

APPLICATION: MA/14/0134 Date: 27 January 2014 Received: 27 January 2014

APPLICANT: Property & Procurement Services

LOCATION: CHILLINGTON HOUSE, ST FAITHS STREET, MAIDSTONE, KENT,
ME14 1LH

PARISH: Maidstone

PROPOSAL: An application for listed building consent for internal alterations to facilitate the change of use of the building to 4No. flats as shown on drawing numbers 14.627.01, 14.627.02, 14.627.03, 14.627.04, 14.627.05, 14.627.06 and 14.627.07, supported by a Planning Statement (incorporating Heritage and Design and Access Statements), all received 27th January 2014

AGENDA DATE: 10th April 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: None relevant
- Government Policy: National Planning Policy Framework 2012, National Planning Policy Guidance 2014, PPS5 Planning and the Historic Environment – Practice Guide

2. HISTORY

- MA/14/0133 - Change of use of the building to 4No. flats – CURRENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION, REPORTED ON THE PAPERS
- MA/93/1271 - Change of use of existing building from a mixed use for museum/offices/workshops/residential purposes to a sole use for museum purposes and internal alterations to improve means of escape - APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

2.1 The building forms part of a complex of buildings associated with the Grade II* listed Chillington House, which houses the Maidstone Museum and Art Gallery. It is considered to be listed itself by virtue of this close relationship. Chillington House was listed in 1951. Chillington House dates from the Elizabethan period, although it has been much modified and added to, and has been open as a museum since 1858, and for much of this period as a college of art and sciences.

The building to which the current application relates is believed to have been constructed in the period between 1896 and 1908 as a residence for the Principal of the college.

- 2.2 The building has most recently been in use for purposes associated with Maidstone Museum and Art Gallery.
- 2.3 The current proposal is the subject of a concurrent application for planning permission under application reference MA/14/0133, the details of which are set out above.

3. CONSULTATIONS

- 3.1 **Maidstone Borough Council Conservation Officer:** raises no objection to the proposed works subject to conditions requiring the submission, written approval and implementation of details of joinery. The officer makes the following detailed comments:
 - 3.1.1 *"Chillington House comprises a major 16th Century town house which was significantly extended in various campaigns in the latter half of the 19th Century after the museum was opened in it in 1858. It is the museum part of the building which attracts the Grade II* listing, mainly because of the 16th century fabric.*
 - 3.1.2 *In the 1890s further extensions were made to the western side of the museum to form new premises for the School of Science and Art which were opened in 1894; these are now used by the Adult Education Centre. These buildings were designed by the architects Ruck and Smith of Maidstone (Ruck had been a former pupil of the Art School); they are in the Flemish Renaissance style popular in the 1890s and together with the museum buildings form a highly attractive group of huge significance to the character and interest of the Chillington House Conservation Area, not only for their architectural merit but also for their social historical interest as representations of civic pride in the late 19th century.*
 - 3.1.3 *The building which is the subject of the current application did not form part of the first phase of building connected with the School of Science and Art, but from old Ordnance Survey map evidence was erected between 1896 and 1908. Although somewhat simpler in design, stylistically it relates well to the rest of the School of Science and Art and museum buildings. It is likely that it is also a design by Ruck and Smith (who later designed County Hall and the Police Station and Court buildings in Palace Avenue). It makes a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area, particularly given its projection towards the street so that it forms one side of an entrance courtyard to the Adult Education Centre.*
 - 3.1.4 *The building is thought to originally have been built to provide a house for the principal of the School of Art and Design, and later it was used as a residence for*

the curator of the museum. Latterly it has been used as offices for museum staff. Its original residential nature is evidenced by the domestic scale of its rooms, which contain some fine fireplaces. The original staircase is also a fine feature which adds significance to the building.

3.1.5 *The proposal to return the building to residential use, albeit in the form of four flats, is considered to be appropriate in listed building terms. The scheme has been designed so as to interfere as little as possible with the original room layout and retains the staircase and other notable interior features. No external changes are proposed."*

3.2 **English Heritage:** did not wish to comment on the application.

