the proposal would not impact the residential amenity of No.26 in terms of a loss of light or overshadowing.

#### Privacy/outlook

- 6.32 The proposed building would only have windows on the west elevation (facing the river) with no windows facing 26 College Road. The proposal would not impact the residential amenity of No.26 in terms of privacy or overlooking.

#### Noise/activity

- 6.33 With no change of use (additional indoor training space for the cadets), the modest scale of the building, the enclosure provided by buildings, boundary walls and ground level changes, the intensified use of the site is found to be acceptable in relation to neighbour amenity relating to noise or activity.
- 6.34 Overall, the proposal is found to be acceptable in relation to residential amenity including in terms of loss of light, overshadowing, privacy, overlooking and noise and activity.

### **Parking/highways/access**

- 6.35 Local Plan policy LPRSP15 states that proposals will be permitted, where they can safely accommodate the vehicular and pedestrian movement generated by the proposal on the local highway network and through the site access. Local Plan policy LPRTRA2 seeks to ensure that vehicle trips generated by a use can be adequately accommodated on the road network.
- 6.36 The existing access to the site and the existing off street parking provision would be retained. There is sufficient parking on site to accommodate the proposal and the site is in a highly sustainable location with access to a variety of public transport options. The proposal would not impact parking at the site or the wider highway network.

### **PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY**

- 6.37 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 For the reasons set out above, the proposed erection of a temporary timber log cabin for training of sea cadets would be acceptable on heritage grounds. The proposal would not cause significant visual harm, harm to neighbouring amenity nor would it be unacceptable in terms of any other material planning considerations. The proposed development is in accordance with current policy and guidance.

## **8. RECOMMENDATION: GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following conditions with delegated powers to the Head of Development Management to be able to settle or amend any necessary planning conditions and/or informatives in line with the matters set out in the recommendation and as resolved by the Planning Committee:**

- 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:  
Application form – Received 21/03/2024  
Topographical Survey – Drawing No. 19417\_01 – Received 05/03/2024  
Cabin Details – Received 05/03/2024  
Proposed Elevations – Received 02/04/2024  
Proposed Floor Plan and North Elevation – Received 02/04/2024  
Reason: To clarify which plans have been approved.
- 3) The materials to be used in the development hereby approved shall be as indicated on the approved plans.  
Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development.
- 4) The building hereby permitted shall be removed and the land upon which it is sited and restored to its former condition on or before 28<sup>th</sup> June 2029.  
Reason: In the interests of landscape, visual impact, and amenity of the area.
- 5) Prior to commencement of development, an Installation Method Statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Installation Method Statement shall include details of the care and attention taken to ensure no detrimental impact on archaeological structures, fixtures, and fittings. The approved development shall only proceed in accordance with the submitted Installation Method Statement.  
Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest especially related to the Scheduled Monument of Maidstone Archbishops Palace are properly protected.
- 6) Prior to first use of the approved building measures taken for the on-site enhancement of biodiversity shall be in place that are in accordance with details that have previously been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall provide for the enhancement of biodiversity through provision within the site curtilage of measures such as bird boxes, bat boxes, bug hotels, log piles, wildflower planting and hedgerow corridors. All features shall be maintained permanently thereafter.  
Reason: To enhance ecology and biodiversity on the site in line with the requirement to achieve a net biodiversity gain from all development.

- 7) The log cabin hereby approved shall only be used in connection with the activities of the Sea Cadets and the building shall not be used for any other purpose.  
Reason: The stated occupants of the building were material in the decision to grant planning permission and in the assessment of potential impact.

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