

2.5 REFERENCE NO - 21/502661/FULL			
APPLICATION PROPOSAL			
Change of use of garages, store and plant room to 3no. workshop studios. Refurbishment of main building to include internal alterations, insertion of replacement windows and external doors, insertion of solar panels, accessibility improvements, external roof plant and drop down safety barrier, erection of screened plant compound to rear yard and erection of replacement of Western boundary fence and gate. Demolition of canopy, ramp, brick infills and flat roof to 1no. garage.			
ADDRESS Masters House Trinity Road Sheerness Kent ME12 2PF			
RECOMMENDATION Grant, subject to conditions			
SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION			
The proposal would facilitate improvements to a non-designated heritage asset that would help secure its long-term use. The scheme would not harm the character and appearance of the building or wider conservation area, and would not cause any other adverse planning impacts.			
REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE			
Application on behalf of Swale Borough Council			
WARD Sheerness	PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL Sheerness Town Council	APPLICANT Anne Adams ,Swale Borough Council AGENT Noviun Architects	
DECISION DUE DATE 26/08/21		PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE 09/07/21	
PLANNING HISTORY			
Application No	Description	Decision	Date
SW/90/1250	Provision of external ramped access to main entrance and cash office with weather protection canopy over cash office	No objection	19.10.1990

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE

- 1.1 The subject site occupies a prominent position on the western side of Trinity Road, opposite the junction with Strode Crescent. The site is broadly rectangular in shape and measures approximately 30 meters from north to south and has an average width of 48 metres. The total curtilage area of the site is approximately 0.13 hectare.
- 1.2 The original building comprises of a two storey building with a pitched roof. There is a later additional flat roof extension to the north and a further large, relatively modern (1960's) two storey flat roof extension to the southern side. Masters House is the collective name for the building formerly occupied by Sheerness Urban District Council and currently home to Sheerness Town Council.
- 1.3 The front of the site is an open decorative grassed area with pathways which is boarded by a low level brick boundary wall fronting Trinity Road. The road boundary has shrubbery and small trees and provides the main pedestrian access point.

- 1.4 Holy Trinity Church occupies the land immediately to the north and the church yard has numerous mature trees along the northern boundary to the site. Some of the trees are close to Masters House to the west side.
- 1.5 Trinity Place leads to a council owned car park to the rear (west) of the site and an access road with a narrow pavement forms the southern boundary.
- 1.6 The rear (west side) of the site is an open tarmacked area enclosed with a chain-link boundary fence. Public car parking spaces are arranged along the west boundary and there is vehicular and gated access off the access road.
- 1.7 Masters House is located within the setting of a number of listed buildings most notably, the grade II listed Trinity Church immediately to the north. Masters House is a 'non-designated local heritage asset', located within the Sheerness Mile Town Conservation Area.

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 Permission is sought for the upgrading of the existing building to be used as a business centre with small conference, office, workshops (Class E) and meeting room facilities.
- 2.2 In total the refurbishment will provide a total of 8 contained office units, with separate access, shared kitchen and WC's. The ground floor would contain the main entrance, enlarged reception, meeting rooms, offices, a potential office for the Town Council and a new suite of WCs. On the first floor, there is a function hall with adjacent smaller meeting/ function space, new accessible WC and kitchenette and further offices.
- 2.3 The proposed use of the land would be retained for offices but leased to small businesses, with community use. The workshops to the rear would be used by small businesses with a focus on the arts, designing, making etc that would require a workshop space (Class E).
- 2.4 Access to all the entrances will be improved as part of the development. The ramp to the main entrance from the garden area adjacent to Trinity Road is to be replaced and a suitable railing provided.
- 2.5 Externally, photovoltaic panels and an associated drop down guard rail are proposed on the existing flat roof over the later 1960's extension. A new pitched roof is to be constructed over Workshop 1 and cloaked to the roofs of workshops 2 and 3. In addition, it is proposed to replace all windows and external doors.
- 2.6 A plant enclosure is proposed immediately to the rear of the 1960's extension which would have a footprint of 45m² and the existing chain link boundary treatment is to be replaced.

