

# HeritageCollective

## Heritage Statement



## Stone Court Hotel, 28 Lower Stone Street, Maidstone

On behalf of Dulson Investments UK Ltd

December 2014

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been produced by Heritage Collective on behalf of Dulson Investments UK Ltd.
- 1.2 The report supports an application for planning permission and listed building consent seeking permission for internal and external alterations associated with the conversion of the building from a hotel into 14 residential units. The Stone Court Hotel, Maidstone is a grade II\* listed building (also known as Stone House and The Judge's Lodgings) and is located within the Maidstone Centre Conservation Area.
- 1.3 In accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>1</sup> this statement describes the significance of the listed building as a designated heritage asset.

## Proposals

- 1.4 Full details of the proposed development are set out within the Design and Access Statement and drawn submission of the application.
- 1.5 In brief the proposals involve the change of use of the building from a hotel to a series of dwellings. For this to be achieved internal alterations to the plan form of the building are required. These alterations have been designed to respect the significant elements of the building and involve limited alterations within areas of high sensitivity. External alterations are limited and involve the creation of a single window and door within the carriage arch to the left hand side of the Stone Court Hotel. It is also proposed to open up and provide improvements to the existing courtyard, removing later fabric of no interest.
- 1.6 There are numerous listed buildings surrounding the application site however, due to the limited external alterations proposed to the grade II\* listed building, the proposals are not considered capable of resulting in an effect on the significance of the these listed buildings. Similarly, due to the nature of the proposals, the works are not considered capable of affecting the character and appearance of the Maidstone Centre Conservation area.

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 128 requires an application to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.

## Purpose of the Study

- 1.7 The purpose of this document is to assist with the determination of the applications by informing the decision takers on the effects of development on the historic built environment. Value judgements on the significance of the heritage assets affected are presented and the effects of the proposals upon that significance are appraised.
- 1.8 Specifically this report assesses the capability of the listed building to absorb change without causing harm to its significance. Particular regard is given to the provisions of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. The report also sets out how the proposal complies with the guidance and policy of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 and local planning policy.
- 1.9 The heritage assets affected have been observed and assessed by the author following a site visit made on 19th November 2014 in good weather.

## Key Considerations

- 1.10 The key factors which need to be taken into consideration are the significance of the grade II\* listed building, its ability to absorb change and the effect the proposed development will have on the significance of the listed building.

## Planning History

- 1.11 The following elements of the planning history for the Stone Court Hotel are considered relevant to the current proposals.

Application	Description	Outcome
75/0373	Permanent use of premises as offices	No Objection
94/1764	Listed Building Consent for alterations and extensions to rear car park	Approved
95/1058	Listed building consent for the removal of new internal partitions and the demolition and removal of W.C. block and external wall to the side access.	Approved

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96/1409	Change of use from offices to a single dwelling as shown on existing and proposed ground first and second floor layouts	Refused
96/0107 and 96/0610	Demolition of existing external W.C's formation of new vehicular access onto Lower Stone Street and change of use of rear garden to provide 10 parking spaces	Approved
97/0883	Change of use from offices to a single dwelling including the erection of a wall at the rear of the property (retrospective), the hard surfacing of the rear garden and the erection of a pair of wooden entrance gates to the side of the pedestrian access, as amended	Approved
99/1398	Change of use from offices to 12 bed hotel with ancillary bar, restaurant and function/conference room.	NOTPRO
01/0315 and 01/0316	Convert existing building from offices to a hotel, vehicular access to the rear from Palace Avenue via the rear of Gail House and the provision of four car parking spaces and the erection of a kitchen extraction system	Approved
03/0312 and 03/0389	Attachment of new timber conservatory to rear of property	Withdrawn
03/1350 and 03/1351	Erection of a rear timber conservatory	Approved

1.12 There are also a number of application for alterations to signage and illumination which have been omitted from the above list.

1.13 Though not forming part of an application a significant amount of damage has been done to historic fabric within the Stone Court Hotel as a result of a

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police raid of the hotel during 2014. This is mainly confined to damage to doors and associated joinery.

## **Pre-application Advice**

1.14 Pre-application advice regarding this scheme was sought from Maidstone Borough Council in September 2014. A site visit with the Maidstone Borough Council Planning and Conservation Officer (Geoff Brown and Mike Parkinson respectively) was undertaken on 16th September 2014. Following the site visit on the 15th October 2014 a series of amended plans were sent through to officers for comment. Though no written pre-application response has been received from Maidstone Borough Council the planning Officer confirmed verbally to the architect, Neil Penfold of ADB Architecture Ltd, that the scheme as amended was acceptable.

## 2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

### Legislation

- 2.1 Legislation relating to listed buildings and conservation areas is contained in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Sections 16 and 66 of the Act place a duty on the decision maker to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings. Section 72 of the Act places similar duty on the decision maker with respect to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

### National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.2 The NPPF constitutes the Government's current national guidance and policy regarding development in the historic environment. It is a material consideration and includes a succinct policy framework for local planning authorities and decision takers. It relates to planning law by stating that applications are to be determined in accordance with the local plans unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 2.3 Paragraphs 126 to 141 of the NPPF deal with conserving and enhancing the historic environment with much emphasis on "significance", defined in Annex 2 as:

*"The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting."*

- 2.4 Paragraph 128 of the NPPF places a duty on the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, providing a proportionate level of detail. The effects of any development on a heritage asset therefore need to be assessed against the four components of its heritage significance: its archaeological, architectural, artistic and historic interests.



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- 2.5 Paragraph 129 requires LPAs to identify and assess the "*the particular significance of any heritage asset*". This should be taken into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, including by development affecting its setting.
- 2.6 Paragraph 131 is particularly relevant, in requiring LPAs to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.
- 2.7 Paragraph 132 applies specifically to designated heritage assets. It states that great weight should be given to their conservation and it requires a proportionate approach (i.e. the more important the asset, the greater the weight attached to its conservation). Conservation (for heritage policy) is defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as:
- "The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance."*
- 2.8 The importance and relevance of this definition is that it does not suggest conservation to be the same as preservation. Indeed, what sets conservation apart is the emphasis on proactively maintaining and managing change and not on a reactive approach to resisting change. In its simplest interpretation conservation could amount to a change that at least sustains the significance of a heritage asset.
- 2.9 Paragraph 131 to 134 describe two levels of potential harm that can be caused to the significance of designated heritage assets, namely substantial harm and less than substantial harm. These effects are to be weighed in the planning balance according to the guidance set out within paragraphs 131 to 134, bearing in mind the statutory provisions above. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, including grade I and II\* listed buildings should be wholly exceptional.
- 2.10 Paragraph 133 deals with substantial harm to, or total loss of, significance of a designated heritage asset and sets out a series of tests to be met in order for substantial harm to a designated heritage asset to be considered acceptable. Paragraph 134 deals with cases of less than substantial harm and

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notes that any such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Heritage protection and the conservation of heritage assets are recognised as of benefit to the public.

