

MC/14/3788

Date Received: 22 December, 2014

Location: Sail And Colour Loft, Church Lane, Historic Dockyard, Chatham, ME4 4TE

Proposal: Change of use of South suite at ground floor level from Office (Class B1) to Office (Class B1) and Education (Class D1) with associated alterations to the external fabric and internal alterations to the South end of the ground and first floors and the whole of the second floor

Applicant: University of Kent Estates Department

Agent: Mr Burrows Hazle McCormack Young 3 Turnagain Lane Palace Street Canterbury Kent CT1 2ED

Ward River

Recommendation of Officers to the Planning Committee, to be considered and determined by the Planning Committee at a meeting to be held on 4 March 2015.

Recommendation - Approval with Conditions

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
1722/001/T2; 1722/010/T3; 1722/011/T2; 1722/012/T3; 1722/016/T3;
1722/019/T1; 1722/048/T2 (Received 22 December 2014); 1722/015/T4;
1722/018/T4; 1722/017/T5 (Received 09 February 2015)

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

- 3 No development shall take place until details of the proposed loophole doors including joinery details at 1:5 have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the work shall be carried out in strict accordance with those details.

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the development is satisfactory and without prejudice to conditions of visual amenity in the locality, in accordance with Policy BNE1 and BNE14 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

4 No amplified equipment shall be used in the premises.

Reason: In the interests of amenity of the adjacent residential properties, in accordance with Policy BNE2 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

For the reasons for this recommendation for approval please see Planning Appraisal Section and Conclusions at the end of this report.

Proposal

The development site is the Sail and Colour Loft, located in the Historic Dockyard in Chatham. The application is for the change of use of the south suite of the building at ground floor level from Office (Class B1) to Office (Class B1) and Education (Class D1) with associated alterations. Additionally internal alterations to the south end of the ground floor, the first floor and the whole of the second floor are proposed, as are some external alterations to the building fabric. The external alterations can be briefly described as:

- Installation of louvers in the rooftop lanterns.
- Replacement of the 'Loophole Doors' on the west elevation
- Like for like replacement of the existing stairs with a marginally wider emergency escape stair on the east elevation.
- New below ground drainage serving expanded WCs on the ground floor.
- Miscellaneous minor alterations to the external fabric.

Relevant Planning History

MC/13/2073 Change of use from office (Class B1) to office (Class B1) and education facilities (Class D1) for the second floor and south suite of the first floor

Decision Approval With Conditions
Decided 28 October, 2013

MC/11/1941 Change of use to B1(a) office use throughout the building together with alterations to existing front entrance and installation of emergency exit at 1st floor level

Decision Approval With Conditions
Decided 16 September, 2011

Representations

The application has been advertised on site and in the press and by individual neighbour notification to the owners and occupiers of neighbouring properties.

English Heritage and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings have also been consulted.

English Heritage have commented as follows:

- Generally support the application as a means of securing the long term future for the building while benefiting the sustainability of the individual building and expect to recommend Schedule Ancient Monument Consent is granted.
- Does not consider that the proposals will result in any significant harm from a Conservation Area perspective
- Internal arrangement around a central circulation core is one which would be sympathetic to the significance of the building, particularly the upper floor space which was used for the sail making
- Minor external alterations are unlikely to be prominent and do not affect key aspects of the building's significance
- Reservations about the loophole doors, however have recommended detailed design alterations to show amended version which will be more sympathetic
- Recommend the Local Authority that Planning Permission be granted subject to the amended loophole door design conditioning

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings have commented as follows:

- Consider that the proposals will affect both the appreciation of the various spaces in the building and its historic fabric.
- Insertion of partitions will alter the character of the spaces and should they be deemed acceptable there will be a need for acoustic separation.
- 19th century props and their integration with the partition issue is a concern, as there is a need to be able to read the various layers of the historic structure
- The construction of new partitions, new toilets and services will lead to the loss of the historic fabric including flooring where timber may affect the ability to insert new service routes.
- Some detailed issues need to be resolved and recommend further information is sought from the applicant.

Development Plan

The Development Plan for the area comprises the Medway Local Plan 2003. The policies referred to within this document and used in the processing of this application have been assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework, 2012 and are considered to conform.

Planning Appraisal

Background

The Sail and Colour Loft is a distinctive and notable building in the Chatham Historic Dockyard. Built circa 1723 it housed the work of sail makers and is a building of important architectural and historical merit and is both a Grade 1 Listed Building and a Schedule Ancient Monument. The building is also located in the Chatham Dockyard Conservation Area.

The Sail and Colour Loft is a key building, at the heart of the site that is at present,

considerably under-utilised. There is office space located on the two bottom floors of the north suite of the building, including the Historic Dockyard Trust Offices. The remainder of the building is in the use of the University of Kent.