3.3 A site notice was displayed at the site, and a notice published in a local newspaper.

4. REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 No representations were received.

5. CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Site Description

5.1.1 The application site is located to the north of St Faith's Street, an unclassified public highway, in the town centre of Maidstone. As set out above, the building is part of a complex of Victorian and earlier buildings associated with Chillington House, a Grade II* listed building which houses the Maidstone Museum and Art Gallery. The complex of buildings forms the core of the Chillington House Conservation Area, together with St Faith's Church to the north east, and the gardens themselves which are located to the north. Also within the conservation area are the mid twentieth century Kent County Council library located to the south west of the site, and the Albion Inn, a Grade II listed building located on the opposite side of the highway. The Fremlins shopping centre is located beyond the public house, further to the south east.

5.1.2 The site is located in the south west of the complex of buildings associated with Chillington House. It comprises one of the later Victorian additions to the complex, and adjoins the earlier School of Science and Art located to the rear which is currently in use by Kent County Council Adult Education Services. These two buildings share a pedestrian access from St Faiths, which is via a small courtyard area formed by the two buildings and the western elevation of Chillington House itself.

5.1.3 The building is a substantial four storey building (including basement accommodation) formed of red brick with ashlar window surrounds in keeping with the older parts of the Chillington House complex. Despite these visual cues between the various elements of the complex, the architectural style of the proposal site differs from that of the other, older buildings in being simpler and

cleaner of line, omitting elements such as the stone mullions and Dutch gables which are characteristic of the older buildings. The building is externally little changed, and has retained some its most interesting internal features.

- 5.1.4 The building is prominent in the streetscape by virtue of its scale and proximity to the public highway, but remains subservient to the main form of Chillington House by virtue of its set back from the front boundary to the public highway, its lesser vertical proportions in respect of the room heights, and the relative grandeur of the architectural design of the different elements of the buildings.

5.2 Proposal

- 5.2.1 The application seeks listed building consent for works to facilitate the conversion of the existing building from accommodation serving the museum to four self contained residential properties, one on each floor. The lower ground floor flat would have its own entrance, however the other three would be served by a shared lobby, landing and staircase area located in the north west corner of the building. The proposal would result in the creation of two 2 bed flats and two 1 bed flats.
- 5.2.2 The proposal has been designed in order that original internal features are retained, and largely preserves the original layout of the building with limited interventions which are clearly identified on the drawings submitted.
- 5.2.3 No works are proposed to the exterior of the building, other than the replacement of joinery on a like for like basis where necessary, however the change of use requires the benefit of planning permission and is the subject of a separate application for planning permission (MA/14/0133), which is also reported on the papers.

5.3 Assessment

- 5.3.1 The application is for listed building consent, and as such the only matter for consideration under the scope of the current application is the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the listed building.
- 5.3.2 The detail of the application has been arrived at in close consultation with the Council's Conservation Officer, who raises no objection to the proposal, subject to the condition set out above, and considers that the proposed works are sympathetic to the original fabric and character and appearance of the listed building. English Heritage raise no objection to the proposed works.
- 5.3.3 In respect of the works to the interior, the scheme is considered to be successful in retaining remaining features of architectural interest including fireplaces and the internal staircase, and to respect the original form and layout of the building. They are considered to be appropriate and necessary for the conversion of the building to the use proposed (see MA/14/0133) which is considered to be appropriate in light of the historic use and purpose of the building, and to retain the overall character of the original building whilst allowing the retention of

original features of interest. For these reasons the works to the interior of the building are considered to be acceptable.

5.3.4 The proposal does not include any alterations to the exterior of the building.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 For the reasons set out above, it is considered that the design and scale of the proposed works would safeguard the preservation and enhancement the historical integrity and character of the Grade II* Listed Building. 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.

2. The development shall not commence until full details of all new internal and external joinery in the form of large scale drawings have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details;

Reason: To ensure safeguard the quality of the development and the character, appearance and historic and architectural integrity of the listed building in accordance with central government planning policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 and PPS5 Planning and the Historic Environment - Practice Guide.

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.