- 2.11 Harm is defined by English Heritage as a change which erodes the significance of a heritage asset.
- 2.12 Paragraph 137 notes that proposals which preserve those elements of the setting of heritage assets that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of that asset should be treated favourably.

## Local Planning Policy Context

- 2.13 Maidstone's current local plan, the Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan, was adopted in 2000. The Council is now working on a new plan to replace it, which will be called the Maidstone Borough Local Plan. In September 2007 numerous policies were not saved as part of the Local Plan, this included all policies relating to heritage assets. The new local plan has not yet been formally adopted and there are therefore no adopted/current local planning policies which are relevant to the heritage considerations of this application. As such, the primary considerations in terms of policy will be national planning policy and guidance.

## National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) 2014

- 2.14 The National Planning Practice Guidance (2014) provides advice on enhancing and conserving the historic environment in accordance with the NPPF (2012).
- 2.15 In relation to harm the guidance states:

*"Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance*

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*rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting."*

2.16 The NPPG also provides guidance on viable uses for heritage assets. The guidance notes that viable uses for heritage assets are likely to lead to the investment in their maintenance necessary for their long-term conservation. It is also desirable to avoid successive harmful changes carried out in the interests of repeated speculative and failed uses.

2.17 The document notes that:

*"If there is only one viable use, that use is the optimum viable use. If there is a range of alternative viable uses, the optimum use is the one likely to cause the least harm to the significance of the asset, not just through necessary initial changes, but also as a result of subsequent wear and tear and likely future changes.*

*The optimum viable use may not necessarily be the most profitable one. It might be the original use, but that may no longer be economically viable or even the most compatible with the long-term conservation of the asset. However, if from a conservation point of view there is no real difference between viable uses, then the choice of use is a decision for the owner."*

2.18 The document also notes that on occasion harmful development may sometimes be justified in the interests of realising the optimum viable use of an asset, notwithstanding the loss of significance caused provided the harm is minimised.

2.19 Paragraph 020 of the document notes that public benefits can be heritage based and can include:

- Sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting;
- Reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset; and
- Securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation.

## 3.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 3.1 It is recognised that not all parts of a heritage asset will necessarily be of equal significance. In some cases certain elements could accommodate change without affecting the significance of the asset. Change is only considered harmful if it erodes an asset's significance. Understanding the significance of any heritage assets affected and any contribution made by their setting (paragraph 128, NPPF 2012) is therefore fundamental to understanding the scope for and acceptability of change.
- 3.2 A description of the significance of the Stone Court Hotel is presented below. The descriptions are proportionate to the asset's significance and are sufficient to understand the nature of any impact the proposals may have upon that significance.

### *Architectural Interest*

- 3.3 The building was clearly constructed during different phases and for ease this section will discuss the architectural interest of the building in two parts; the front portion of the building which contains the original 16th century dwelling and later 19th century additions to the rear.

#### Front Portion

- 3.4 To the front elevation the Stone Court hotel is a three storey and 5 bay structure. The elevation is stuccoed with a plain clay tile roof above. The front elevation holds a number of features of architectural interest including a heavily moulded wooden modillion eaves cornice with egg and dart detailing and a moulded cornice above first floor with a central curved pediment.
- 3.5 The feature of main architectural interest to the front elevation is the central doorcase. The doorcase comprises of fluted Corinthian pilasters supporting a curved pediment. The tympanum of the pediment is enriched with pargetting of foliage and the date '1716'. Within the doorcase is the original early 18th century door with ten fielded panels.
- 3.6 The front elevation masks the original façade of the building which would have been a 16th century frontage of a timber framed building. The current

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façade was added, along with around three feet of floor space, to the structure in the early 18th century, as dated by the doorcase. Evidence of the earlier building and the structure's development can be seen on the visible side south elevation.

- 3.7 Internally the front portion of the building containing the original 16th century dwelling is of considerable architectural interest as reflected by its high grade listing. There are numerous features of architectural importance including a large 17th century stone fireplace with carved timber overmantel and numerous rooms at ground and first floor containing 17th and 18th century panelling of various forms. The panelling has been affected by some later alterations, however, this does not greatly affect the interest of the features. Also of note internally is the grand 18th century staircase located within the main hall which features turned balustrades and an ornate Corinthian column newel post. The front portion of the building retains a good number of 18th century, and some earlier, windows and doors along with their associated joinery.
- 3.8 To the attic floor within the front section there are a series of rooms accessed from a long barrel arched hall which retains exposed timber framing, dating to the construction of the building.
- 3.9 Though altered in part, the original plan form of the building is present and broadly appreciable.
- 3.10 The front portion was also considerably altered in the 1820s by an architect known as T. Atkins. Some of these alterations are evident, with early 19th century fireplaces and other features present throughout. One particular feature of interest is a plaque installed in one of the cupboards of the first floor bedroom which reads:

*"Beware of removing this wall*

*Examine first a trussed gurder in partition in attic which bears on this wall  
and to which the floors are screwed up*

*T. Atkins 1820"*

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## Rear Portion

- 3.11 The rear portion of the building, constructed in pale yellow brick and slate roofing predominantly dates from the 19th century. It is likely that extension was undertaken in two phases. Firstly the areas closest to the original dwelling was added in the 1820s, probably by T. Atkins. This phase of addition is constructed from brick and includes the right hand side flanking wall in the underpass. There are also later additions to the rear of the building which date to the 1880s. These areas are constructed from yellow brick and include decorative brick string courses between ground and first floor and floral moulded yellow brick at eaves level. To the rear is also a carved timber pagoda feature with a leaded roof.
- 3.12 Internally the 1820s portion of the building is much altered. However, there is a large early 19th century staircase present with niches, associated joinery and cornices. These features are of high quality and make a valuable contribution to the architectural interest of the building.
- 3.13 When entering the 1880s areas of the building there is a clear change in the character of the building. Ceilings are higher and the remaining joinery and plasterwork reflects the late 19th century date. The rear portion of the Stone Court Hotel, which dates from the late 19th century, is of inherently lower heritage significance than the front earlier portion. This is due to the lower quality of features and later alterations, particularly to the first floor, which have affected the plan form considerably as seen by corner fireplaces being present to the centre of rooms. However, at ground floor level this area contain two large principal rooms with decorative cornicing, joinery and a fireplace typical of the period.