A similar application [MC/13/2073] has established the principle of the part change of use from office (Class B1) to office (Class B1) and education facilities (Class D1) in sections of the Sail and Colour Loft.

It should be noted that this application relates wholly to planning permission with the key heritage application being assessed by English Heritage in terms of Scheduled Monument Consent.

Main Issues

The key considerations in this case, are the principle of the change of use, impacts on design including any impacts on the conservation area, amenity and highways.

Principle

The previous application for the change of use from B1 to B1/D1 noted that the establishment of a mixed B1 and D1 use is not considered to be negative due to the mixed use of the site and the fact there has over time been a change in the mix of uses across the site [The Dockyard].

In this case, the two key principle policies are the following:

Policy S9 – Chatham Historic Dockyard

Policy CF7 – Further, Higher and Adult Education

Policy S9 of the Local Plan states that at the Historic Dockyard, development that respects the historic character of the site will be permitted. The standard of urban design must be of the highest order.

The upper floors of the building provides an open and un-interrupted space for sail making, this is an important feature. There had been some concern the internal fit out will lose some of this openness. However, in consultation with English Heritage, the effect of this division will be ameliorated by the use of high level glazing to achieve visible continuity of the ceilings. To the same end no false ceilings are to be introduced anywhere in the building.

Externally, the installation of louvers in the rooftop lanterns is considered to result in minimal impacts, positioned in a manner that refrains from interrupting the rhythm. Equally, the like for like replacement of the existing, albeit marginally wider escape stair on the east elevation is considered to result in negligible impacts on the host building or the conservation area in which it is located. The key concern was the introduction of glass sheets as a part glazing to the loophole doors. A revised loophole design has been submitted that is broadly acceptable. However a condition to show the joinery detail of the doors is required. It is acknowledged that English Heritage is dealing with a Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) who will also specifically address this aspect of the design. In this regard the proposals are

considered acceptable to Policy S9 of the Local Plan.

Policy CF7 of the Local Plan seeks to support the expansion of further education facilities locally. The policy states that expansion of the existing campuses at Chatham Maritime and the Chatham Historic Dockyard will be permitted.

The Sail and Colour Loft building is currently occupied by offices, particularly the Historic Dockyard Trust, with the remainder of the building being occupied by the University of Kent. These proposals seek the internal fit out, for the University of Kent's Business School, who will also part occupy the ground floor. The proposals seek a further consolidation of university and further education activities in the Dockyard, ensuring a vital contribution to the local economy by further establishing greater synergy between the local economy and educational institutions. As such the proposals are acceptable to Policy CF7 of the Local Plan.

Design

The proposal will result in minimal impacts on the external appearance of the building. Improvements have been sought in terms of the more sympathetic design of the loophole doors. This is a required condition and subject to this, the proposals are acceptable to Policies BNE1 and BNE14 of the Local Plan.

Amenity

Key considerations in this regard are the surrounding neighbouring residential properties and existing organisations/business in the building itself. The change of use will result in a greater intensification of the D1 education use and therefore a greater influx in students. However, the use is established and the influx of activity to the dockyard area and, by association, Chatham is to be welcomed. The proposals are associated with the Kent University School of Business, therefore noise concerns in the guise of music tutorials etc, that would be expected in the School of Arts will not be increased by the activities of the School of Business. Therefore no negative impacts are envisaged above and beyond what currently exists.

The proposed alterations will not create any new issues with regard to loss of outlook, daylight, sunlight or privacy and as such the proposal is considered to be in accordance with policy BNE2 or the Medway Local Plan 2003

Highways

Parking space for the building uses falls within the dockyard's general parking strategy, as stated in the applicants Design and Access Statement. The proposal will generate increased patronage to the site, however this will be predominantly students whom are mostly a non-car ownership cohort. It is considered however, that there will be no increased demand for parking above what would have been required for an office use at this location. As such no objection is raised in this regard. There are no detrimental impacts considered as part of the change of use. The proposals, therefore accord with Policy T1, T4 and T13 of the Local Plan.

Conclusions and Reasons for Approval

The proposals enable further educational uses in the dockyard area with no significant effects considered detrimental to the conservation area, to the amenities of surrounding properties or to the Highways. The application is in accordance with Policies BNE1, BNE2, S9, CF7, BNE14, T1, T4 and T13 of the Local Plan and is recommended for approval.

The application would normally be determined under delegated powers but is being referred for Committee determination at the request of Cllr Mackness due to the sensitivity of the site being within the Historic Dockyard..

Background Papers

The relevant background papers relating to the individual applications comprise: the applications and all supporting documentation submitted therewith; and items identified in any Relevant History and Representations section within the report.

Any information referred to is available for inspection in the Planning Offices of Medway Council at Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham ME4 4TR and here <http://publicaccess.medway.gov.uk/online-applications/>