

MC/17/0028

Date Received: 5 January, 2017

Location: Slough Fort, Avery Way, Allhallows, Rochester ME3 9QL

Proposal: Listed building consent for exploratory works to investigate presence of stairs, ammunition lifts, embrasures and materials and equipment within ditch

Applicant: Mrs Duane Ashdown

Ward Peninsula

Case Officer Mary Smith

Contact Number 01634 331700

---

**Recommendation of Officers to the Planning Committee, to be considered and determined by the Planning Committee at a meeting to be held on 12 April 2017.**

**Recommendation - Approval with Conditions**

- 1 The development and works to which this consent relates shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

Reason: To comply with Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

The Ground Plan received 5 January 2017 and the annotated photographic details received 20 February 2017 and updated on 13 March 2017.

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

- 3 Prior to the removal of any material from the site a detailed written and photographic record of its condition and of the immediately surrounding area shall be taken. Both this and all other works hereby approved shall be supervised by Mr Keith Gulvin (Defence Heritage Historian) or another appropriately qualified Defence Heritage Historian or archaeologist who has first been agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority (in consultation with Historic England). Written notice of the completion of the works hereby permitted shall be sent to the Local Planning Authority upon their completion and within 6 months of this completion of the works two copies of a written and photographic record of the works shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority (one of which will be forwarded on to Kent County Council for

inclusion in their Historic Environmental Records).

Reason: In order to ensure that the works to this historic building and its surroundings are adequately recorded with regard to Policies BNE17 and BNE20 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**

This application for listed building consent is for exploratory works to investigate the presence of stairs, ammunition lifts, embrasures and materials and equipment within the ditch. These works would include:

- Investigations to establish if stairs remain to the lower magazine level;
- Investigating the possibility of ammunition lifts to the roof area and to the lost lower magazine level;
- Investigations to see if there are remains of the original gun embrasure and to see if one of the embrasures can be opened up as a potential siting for a replica or original gun on a carriage;
- The removal of a section of the earth glacis to expose a section of the granite face of the fort which was buried in the 1880's to establish the depth of the original ditch and recover materials and objects which may have been dumped in it.

## **Relevant Planning History**

MC/16/0342	Listed building consent for removal of existing electricity poles and redundant water tank and repair historic fabric of the Fort Decision Approval With Conditions Decided 22 March, 2016
MC/14/1611	Details pursuant to condition 3 of planning permission MC/14/0455 for Listed building consent application for the removal of the booster pump house front wall and concrete tank support bases Decision Discharge of Conditions Decided 27 June, 2014
MC/14/0455	Listed building consent application for the removal of the booster pump house front wall and concrete tank support bases Decision Approval With Conditions Decided 4 April, 2014

## **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. Historic England, Kent County Council (KCC) Archaeology, the Ancient Monuments Society, The British Council for Archaeology, The Georgian Group, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, The Twentieth Century Society, the Victorian Society and Allhallows Parish Council have also been consulted.

Historic England raise no objection to the application on heritage grounds.

## **Development Plan**

The Development Plan for the area comprises the Medway Local Plan 2003 (the Local Plan). 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 (the NPPF) and are considered to conform.

## **Planning Appraisal**

### *Background*

Slough Fort is a Grade II\* listed building, being a Royal Commission Fort of 1867 built to link the Medway defences with other new forts in the Thames Estuary. It was modified and extended in 1889-91 with the addition of two wing batteries each accommodating two 'disappearing' guns. There were further modifications to the armaments in the early twentieth century and the erection of a Battery Command Post on the fort roof during World War I to operate in conjunction with a Port War Signal Station to the east of the fort. The army withdrew in 1920 and the fort was sold in 1929 and used to house a small zoo. From the early 1960's it was then used as stables. The listing relates to the main D-shaped fort only. The external earthwork defences, wing batteries, the well protecting wall and the probable gun detachment shelter are protected by Scheduled Monument status.

The fort was listed in 2009. It had not been maintained in a wind and weathertight condition. Having served notice on the riding school tenants, the current owners commissioned a dilapidations schedule to identify and prioritise works required to repair the structure on a like for like basis in order to restore it to a condition which would enable it to be used as a historical attraction for the visitors of their holiday park/the local area. Repair works have commenced, being supervised and recorded by a Defence Heritage Historian, who has produced detailed reports and papers on the history and development of the fort.

### *Heritage Impacts*

The current application is for exploratory works to investigate presence of stairs, ammunition lifts, embrasures and materials and equipment within ditch. This work is in preparation for a much longer term project for the fort and site which would return some original features for visitor enjoyment if they are found to exist. The areas, extent and nature of the investigation works have been clearly identified in the submission

statements and documentation, as has the significance of the heritage asset. There are no objections to these investigative works which would not harm the overall importance of the fort as a heritage asset.

#### *Local Finance Considerations*

None considered relevant.

#### **Conclusions and Reasons for Approval**

The investigative works would not harm the overall historical significance of the fort and would aid in understanding its history. Approval is therefore recommended including with regard to Policies BNE17, BNE18 and BNE20 of the Local Plan and the advice in Section 12 of the NPPF. The applicant is already aware that a Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent will also be required for some of the works.

The application would normally be determined under delegated powers but is being referred to Planning Committee as the applicant is a member of staff of Medway Council.

---

#### **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/>