

APPLICATION: MA/13/1917 Date: 6 November 2013 Received: 11 November 2013

APPLICANT: Mrs Liz Tredget, Voluntary Action Maidstone

LOCATION: TOWN HALL, MIDDLE ROW, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME14 1TF

PARISH: Maidstone

PROPOSAL: A planning application for the introduction of external LED light fittings as shown on the site location plan and 2No. drawing numbers PL(0)1 and design and access statement, all received 6th November 2013.

AGENDA DATE: 16th January 2014

CASE OFFICER: Catherine Slade

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

- The Council owns the building to which the application relates.

1. POLICIES

- Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan 2000: R8
- Government Policy: National Planning Policy Framework 2012, PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment – Practice Guide.

2. HISTORY

- 2.1 The site has an extensive planning history, much of which is not directly relevant to the current application. The relevant recent history is summarised as follows:

MA/13/1918 - An application for listed building consent for the introduction of external LED lights – CURRENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION

MA/11/0752 - An application for listed building consent for works to the lead gutter serving the roof, including removal of redundant SV pipe from front elevation and replacement with cast iron downpipe – APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

MA/10/0229 - An application for listed building consent for alterations to ventilation pipe work on the south elevation of the Town Hall, replacing 100mm

CI pipe with a 150mm CI pipe with bracket fixings and replacement of existing 150mm CI pipe with a new pipe and bracket fixings – APPROVED SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

MA/08/1232 - An application for listed building consent for the fitting of a 450mm diameter plaque on the south elevation – APPROVED

MA/07/0474 - An application for listed building consent for the lowering of the public notices boards on the High Street elevation of the Town Hall – APPROVED SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

3. CONSULTATIONS

- 3.1 **Maidstone Borough Council Conservation Officer** raises no objection to the proposal, making the following detailed comments:

"The proposals concern the fixing of 8 small light fittings to the Town Hall to be sited above the entrances from Jubilee Square and Middle Row. These are considered to be appropriately sited and will have no major impact on the character or appearance of the building."

- 3.2 **English Heritage** did not wish to comment further than stating that the application should be decided in accordance with national and local policy and Maidstone Borough Council's specialist conservation advice.

4. REPRESENTATIONS

- 4.1 **Councillor Mrs Wilson** raised concerns over the visual impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the building.
- 4.2 No neighbour representations have been received.

5. CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Site and Surroundings

- 5.1.1 The application relates to the Grade II* listed Maidstone Town Hall, which is located in a prominent position at the north east end of Middle Row between the High Street and Bank Street, both subject to traffic restrictions. The site is located within the Maidstone Town Centre Conservation Area and the secondary retail area as designated in the Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan 2000. The area is identified as having the potential for the finding of archaeological remains.

5.1.2 The Town Hall is a two storey building constructed during the 1760s and having undergone extensive refurbishment in the 1850s. The building is constructed of Portland ashlar at ground floor level with red brick with stone dressings above. The building has a stone modillion cornice and brick parapet with pediment. At ground floor level, the windows are large round-headed openings flanked by pilasters with two round-headed doorways with large semi-circular fanlights and doors of 6 moulded panels. Above the ground floor level is a stringcourse, above which are the first floor windows which have stone architrave surrounds with pediments over, alternately triangular and curved. The north east end of the building forms a canted bay of three windows at first floor level and two windows and a door at ground floor level.

5.2 PROPOSAL

5.2.1 Planning permission is sought under this application for works to introduce four pairs of light fittings to the building at "fascia" level between the Portland stone of the ground floor and the string course above.

5.2.2 Two pairs would be introduced to the north east elevation of the building on either side of the main entrance, and two to the north west elevation of the building. These would be located to either side of the main entrance below the clock.

5.2.3 The lighting structures would be arranged in pairs providing up-lighting and down-lighting by way of LEDs. The individual lights would measure 345mm by 125mm, and would project from the building by 200mm.

5.3 ASSESSMENT

5.3.1 The key issues arising from this application is the impact upon the historic and architectural integrity of the Grade II* listed building and the Town Centre Conservation Area.

5.3.2 The works seek to provide feature lighting to highlight features of interest in the relevant facades. The proposed positions of the lighting and the use of up and down lighting have been determined in consultation with the Council's Conservation Officer, who has raised no objection to the proposal on the grounds of impact on the heritage asset. The introduction of these small structures would allow lighting to add interest and enhance visibility of features of architectural interest, whilst resulting in limited disruption to the fabric of the building.

5.3.3 The structures, and the lighting that would result, are limited in extent and in any case are located in a town centre location which is characterised by a significant amount of lighting and signage appropriate to the setting. It is not

considered that the proposal would result in harm to the amenity of the area, or the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

5.3.4 The proposal would not result in harm to residential amenity or highway safety, would not be detrimental to the functioning of the secondary retail area, and in all other respects is acceptable in planning terms.

5.3.5 To summarise, therefore, the proposal would preserve and enhance the Grade II* listed building and the Town Centre Conservation Area, and is acceptable in respect of all other planning considerations. As such, the proposal complies with the policies of the Development Plan (Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan 2000) and national planning policy and guidance as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 and PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment – Practice Guide, and planning permission should therefore be granted.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The proposed works would preserve the historic and architectural integrity of the Grade II* listed Town Hall building, its significance and its features of special interest. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Central Government guidance as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 and PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment – Practice Guide, and I therefore recommend approval subject to the conditions set out below.

7. 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:

2No. drawing numbers PL(0)1 and design and access statement, all received 6th November 2013;

Reason: To ensure the quality of the development is maintained and safeguard the historic and architectural integrity of the Grade II* listed building.

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.