3. PLANNING CONSTRAINTS

- 3.1 Mile Town Conservation Area
- 3.2 Potential Archaeological Importance
- 3.3 Environment Agency Flood Zone 3

4. POLICY AND CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021

Chapter 2: Sustainable Development; Chapter 6: Building a strong, competitive economy; Chapter 9: Promoting sustainable transport; Chapter 11: Making effective use of land; Chapter 12 : Achieving well-designed places; Chapter 14 : Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change; Chapter 16: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

4.2 Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan 2017

Policy ST 1 Achieving sustainable development in Swale; Policy ST 3 The Swale settlement strategy; Policy CP1 Building a strong, competitive economy; Policy CP2 Promoting Sustainable Transport; Policy CP4 Requiring good design; Policy CP7 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment – providing for green infrastructure; Policy DM Managing Transport Demand and Impact; Policy DM 7 Vehicle Parking; Policy DM 14 General Development Criteria; Policy DM 16 Alterations and Extensions; Policy DM 19 Sustainable Design and Construction; Policy DM 21 Water, flooding and Drainage; Policy DM 33 Development Affecting a Conservation Area.

4.3 Swale Borough Council Parking Standards 2020

5. LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

5.1 Sheerness Town Council – Support the proposal (27.07.2021)

6. CONSULTATIONS

6.1 Design and Conservation Officer – No objection, subject to conditions (20.07.2021)

6.2 Environment Agency – Low environmental risk – no comments (25.06.2021)

6.3 KCC Highways – Does not warrant involvement from the Highway Authority (30.06.2021)

6.4 Environmental Health – No objection, subject to conditions (30.07.2021)

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PLANS

7.1 Site Location Plan PL003 Rev PL 1; Existing Block Plan PL001 Rev PL2; Existing Ground Floor Plan PL004 Rev PL1; Existing First Floor Plan PL006 Rev PL1; Existing Elevations PL010 Rev PL 1; Existing Sections PL012 Rev PL1; Existing Roof Plan PL008 Rev PL2; Existing South and West Boundary Fence PL014

7.2 Proposed Block Plan PL002 Rev PL2; Proposed Ground Floor Plan PL005 Rev PL1; Proposed First Floor Plan PL007 Rev PL1, Proposed Roof Plan PL009 Rev PL2; Proposed Elevations PL011 Rev PL2; Proposed Sections PL013 Rev PL 2; Proposed South and West Boundary Fence PL015; Proposed Plan Compound PL016

7.3 Acoustic Planning Report; Flood Risk Assessment; Heritage Statement; Tree Survey

8. APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

8.1 The site is located within the built-up area boundary of Sheerness which is recognised as the main town centre within the West Sheppey Triangle. Sheerness is identified as Tier 2 of the

settlement strategy where the location of development and services is generally supported under ST3 of the Local Plan (2017).

- 8.2 Policy CP1 of the Local Plan (adopted 2017) safeguards for future use the employment potential and the sustainable growth and expansion of business and enterprise in these areas. The application seeks the re-use of an existing building and would increase facilities available to local communities as well as visitors. The conversion of the workshops to the rear has the potential to bring forward homegrown business creation and opens up wider employment and educational opportunities within a sustainable location.
- 8.3 The existing building is a ‘non-designated local heritage asset’, located within the Sheerness Mile Town Conservation Area. Policy CP 8 stipulates that development should ‘*sustain and enhance the significance of Swale’s designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings in a manner appropriate to their significance*’, and policy DM 33 (4) states proposals should ‘*retain unlisted buildings or other structures that make, or could make, a positive contribution to the character of the area.*’ In this regard, a Heritage Statement has been submitted with the application and the application has been considered by the Swale Conservation and Design Manager who is satisfied that the net effect of the proposals on this heritage setting would ‘*be that of a modest, and welcomed enhancement*’.
- 8.4 As such, for the reasons set out above, I consider the principle of development to accord with policies ST1, ST6, CP8 and DM33 of the Local Plan (2017) as adopted, subject to any material considerations as set out in further detail below.