## *Artistic Interest*

- 3.14 The Stone Court Hotel is a listed building of limited artistic interest. Any artistic interest is as a result of the internal features of decoration which include carved late 17th/early 18th century panelling, plasterwork, a turned balustrade 18th century staircase and a 17th century stone fireplace with overmantel.

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## *Archaeological Interest*

- 3.15 The grade II\* Stone Court Hotel is a building of archaeological interest as one of the oldest buildings within Maidstone town centre. Remaining original and early historic fabric, particularly fabric found within the front portion of the structure, including panelling, flooring and a stone fireplace, contribute to this archaeological/evidential value.
- 3.16 The building has been altered numerous times through its history, specifically when it was re-fronted in the early 18th century, altered in the early 19th century and extended to the rear in the late 19th century. Though this high level of alteration has impacted upon the archaeological interest of the original earlier building each phase of development is clearly understandable. As such the clear historic development of the building contributes to the archaeological interest of the structure.

## *Historic Interest*

- 3.17 The Stone Court Hotel is a building of considerable historic interest as demonstrated by its high grade of listing. Its origins as a 16th century timber frame building is also an important element of its historic interest, providing a high quality example of a large town house during this period with many internal original and early features which contribute to this illustrative value.
- 3.18 The building was once the town house lived in by the Sackville family, a prominent local family, and then the circuit judges' lodgings from the late 19th century until the late 20th century. These associations provide a level of historic interest to the building.

## *Setting*

- 3.19 The setting of the Stone Court Hotel is much changed as identified by historic mapping, however, it makes a valuable contribution to its significance. This is primarily due to the surrounding grade II listed buildings which predominantly date from the 18th century. These structures, of comparable date and architectural form to the Stone Court Hotel, hold a group value and enhance the significance of the assets.

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3.20 While the setting as a whole makes a positive contribution to the significance of the building the current condition of the rear yard, as shown on photographs contained within Appendix 4, detracts from the architectural interest of the building



## **4.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 4.1 This section appraises the impacts of the proposed development on the heritage sensitivities identified within the report. It seeks to support the Local Planning Authority in their decision making process.

### **Principle of Residential Conversion**

- 4.2 The building's original use was that of a residential dwelling and this appears to have remained the use of the structure until the late 19th century, when it was converted into offices. The conversion of the building back to residential use is an appropriate use for the building which will lead to investment in the structure and its surroundings. This investment will see for the grade II\* listed building's long term conservation and maintenance. The residential use of the structure is also likely to bring about a far less intensive use of the structure than the existing hotel use and is therefore likely to result in lower levels of wear and tear to significant historic fabric.
- 4.3 The change of use of the building into a series of 14no. residential units will clearly require some level of subdivision. However, due to the existing plan form of the building and the number of staircases present the subdivision can be achieved without the need for high levels of alteration to fabric or plan form. The physical alterations to the fabric of the Stone Court Hotel necessary to facilitate the change of use are considered in section below.

### **Physical Alterations to the Stone Court Hotel**

- 4.4 The following section details all proposed physical alterations to the Stone Court Hotel and discusses the impact on the significance of the buildings as a result of these alterations.

#### *Internal Alterations to the Front Portion of the Stone Court Hotel*

- 4.5 Within the front portion of the building, that part dating to the 16th century (re-fronted in the 18th century) it is proposed to create five one bed residential units (Units 1, 2, 7, 13 and 14). General alterations within the front portion of the building include the repair and maintenance of historic features of interest such as the 18th century panelling and staircase as necessary.

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## Unit 1

- 4.6 Unit 1 is a split level unit to the ground and first floor and incorporates the northern (RHS) ground floor hall, 18th century staircase and first floor landing and the northern (RHS) front room.
- 4.7 The connections the main ground floor room currently has into the adjoining panelled room will be sealed shut and made good within Unit 1 (within Unit 2 the door is retained and the doorway becomes a cupboard). The modern reception desk is also to be removed from this room and all features of significance, such as the 18th century staircase and the 17th century fireplace, are restored and preserved in full. Within this space any features such as new kitchens will be fitted within the centre of the room to avoid alterations to the 18th century panelling.
- 4.8 At first floor changes are also limited. There is currently a large landing to the first floor and here it is proposed to create a bathroom. This will be achieved by the use of lightweight partitions which can at a later date be removed with a minimal effect on the fabric of the building. This alteration, along with the services required, will have a resultant effect on the character of this hallway, which, while not dating to the 16th century, is a significant feature. However, due to the small scale works required to achieve this alteration the overall effect on the significance of the building will be limited.
- 4.9 The only other alteration within Unit 1 is the sealing of an existing door leading through from the main room at first floor. The door will be sealed in situ allowing the alteration to be reversible at a point in the future should it be required.

## Unit 2

- 4.10 Unit 2 is a one bedroom ground floor residential unit which occupies the southern (LHS) panelled room and the two smaller rooms, currently in use as bathrooms, behind the chimney breast.
- 4.11 Within the main living room at ground floor the changes proposed are limited. The two doors either side of the chimney breast will connect into the two bathrooms behind, providing space for a bedroom and bathroom. This

alteration will require the provision of a new door to the right hand side of the chimney breast and the removal of fabric behind both doors (left hand side door currently provides access into a cupboard). The new door will be detailed to match the existing left hand side door. This alteration will result in the removal of some historic fabric however the proportions of the room will remain appreciable and new detailing will be sympathetic to the detailing of the space. It is also proposed to insert a new door into the northern wall of this room to provide the main access into the unit from the front porch. This alteration will result in the loss of some panelling which is likely a later copy due to the dogleg in the wall. The new door will be sympathetically detailed and will respect the form of the existing panelling. Within the main room any features such as new kitchens will be fitted within the centre of the room to avoid alterations to the 18th century panelling.

## Unit 7

- 4.12 Unit 7 is a one bedroom unit located at first floor and accessed from the west by the 1820s staircase. This unit occupies the entire southern (LHS) of the first floor.
- 4.13 Physical alterations to the fabric of the building necessary to create this unit are limited. Within the unit two doors will be sealed shut; the first within the main living room a doorway leading into the first floor hallway (Unit 1) and the second a doorway within the bathroom leading to the bedroom of Unit 1. All other doors will be retained.
- 4.14 It is also proposed to remove the modern stud partition bathroom from the bedroom of this unit, opening up the original proportions of the room. The southernmost front room is proposed to be converted into the kitchen dining room following the removal of later fitted units. It will be necessary to make some fittings into the 18th century panelling within this room. However, this panelling has already been much altered and fixings required for kitchen units will be kept to a minimum.

