

<b>2.3 REFERENCE NO - 15/504308/FULL</b>		
<b>APPLICATION PROPOSAL</b> Alterations to external doors and the creation of ramped access. As amended by the revised drawing and specifications received 7 <sup>th</sup> July 2015 indicating that the Aco drain shall be substituted for a Marshalls Mono Slot drain.		
<b>ADDRESS</b> St Mary Of Charity Church Church Road Faversham Kent		
<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b> GRANT, SUBJECT TO any additional comments from Historic England received (closing date 15th July 2015).		
<b>SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION/REASONS FOR REFUSAL</b> The proposal meets the statutory requirement in preserving the special interest of the listed building and preserving or enhancing the character of the conservation area.		
<b>REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE</b> Town Council objection		
<b>WARD</b> Abbey	<b>PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL</b> Faversham	<b>APPLICANT</b> St Mary Of Charity Vicar And PCC <b>AGENT</b> Lee Evans Architects
<b>DECISION DUE DATE</b> 17/07/15	<b>PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE</b> 17/07/15	

**1.0 DESCRIPTION OF SITE**

- 1.01 The site is the area outside the west end of the south aisle at the church of St Mary of Charity, Faversham which is a Grade I listed Historic parish church.
- 1.02 The parts of the building affected by the proposals are the South porch and the area immediately outside the porch. St Mary of Charity is situated in the heart of Faversham, in the conservation area, set in a large churchyard.

**2.0 PROPOSAL**

- 2.01 The existing access into the church at this point has a step which prevents easy access for the disabled This application is for planning permission to take up the existing flagstones (approximately 3 square metres) and re-lay them to form a graded approach which will remove the current step in the area outside the South porch. The proposal also includes moving the existing inner timber doors to the outer doorway, replacing existing spiked timber gates; the gates would be relocated to act as inner entrance gates.
- 2.02 .The South porch will have a gentle ramp down into the porch with an “Aco” type drainage gulley at the bottom. These works will be carried out under the direction of an Archaeologist.
- 2.03 Having moved the existing doors to the outside of the porch the ironmongery on the relocated door would remain and a pair of purpose-made cast brass cruciform round windows are proposed to be installed to give light into the church.

### **3.0 PLANNING CONSTRAINTS**

Conservation Area Faversham

Listed Buildings SBC Ref Number: 1392/SW

Description: G I ST MARY OF CHARITY CHURCH, CHURCH ROAD, FAVERSHAM

### **4.0 POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Development Plan:

Relevant Saved policies of the adopted Swale Borough Local Plan 2008 include:

E1 (General Development Criteria)

E14 (Listed Buildings)

E15 (Conservation Areas)

E19 (Design)

### **5.0 LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS**

None Received.

### **6.0 CONSULTATIONS**

6.01 Faversham Town Council raises objection, their comments are below:

- 1) The proposed circular windows in the timber doors would be harmful to the character of those doors.
- 2) Removing the gates to the inner doorway and fixing them opening would take away their meaning as entrance doors.
- 3) The proposed Aco drain would be harmful to the character of the external paving.

### **7.0 APPRAISAL**

7.01 This is a minor but significant alteration to the porch of this grade I listed church. The work is exempt from the need for listed building consent under ecclesiastical law but the new external porch doors and new ramp require planning permission.

7.02 The main considerations in this case concern the impact the alterations would have upon the special architectural interest of the listed building and the conservation area. The Council has a statutory duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building, its setting and any features of

interest which are present. It has a similar duty with regard to the conservation area.

- 7.03 Paragraph 132 of the NPPF states that *“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.”*
- 7.04 I initially had one very minor concern over the appearance of the Aco drain at the threshold to the new porch doors. The Aco drain is a utility item which will look a little inappropriate in such sensitive surroundings amidst high quality paving. I considered that amendments relating to the drain were necessary to make the proposal acceptable.
- 7.05 The applicant was provided with the opportunity to submit amendments to the scheme, these were forthcoming and my concerns have been addressed. Historic England have been reconsulted on the amendments and their views are awaited. I will update Members at the meeting on this issue.
- 7.06 Within the design and heritage statement clear justification for the proposed works has been outlined. The purpose of the proposal is to make the church less forbidding and “fortress like” and, in the case of the South porch, provide full access for wheelchair users.
- 7.07 The inner doors have been altered in the past, possibly from a large single door into a handed pair and the imprints of the ironmongery are visible and will remain to enable its story to be read. It is believe that when it was a single door it was placed in the outer opening and that this proposal will return it to its original position but as two doors rather than one.
- 7.08 When considering the objections from the Town Council, I believe that the amended proposal will have minimal effect on the historic fabric. The proposed circular windows in the timber doors would comprise of a mixture of traditional and contemporary design and detailing that will complement the doors which have previously been altered.
- 7.09 The relocation of the spiked gates is in my opinion a well thought out compromise as their loss would be a negative impact on the significance of the porch. It is also worth keeping in mind that the repositioning of the gates would be largely reversible and that the Aco drain that has been considered harmful to the character of the paving has now been amended to a very subtle slot drain.

## 8.0 CONCLUSION

8.01 A clear and convincing heritage and design statement has accompanied this application. The proposed alterations will use materials which are entirely in keeping with a historic ecclesiastical building, while preserving the special architectural interest of the listed building and the conservation area.

8.02 I am of the view that the changes are modest and largely non-destructive to the historic fabric but would make the church fully accessible and allow more flexible use. I am content that the justification for the changes is well made and that any small harm to the historic fabric is outweighed by the benefits of achieving disabled access to the church.

**9.0 RECOMMENDATION – GRANT** Subject to any further views of Historic England on the amended plans (closing date 15/7/15) and to the following conditions

- (1) The development to which this permission relates must be begun no later than the expiration of one year beginning with the date on which the permission is granted.

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

- (2) The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved plans and specifications, including drawing 07969-WD-(20)-0-02 Revision F.

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

### The Council's approach to the application

In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Council takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. We work with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by:

Offering pre-application advice. Where possible, suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome. As appropriate, updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.

In this instance the applicant/agent was advised of minor changes required to the application and these were agreed.

**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.