Visual amenity and impact upon wider Heritage Setting

- 8.5 The site is currently vacant and minimal changes are proposed to the existing external built form. The changes to the external appearance of the building include the proposed replacement of a flat roof with a pitched roof on one of the outbuildings to the rear and replacement windows and doors to the main building – incorporating timber framed windows to the main building and aluminium framed windows to the 1960’s extension. A solar array is also proposed on the flat roof section of the 1960’s extension, to be screened from view by an existing parapet. In my opinion, the external alterations would not be harmful to the character or appearance of the building or wider heritage setting.
- 8.6 The proposals would facilitate the continued use of a historic building in a sustainable location. It is considered that the net effect of the proposals would result in a modest net enhancement to the application property, the wider conservation area and the setting of the grade II listed Trinity Church immediately to the north, subject to the necessary detailed consideration as requested in conditions 3, 4, 5 and 6 set out in further detail below.
- 8.7 As such, it is reasonable to conclude that the use can be accommodated on the site without a harmful impact on visual amenity or the character of the wider heritage setting, consistent with Policies CP8, DM14 and DM33 of the Local Plan (2017) as adopted.

Residential Amenity

- 8.8 In terms of residential amenity Policy DM14 of the Local Plan 2017 supports development that would, ‘*cause no significant harm to amenity and other sensitive uses or areas*’. In this regard, given the nature of development and relative separation between the site and surrounding buildings, the proposal would not adversely impact on loss of natural light, overshadowing, outlook, sense of enclosure or loss of privacy.

- 8.9 Turning to potential noise issues, an Acoustic Planning Report was submitted alongside the application. The information has been assessed by the Council's Environmental Health Manager who is satisfied with its conclusions and recommendations, and subject to the current design remaining unchanged and that the mitigation scheme and measures recommended within the report are carried out, raises no objection to the proposal. Therefore, proposed compliance with the report's mitigation measures is secured by condition 7 as set out below.

Access, Highways and Parking

- 8.10 Policies DM6 and DM7 of the Local Plan (2017) set out vehicle parking for non-residential uses and measures for cycle parking facilities.
- 8.11 The existing vehicular access to the rear of Masters House is retained and a new loading area for the proposed workshops / studios created. The site will remain accessible from Trinity Road and the church yard. The main entrance from the garden area is to be retained, with the existing access ramp replaced. The building will also be made accessible from the vehicle access road and from the rear yard. Given that, no changes are proposed to the existing arrangements and I have no concerns in relation to highway safety.
- 8.12 The proposal does not incorporate any formal on-site parking provision (although the small yard would offer some limited opportunity for parking). However, in this instance members will note the sustainable location of the site and the proximity and size of the Council owned public car park immediately to the rear of the site. It is not unusual for town centre business premises to have no formal on-site parking and in this instance, I do not consider this to be unacceptable – taking into account that the main building has an existing longstanding use as offices and that additional traffic and parking impacts arising from the conversion of the outbuildings to workshops would be limited.

Flood Risk

- 8.13 The site is identified by the Environment Agency as Flood Risk 3 and the Environment Agency have raised no objection subject to compliance with standard advice. In this regard the proposal is for the purposes of commercial use, no habitable accommodation is proposed and there is no intended night time use and as such is compliant with standard advice of the Environmental Agency.

Landscaping

- 8.14 Policy DM14 requires the provision of an integrated landscape strategy that would achieve a high standard of landscaping scheme within the development. The proposed site plan shows the retention of existing grassed areas, shrubbery and trees along the site frontage which would soften the visual impact whilst encouraging natural bio-diversity and natural habitat, all of which is encouraged and considered acceptable.

9. CONCLUSION

10. For the reasons set out above, I consider the proposal is acceptable and recommend for approval subject to safeguarding conditions as set out in detail below.

11. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT Subject to the following conditions

CONDITIONS to include

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which the permission is granted.

Reason: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. No development shall take place other than in accordance with the following approved plans: Proposed Block Plan PL002 Rev PL2; Proposed Ground Floor Plan PL005 Rev PL1; Proposed First Floor Plan PL007 Rev PL1, Proposed Roof Plan PL009 Rev PL2; Proposed Elevations PL011 Rev PL2; Proposed Sections PL013 Rev PL 2; Proposed South and West Boundary Fence PL015; Proposed Plan Compound PL016

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development and to safeguard the enjoyment of their properties by existing and prospective occupiers.