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## Unit 13

- 4.15 Unit 13 is located at third floor, accessed by the 1820s staircase, and incorporates the northern long hall as a living area and entire front range at this floor level.
- 4.16 Physical alterations to the fabric of the Stone Court Hotel necessary to facilitate the creation of Unit 13 are limited and predominantly involve the removal of later partitions which are intrusive to the special interest of the building. The proposals within this Unit would allow the preservation of the exposed timber frame, a key feature of interest at this level.

## Unit 14

- 4.17 Unit 14, also accessed by the 1820s staircase, occupies the remaining areas of the second floor, including the two rooms with south facing windows.
- 4.18 In order to provide access into this Unit from the 1820s staircase an 18th century currently sealed door will be opened and re-used, reinstating a lost element of circulation.
- 4.19 The main alteration at this floor involves creating a connection between two rooms (proposed hallway and living/kitchen) and the creation of a small corridor linking these rooms. This requires the conversion of an existing late 19th/early 20th century window into a full length opening in the living room and the opening of a blocked opening (probably a window) within the hallway. This will result in the loss of some historic fabric and will alter the roof structure of the building. However, in terms of the scale of the building this is a fairly small alteration which will not affect the elements of high significance, such as timber framing and early panelling. Overall this element of the proposal would result in a low level of harm to the significance of the listed building, clearly less than substantial in NPPF terms.

### *Internal Alterations to the Rear Portion of the Stone Court Hotel*

- 4.20 One of the main changes is the opening up of the existing courtyard. The physical alterations associated with this scheme involve the removal of later fabric. This fabric predominantly dates to the 20th century and includes numerous metal staircases and walkways at first and second floor levels.

Some areas which are proposed for removal in order to open up the courtyard date to the 1880s phase of construction, for example the ground floor housekeeper's room and corridors which run around three sides of the courtyard. As assessed this area is generally of lower sensitivity than the fabric of high significance within the front portion. While this element of the proposal will result in some loss of historic fabric, overall this element of the proposals will have a limited effect on the significance of the listed building.

- 4.21 While forming part of the story and development of the building the rear portion of the Stone Court Hotel, those areas added in the 1880s including the boiler house, are of less significance than the front portion of the building. These parts of the building are not inherently of special interest. Due to their quality, date and previous alterations these areas are capable of accommodating a greater level of change without resulting in harm to the significance of the building. The large principal rooms with decorative plasterwork at ground floor within this are of the building remain without subdivision as a result of the scheme allowing their proportions and interest to be fully appreciated. Other changes to these areas are limited and involve small scale alterations to plan form and circulation. Where possible existing 1880s joinery will be retained and new sympathetically detailed joinery installed. These change within the 1880s sections of the building are limited and will not affect the considerable significance of the listed building which is predominantly derived from the front portion of the building.
- 4.22 Changes to the 1820s staircase (ground to second floor) are limited and only involve the sealing of existing doorways. Doors will remain present though locked and sealed on the other sides to allow for the character of the stair core to be preserved.

### *External Alterations to the Stone Court Hotel*

- 4.23 External alterations are limited and do not result in harm to the significance of the listed building. The first external alteration involves the reinstatement of one window within Unit 2. The window profile can clearly be seen externally and this element of the proposal would reinstate a lost feature. No fabric of interest, either external or internal, would be lost as a result of this alteration and the significance of the building would be preserved. The only other external alteration is the conversion of a blocked window into an access door

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providing entrance to Unit 3. This is within the 1880s section of the building and the alteration would not affect the internal or external character of the building, preserving the significance for which it was designated. The new window and door will be appropriately and traditionally detailed and sympathetic to the significance of the building.

## *Alterations to Services*

4.24 As a result of the change of use of the building alterations to services will be required. Due to limitations on opening up works firm plans for these alterations have not yet been established. However, a services strategy is in place which seeks to ensure the significance of the building is not adversely affected by such alterations. In general this strategy notes that:

- Existing drainage will be retained where necessary for proposed bathrooms and shower rooms and kitchens. All redundant drainage will be removed and walls and floors made good;
- Existing conduits for electrical installation will be utilised where possible with new works preserving the existing fabric where appropriate, for example, where historic panelling exists;
- Any new service risers required will be contained within the reinstated internal courtyard and the basement (where no alterations are proposed) will provide access points for services;
- Upgrading of floors and walls for fire and sound will follow detailing as specified for existing and listed buildings. Important existing fabric and detailing will be retained so that the building can be reverted back to its original state before the works were carried out.
- Separating floors will be achieved through the installation of a propriety fire proofing system inserted between the existing joists. Existing floor boards will be re-laid as existing and all skirting boards will remain unaffected;
- Acoustic upgrades to floors, where required, will be achieved through the installation of an acoustic flooring system on top of the existing floor boards;
- As part of the scheme it may be required to upgrade some existing walls to meet standards required for separating walls. Where

necessary and appropriate (in accordance with the significance of the building) it is proposed to achieve this by providing an independent wall adjacent to the existing with minimal fixings into existing fabric. This will consist of Soundbloc plasterboard, with resilient bars to one side of timber studs and sound insulation between studs. This form of alteration to upgrade walls is only required within the rear later addition, dating from the 1880s, and will not be used within the highly sensitive front historic core of the building;

- The heating systems will respect the original building with appropriate radiators selected and flues to boilers, as well as mechanical ventilation, to terminate in discreet locations; and
- Where doors are to be retained and sealed, approved infill structure will be provided behind the closed door with minimal fixings provided to historic fabric.

4.25 Though specific details as to alterations to service are not yet firm the general services strategy ensures that the significance and elements of special interest of the Stone Court Hotel will be respected and preserved. As a result of these alterations there may be some low levels of harm incurred as a result of loss of historic fabric. On balance this level of harm is considered to be negligible and when considered as a whole the overall character and interest of the building will be preserved. Importantly the alterations will allow the provision of a viable use for the grade II\* listed building which will provide for its long term conservation and maintenance.

## *Landscaping*

4.26 Landscaping works are also proposed to the rear amenity space and the courtyard.

4.27 The rear amenity space is currently surfaced with numerous phases of tarmac and used as general storage with a large metal container present to the rear. This area will be hard landscaped with container planting, a refuse storage area and cycle parking. The existing rear walls and gates will be retained. As shown on the drawn submission Units 3 and 5 have small private garden areas accessed by the existing French doors. The private gardens will have

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low level wrought iron fencing to the boundaries to ensure there is a minimal sense of subdivision of the garden space.

- 4.28 Landscaping within the courtyard will provide a new stone flagged surface with container planting. This landscaping, coupled with the physical alterations to the courtyard to open up the area represents an enhancement to the aesthetic of the area and the setting of the building.

