

APPLICATION: MA/13/1918 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: An application for listed building consent for the introduction of external LED lights 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: Not applicable.
- Government Policy: 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/13/1917 - A planning application for the introduction of external LED light fittings – 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, within the Maidstone Town Centre Conservation Area. 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 Listed Building Consent 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 issue arising from this application is the impact upon the historic and architectural integrity of the Grade II* listed building, its significance and its features of special interest.
- 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 To summarise, therefore, the proposal would preserve and enhance the Grade II* listed building, its significance and its features of special architectural/historic interest. As such, the proposal complies with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment – Practice Guide, and Listed Building Consent 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.
- 6.2 As this is a Listed Building Consent application made on behalf of the Council, it must be referred to the Secretary of State for determination and consequently I have phrased my recommendation to Members accordingly:

7. RECOMMENDATION

REFER THE APPLICATION TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DETERMINATION, RECOMMENDING THAT LISTED BUILDING CONSENT BE GRANTED subject to 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.

Informatives set out below

For the avoidance of doubt, this consent does not grant listed building consent for any other works, including removal of existing lighting structures, than those set out in the description and necessary for implementation.

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.