3. Prior to the commencement of development, a sample and/or manufacturer brochure and technical details of the metal sheet product to be used on the replacement roof to garage/workshop 1 and a 1:5 vertical section of the eaves and verge detailing to the replacement roof shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The roof replacement work shall thereafter be carried out using the roof covering material and eaves/verge detailing agreed in relation to this condition.

Reason: In the interest of protecting the character and appearance of the Sheerness Mile Town Conservation Area.

4. Prior to the commencement of development, details of the replacement colour-coated windows to be used shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.. The details to be submitted shall include a technical specification of the windows to be used, scaled sections through the frame and glazing and a section showing the proposed depth of the window reveal. The relevant window replacement work shall thereafter be carried out using the window product(s) agreed in relation to this condition

Reason: In the interest of protecting the character and appearance of the Sheerness Mile Town Conservation Area.

5. Prior to the commencement of development, a 1:10 elevation detail and a 1:1 or 1:2 plan and vertical section for the replacement/new timber window and doors shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The sections to be provided shall include part of the surrounding masonry or joinery bordering the window or door opening and shall be set out clearly (annotated as necessary) to show the following details, as applicable:

- Depth of reveal
- Window head and cill/sub-cill detailing
- Glazing section (thickness of glass and in case of double glazing, dimension of spacing between the panes of glass)
- Glazing bar profile(s)
- window frame

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details

Reason: In the interest of protecting the character and appearance of the Sheerness Mile Town Conservation Area.

6. The guardrails to the solar array shall remain in the folded, flat position at all times, except when repairs and/or routine maintenance is being carried out to the solar array.

Reason: In the interest of protecting the character and appearance of the Sheerness Mile Town Conservation Area.

7. The development hereby permitted shall not be open to the public or any part thereof operational until the mitigation measures as set out in the Acoustic Planning Report prepared by ICP dated 22.04.2021 have been completed. The mitigation measures shall be retained in-situ thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity.

8. No part of the building shall be occupied until details of secure and covered cycle parking facilities have been provided in accordance details that have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To provide adequate bicycle storage in the interest of promoting energy efficiency and sustainable development.

9. The workshops located within the outbuildings to the rear of the site, shall be used for the purposes of Class E only and for not for other purposes whatsoever, of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Class) Order 1987 (as amended) and any other use whether permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2020 (as amended) (or any order revoking or re-enacting that Order) of not.

Reason: To the interests of the amenities of the area

INFORMATIVES

Environment Agency

Although we have no comments on this planning application, the applicant may be required to apply for other consents directly from us. The term 'consent' covers consents, permissions or licenses for different activities (such as water abstraction or discharging to a stream), and we have a regulatory role in issuing and monitoring them.

The applicant should contact 03708 506 506 or consult our website to establish whether a consent will be required. <https://www.gov.uk/environmental-permit-check-if-you-need-one>

KCC Highways and Transportation

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure , before the development hereby approved is commenced, that all necessary highway approvals and consents where required are obtained and that the limits of highway boundary are clearly established in order to avoid any enforcement action being taken by the Highway Authority.

Across the county there are pieces of land next to private homes and gardens that do not look like roads or pavements but are actually part of the road. This is called 'highway land'. Some of this land is owned by The Kent County Council (KCC) whilst some are owned by third party owners. Irrespective of the ownership, this land may have 'highway rights' over the topsoil.

Information about how to clarify the highway boundary can be found at <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/what-we-look-after/highway-land/highway-boundary-enquiries>

The applicant must also ensure that the details shown on the approved plans agree in every aspect with those approved under such legislation and common law. It is therefore important for the applicant to contact KCC Highways and Transportation to progress this aspect of the works prior to commencement on site.

The Council's approach to the application

In accordance with paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), July 2021 the Council takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. We work with applicants/agents in a positive and creative way by offering a pre-application advice service, where possible, suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome and as appropriate, updating applicants / agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.

The application was considered by the Planning Committee where the applicant/agent had the opportunity to speak to the Committee and promote the application.

NB For full details of all papers submitted with this application please refer to the relevant Public Access pages on the council's website.

The conditions set out in the report may be subject to such reasonable change as is necessary to ensure accuracy and enforceability.