## **Policy Compliance**

- 4.29 As required by paragraph 128 of NPPF (2012) this report has described the significance of the Stone Court Hotel as a grade II\* listed building. The report then goes on to appraise the effects on the significance of the heritage assets identified.
- 4.30 Overall the proposed works to the grade II\* listed building respect the areas of high significance and ensure that within these areas any harm is minimised. Some elements of the scheme have been identified as resulting in low levels of harm to the significance of the listed building, for example due to loss of historic fabric and alterations to plan form. On the whole this low level of harm is clearly identified as being less than substantial in NPPF terms.
- 4.31 As noted by the NPPF this low level of harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme. Heritage based public benefits of the scheme demonstrably outweigh the low levels of harm and include securing a viable use of the asset in support of its long term conservation and the removal of risk to the currently unoccupied grade II\* listed building. It is also important to note that some elements of the work, including making good to historic features of interest and the removal of inappropriate later additions to the courtyard will result in an enhancement to the significance of the listed building.
- 4.32 As discussed given the limited external alterations the character and appearance of the surrounding Maidstone Centre Conservation Area and the significance of nearby listed buildings will not be affected as a result of these proposals.



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4.33 The proposed development is in accordance with the NPPF and guidance contained within National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) 2014.

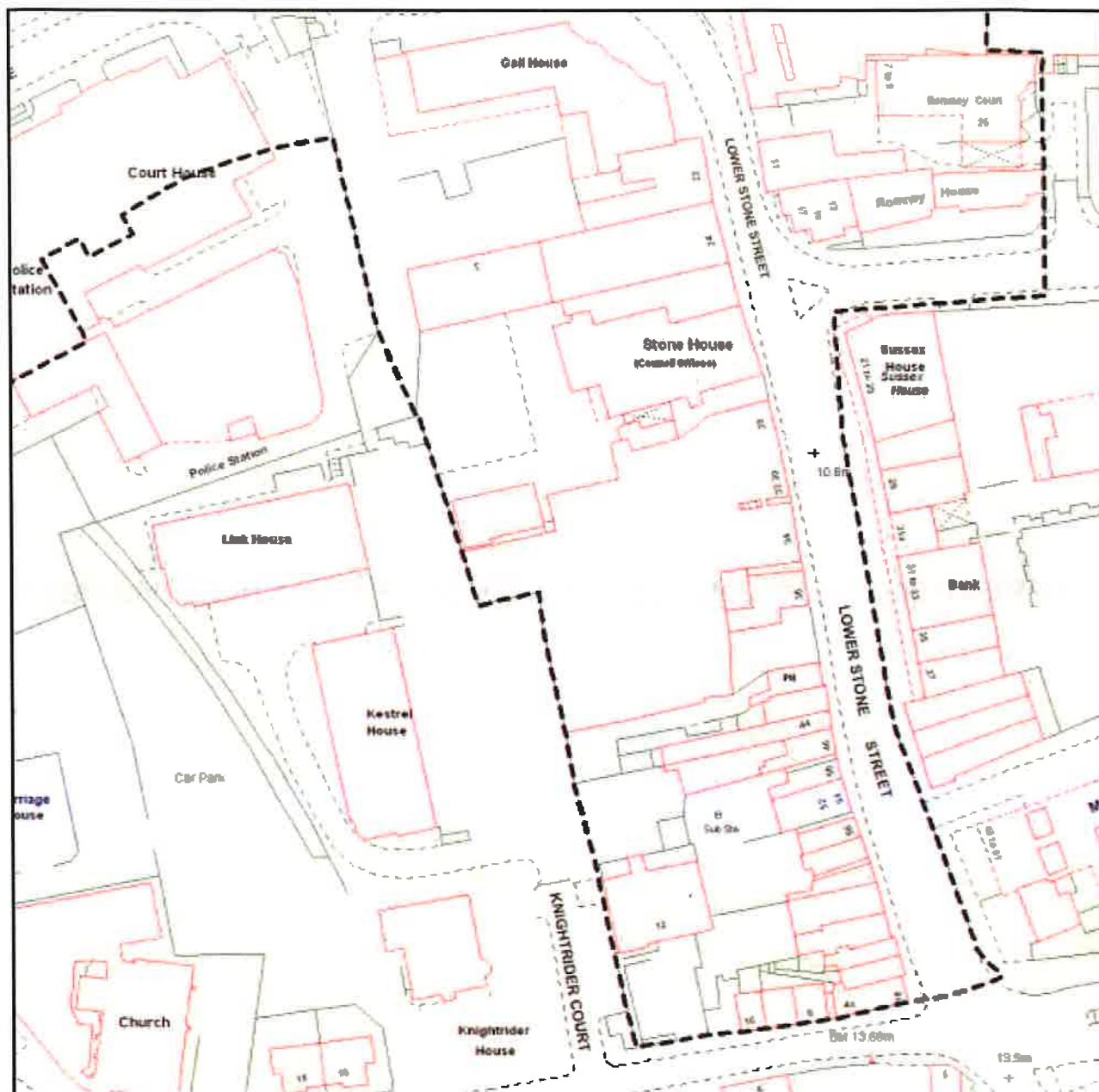
## **5.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 This report has undertaken an assessment of the significance of the grade II\* listed Stone Court Hotel. This is followed by an appraisal of the effects of the proposals upon this heritage asset with consideration given to local and national policy and guidance.
- 5.2 The Stone Court Hotel is a grade II\* listed building located within the Maidstone Centre Conservation Area. The building originally dates to the 16th century though was substantially altered with a new frontage in the early 18th century and again in the 19th century with rear additions. The building is of considerable architectural interest as demonstrated by its high grade of listing due to its clear historic development and internal features including 17th and 18th century panelling. The structure is also of clear historic interest due to its illustrative value as a 16th century timber framed townhouse.
- 5.3 Section 4 presents an assessment of impact the proposed works on the significance of the listed building. As identified one element of the proposed scheme would result in minor levels of harm to the character of the building. However, a minimal level of historic fabric will be lost as a result of the scheme and all significant elements of internal interest (including but not limited to the 17th century fireplace, 18th century panelling and staircase) are preserved in full and where necessary restored. There are also heritage benefits associated with the proposed development which include securing a viable use for the building which will provide for its long term conservation and maintenance and removing its risk. Overall, when considered as a whole it has been established that the heritage based public benefits of the proposed scheme demonstrably outweigh the limited low levels of harm which result from the physical alterations proposed.
- 5.4 As discussed given the limited external alterations the character and appearance of the surrounding Maidstone Centre Conservation Area and the significance of nearby listed buildings will not be affected as a result of these proposals.

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5.5 This report demonstrates that the development complies with national planning policy and guidance.

## **APPENDIX 1: Site Location Maps**



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**Appendix 1.1:** Maidstone Centre Conservation Area boundary showing the Stone Court Hotel, listed as Stone House.

**APPENDIX 2: List Description for the Stone Court Hotel, Maidstone**

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Mr John Vigar FRSA

IoE Number: 173399

Location: JUDGE'S LODGINGS, 28 LOWER STONE STREET (west side), MAIDSTONE, MAIDSTONE, KENT

Date Photographed: 26 June 2000

Date listed: 30 July 1951

Date of last amendment: 30 July 1951

Grade II\*

LOWER STONE STREET 5278 (West Side) No 28 (Stone House)

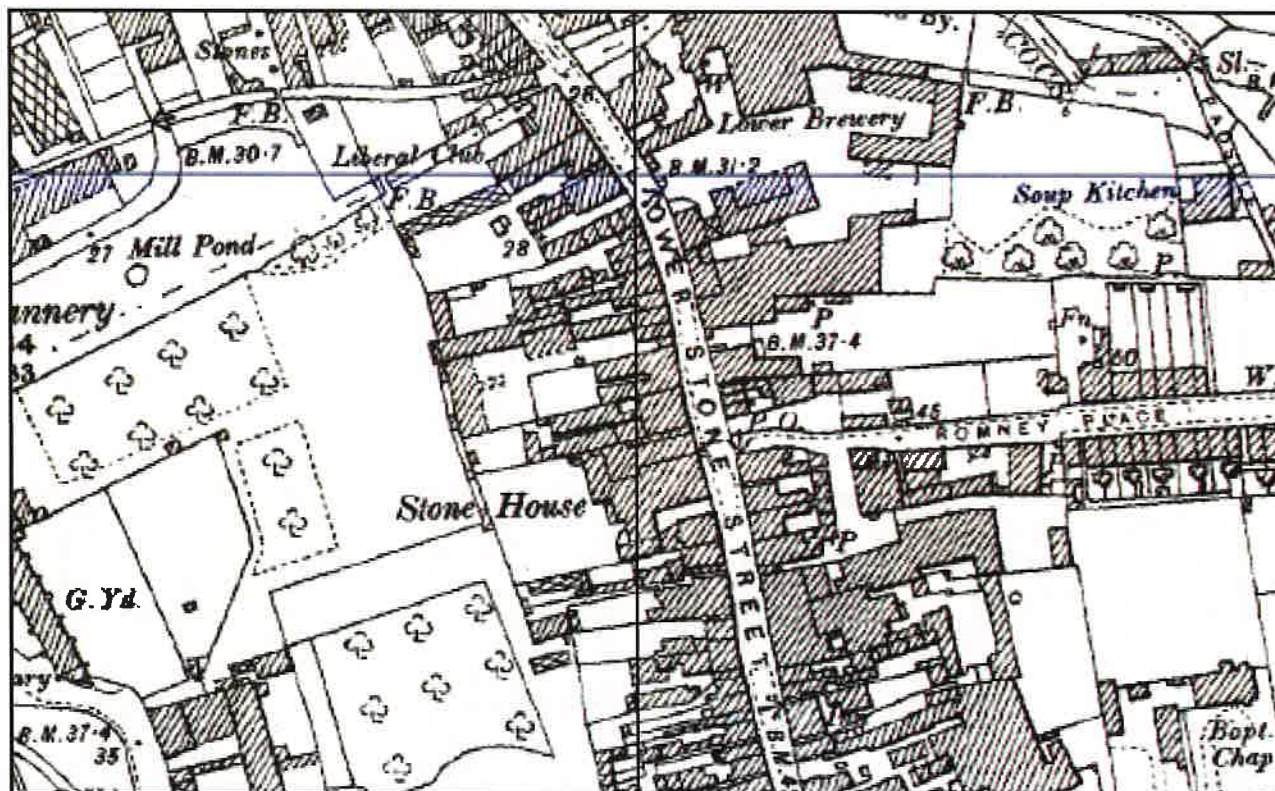
LOWER STONE STREET 1. 5278 (West Side) No 28 (Stone House or the Judge's Lodgings) TQ 7655 NW 2/39 30.7.51. II\* GV 2. A timber-framed house refronted in the early C18. On the south side the timbering is visible with a gable overhanging on brackets, but the east front facing the street is stuccoed. 3 storeys. Tiled roof and heavy moulded wooden modillion eaves cornice with egg and dart moulding below it. Moulded cornice above 1st floor slightly projecting above each window and a curved pediment over the centre 1st floor window. Cornice without projections over the ground floor. Windows in moulded architrave surrounds with glazing bars intact. Doorcase with fluted Corinthian columns, curved pediment, tympanum enriched with pargetting of foliage and the date 1716 and door of 10 fielded panels. The interior contains an early C18 oak staircase with turned balusters to each step and scrolled tread ends with newel post in the form of a Corinthian column. C17 stone fireplace with overmantel. 1st floor has early C18 panelling and pedimented doorcases with strapwork pilasters. Marble fireplace with strapwork motifs and pilasters surmounted by terms. Also an early C19 staircase with scrolled tread ends. This was formerly the Judge's House. Nos 26 to 36 (even), 40 to 46 (even) and 50 to 70 (even) form a group.

**APPENDIX 3: Historic Mapping**





**Appendix 3.1:** Extract from the 1868-1883 Ordnance Survey map showing the Stone Court Hotel as Stone House with numerous rear extensions already present

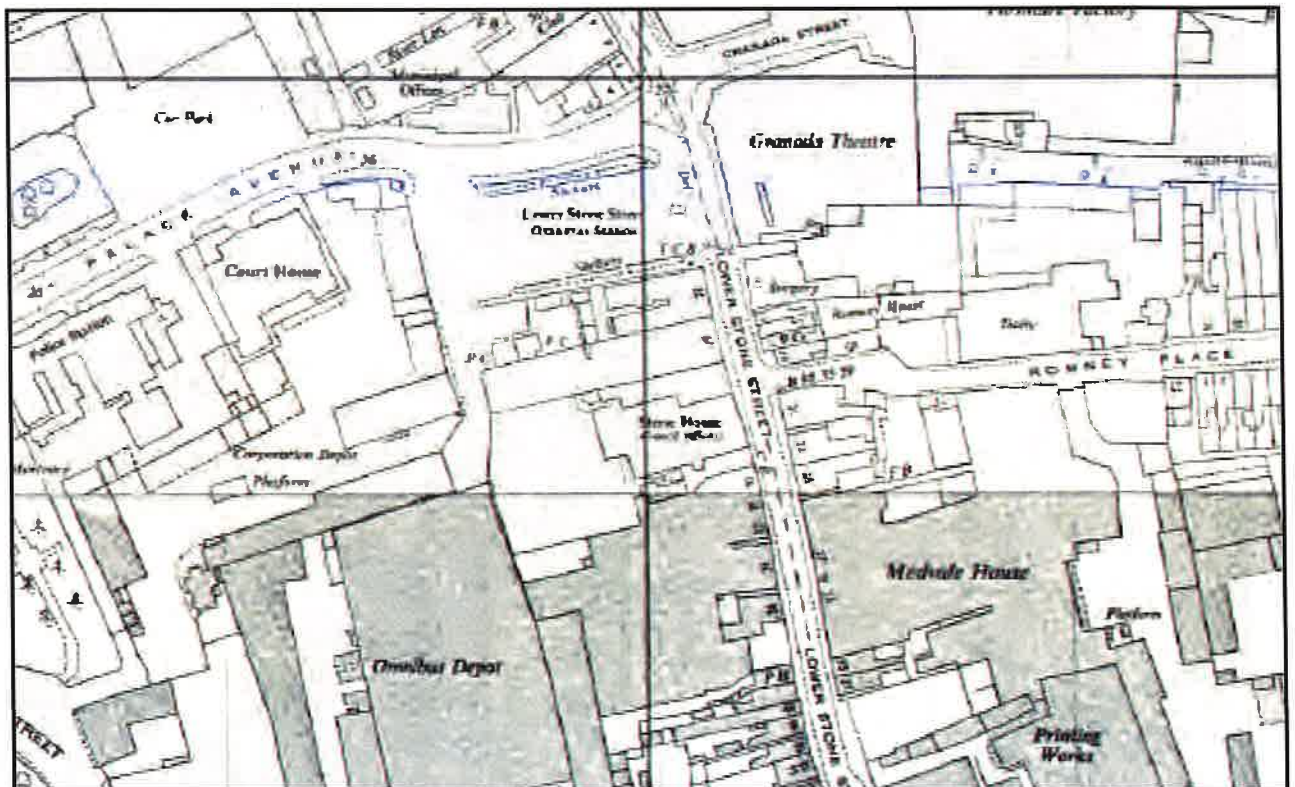


**Appendix 3.2:** Extract from the 1897 Ordnance Survey map showing further rear extension

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Appendix 3.3: Extract from the 1908 Ordnance Survey map



Appendix 3.4: Extract from the 1967-68 Ordnance Survey map

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**APPENDIX 4: Photographs (November 2014)**





**Appendix 4.1:** Front elevation of Stone Court Hotel viewed from the north



**Appendix 4.2:** Front elevation of the structure viewed from the south showing evidence of the development of the building to the south side elevation



**Appendix 4.3:** Rear elevation of the Stone Court Hotel showing the areas dating to the 1880s



**Appendix 4.4:** Rear elevation of with the flying freehold and boiler room



**Appendix 4.5:** Rear curtilage of the Stone Court Hotel



**Appendix 4.6:** Underpass of flying freehold with boiler room to the right hand side and main body of the Stone Court Hotel to the left



**Appendix 4.7:** 17th century fireplace with carved timber overmantle



**Appendix 4.8:** 18th century staircase



**Appendix 4.9:** Turned balustrade of 18th century staircase



**Appendix 4.10:** Carved Corinthian column newel post



**Appendix 4.11:** 18th century panelling with two doors leading to cupboards





**Appendix 4.12:** Southern most ground floor room with 18th century painted panelling and window shutters



**Appendix 4.13:** Chimney breast and fireplace



**Appendix 4.14:** Large arched window providing light at landing level within the staircase



**Appendix 4.15:** Painted stone detailing at the first floor landing



**Appendix 4.16:** Southern most panelled room at first floor with blockedup fireplace



**Appendix 4.17:** Matching left hand side door providing access into bathroom



**Appendix 4.18:** Matching right hand side door providing access into toilet



**Appendix 4.19:** 1820s plaque by architect T. Atkins located within first floor cupboard



**Appendix 4.20:** Bathroom with 18th century panelled room (with later added door)



**Appendix 4.21:** First floor rear room (within front portion of building) with blocked up fireplace



**Appendix 4.22:** Barrel arched hallway at second floor within front portion of the building



**Appendix 4.23:** Second floor bedroom with exposed timber beams



**Appendix 4.24:** Second floor front room with exposed timber framing and later partitions



**Appendix 4.27:** 19th century fireplace located within the rear room at second floor level



**Appendix 4.28:** Existing sealed door to be reopened to provide access to Unit 14



**Appendix 4.29:** Courtyard with 19th/20th century additions or limited or no interest



**Appendix 4.25:** Second floor room with exposed timber framing



**Appendix 4.26:** Second floor window proposed for conversion to a doorway with corridor leading to the room beyond where a past opening has previously been located





**Appendix 4.30:** Cornice within the 1820s staircore



**Appendix 4.31:** 1820s staircase



**Appendix 4.32:** Niche located along the 1820s staircase



**Appendix 4.33:** Balustrade, handrail and treads of the 1820s staircase



**Appendix 4.34:** Late 19th century room at ground floor



**Appendix 4.35:** Cornice detailing within the late 19th century room at ground floor



**Appendix 4.36:** Second large late 19th century room at ground floor



**Appendix 4.37:** Fireplace within the late 19th century room at ground floor



**Appendix 4.38:** Housekeepers room dating to the late 19th century proposed for removal to facilitate the opening of the courtyard



**Appendix 4.39:** Late 19th century corridor to be removed to open the courtyard



**Appendix 4.40:** Late 19th century corridor to be removed to open the courtyard



**Appendix 4.41:** Typical first floor bedroom within the 1880s rear portion of the building



**Appendix 4.42:** Typical first floor bedroom within the 1880s rear portion of the building



**Appendix 4.43:** Typical first floor bedroom within the 1880s rear portion of the building

**Maidstone Borough Council**  
Heritage, Landscape and Design  
**Planning Consultation Response Sheet (C)**

For admin. use	
Date logged:	06/05/2015
21 day completion:	Yes
If no, timescale is:	
Original MA ref (conditions):	MA/ /
<b>Time allocation:</b>	<b>45 mins</b>

FAO (Case Officer): Geoff Brown  
**Application No.: 15/500338**

Address of site: Stone Court Hotel, 28 Lower Stone Street, Maidstone  
Proposal: Conversion to 14 residential units to include some demolition and external alterations.  
Application for: Listed Building consent

Type of consultation: Automatic

Reason for consultation:

- |   |  |   |                                    |
|---|--|---|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Major application            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conservation area  | <input type="checkbox"/> Locally listed building    | <input type="checkbox"/> Not known |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Listed building   | <input type="checkbox"/> Setting of Conservation area  | <input type="checkbox"/> Registered park/garden     |                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Setting of Listed building   | <input type="checkbox"/> Planning Committee report     | <input type="checkbox"/> Scheduled ancient monument |                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curtilage of Listed building | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional comments           | <input type="checkbox"/> Design advice              |                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural conversion      | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-designated heritage asset | <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal                     |                                    |

Comments:

English Heritage need to be consulted if they have not already been.

28 Lower Stone Street is a large and complex Grade II\* Listed Building. It comprises a high status town house which in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century was adapted to form judges' lodgings. The bones of the building may be medieval, but the principal and most notable phases include a 16<sup>th</sup> Century range, the fine early 18<sup>th</sup> Century frontage added to this, a grand staircase hall and other accommodation to the rear added in the 1820s and further substantial rear additions dating from the later 19<sup>th</sup> Century. It contains a number of very fine interior rooms, some of large scale. Latterly in use as a hotel, the building has now been vacant for some years and it is important to bring it back into use.

The current proposals have been the subject of pre-application discussions which have resulted in a scheme which maintains the principal rooms intact by the use of open-plan apartments. Where sub-division of rooms is proposed it is kept to a minimum and does not affect any of the best rooms. A small amount of demolition is proposed within the internal courtyard; this affects one of the latest additions of the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century which essentially provides a passageway allowing access to the rear parts of the building without having to go through rooms. This addition is considered to be of low significance and I have no objection to its demolition. Other external alterations are minor in nature and are all acceptable.

Recommendation

- I **RAISE NO OBJECTION** to this application on heritage grounds subject to conditions re joinery details, samples of materials, submission of a schedule of repairs and details of works of making good subsequent to demolition works.

Signed: Mike Parkinson

Date: 22/05/2015





## **PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE**

Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2017

APPLICATION No: 17/500148/PAMEET

PROPOSAL: Pre App - Listed Building Consent – Discharge of Conditions  
Relating to 15/500338/LBC

ADDRESS: **Stone Court Hotel**

28 Lower Stone Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6LX

### **RE: Pre-Application Advice**

I write following your submitted request of 12<sup>th</sup> January 2017, and our site visit of 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017

The applicant seeks pre-application advice on Discharge of Condition, under Approved Plans to convert the existing listed property to flats.

Following a thorough inspection of the premises, you felt the scheme could benefit from some alteration to better use service runs etc. and you will consider these layouts together with points below.

- **Wiring & Plumbing/ Fixtures** : These should be surface mounted where possible/follow existing runs, especially in the front range of buildings, and may be chased in as existing to rear range as existing. All power sockets should be mounted clear of the existing (historic), skirting.

Light fittings should be, where possible, mounted to existing points, although some alternatives could be considered: suspended wire-track fittings, or recessed lighting within suspended ceilings. It is recognised that to achieve a conversion, the removal of 2no. chandeliers is necessary, this is considered an acceptable, although regrettable alteration to the space. To roof space in Unit 14, where the ceiling appears to 20<sup>th</sup> century plaster and recessed lighting, it is suggested that this be carefully removed, that the original timber structure be revealed and better appreciated in line with good conservation practice.

It is noted that you intend to install electric radiators and kitchen appliances to each unit. Where it is not possible to wall-mount radiators, frames must be affixed to the floor to achieve stability and reduce intrusion to the historic fabric. Where it is necessary to lift a floorboard this should be carefully removed and put back, without cutting/use of power tools.

- **Joinery**: In general terms, where a door is to be blocked up, it is preferred that the original architrave be retained, with door in situ and the filling-in to



be achieved on one side, leaving the aperture apparent from both sides. Where no door exists, it is considered acceptable to utilise the recess for shelving etc.

All original cupboards should be retained in their entirety, including door, architrave, door furniture and internal shelves, hooks, pegs etc.

It is unlikely that removal/replacement of original stair elements would be supported. If your discussions with Building Control require additional measures, these should not impinge on the historic fabric.

- **Flooring:** It is proposed that a mix of laminate/carpet and lino-type flooring be laid. This should be laid over ply to protect the original flooring. This may be laid to reveal features such as fireplace tiles etc and bare floorboards should be lightly cleaned and sealed with wax (non-paint) finish.
- **Ceilings:** It is recognised that suspended ceilings may go some way to address the fire separation/sound attenuation between flats. In some rooms, this is considered acceptable where the new ceiling can be installed clear of the picture rail/cornice and would be hit-and-miss fitted to avoid decorative plaster. Any such ceiling must be fitted to avoid damage to historic plaster detailing. There are some spaces – specifically Units 2 and 3 where windows and door heights require detailing to achieve this.
- **Structural Elements:** Any removal of walls, whether to replace defect, or to achieve a new opening should be fully justified, with full details and loss of fabric noted.
- **Wall Treatments:**

It is recognised that in certain spaces, lateral fire separation/sound attenuation measures have been included. It is preferred that these be achieved without interference to skirtings/cornices etc and that especially where a doorway is to be retained, that features be exposed by means such as intumescent paint, fire seals etc. You suggested that advice be sought from Building Control / Fire & Rescue Services on these matters.
- **Fenestration:** In general terms, it is not considered appropriate to double-glaze or otherwise alter the original fenestration. It may be possible to secondary glaze the large-plate fenestration to the rear elevation, although it is suggested there is little benefit in doing so, as there are other, unalterable elements (eg door in Unit 3). Units 5 & 6, facing Lower Stone Street, benefit from internal original shutters and as such no retro fitting of secondary glazing would be acceptable or indeed possible without loss of the original shuttering. Some unsympathetic fixed plate glazing has been affixed to the exterior of the property which does little to attenuate external sound.
- **Basement Access:** The original external stair to basement should be retained, together with its railing. It is understood that it is necessary to temporarily remove the railings to achieve access to the rear yard during construction and to cover the void to provide safe working conditions. The



railings should be replaced after works, and correctly reinstalled in poured lead fixings as existing.

**Note:** Care should be given to retain existing features during construction, in particular, stair treads, baluster, newels etc, original features such as the original light to hall/stairway.

I hope the information and advice given is of assistance to you. Please note that the advice in this letter is the opinion of an individual officer and the Council is not bound to follow that advice in its formal determination of any application. Except where stated otherwise, all works discussed above would require consent via a formal application or notification, and advice is provided without prejudice.

Yours sincerely,

*Clare Dales*

**Clare Dales  
Principal Conservation Officer  
Maidstone Borough Council  
Maidstone House  
Kings Street,  
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ME15 6JQ**

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