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**Report of 16 November 2006**

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**East Malling & Larkfield**                      **569747 157114**    **25 September 2006**    **TM/06/03106/RD**  
East Malling

Proposal:                      Details of ragstone walling submitted pursuant to condition 10 of planning permission TM/05/00405/FL: Change of use and alterations/refurbishment to form a pair of semi-detached dwellings with a detached garage and partial details of refurbishment submitted pursuant to condition 3 of planning permission TM/01/03099/FL: residential development comprising 63 new build and 2 refurbished dwellings and associated external works, access, landscaping, parking, garaging and traffic management proposals

Location:                      39 Upper Mill East Malling West Malling Kent ME19 6BF

Applicant:                      Vanhalen Developments Limited

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**1. Description:**

- 1.1 These details relate to the ragstone walling details as part of the conversion for the former Mill Building/Rag Store. The applicant is seeking to raise the height of the ragstone to the north of the Mill Building by 400mm for a length of 5.2m, and then it will slope down to the existing height. To the west of the building, the applicant is proposing to new rebuild the ragstone wall alongside the stream to 1.1m high. The applicant is also proposing to cap the low level streamside ragstone wall in the garden of House 1 with brick on edge.
- 1.2 Members will recall that landscaping and boundary treatment details (excluding the ragstone wall details) for the former Mill Building/Ragstore were approved at the Area Planning Committee No.3 on the 19 October 2006 under application TM/06/02749/RD.

**2. The Site:**

- 2.1 The application site lies within the Mill Street Conservation Area and within the rural settlement confines of East Malling. The site lies within the former Council Depot site which was recently redeveloped for housing by Hillreed Homes. The Mill building formed part of the original planning permission, but was sold onto the applicant for the conversion works. The conversion and renovation works have commenced on the mill building. The property is a three storey brick built structure which sits over the stream. The mill building is not a listed building.

### 3. Planning History (most relevant):

TM/01/03099/FL      Grant With Conditions      27 June 2003

Residential development comprising 63 new build and 2 refurbished dwellings and associated external works, access, landscaping, parking, garaging and traffic management proposals

TM/05/00405/FL      Grant With Conditions      1 June 2005

Change of use and alterations/refurbishment to form a pair of semi-detached dwellings with a detached garage and partial details of refurbishment submitted pursuant to condition 3 of planning permission TM/01/03099/FL: residential development comprising 63 new build and 2 refurbished dwellings and associated external works, access, landscaping, parking, garaging and traffic management proposals

TM/06/02749/RD      Grant      20 October 2006

Details of landscaping submitted pursuant to condition 3 of planning permission TM/05/00405/FL: Change of use and alterations/refurbishment to form a pair of semi-detached dwellings with a detached garage and partial details of refurbishment submitted pursuant to condition 3 of planning permission TM/01/03099/FL: residential development comprising 63 new build and 2 refurbished dwellings and associated external works, access, landscaping, parking, garaging and traffic management proposals

### 4. Consultees:

- 4.1 PC: A consistent height of 1.8m is preferred along its entire length. We object to the use of creasing tiles on the coping, it is not a feature in East Malling. The pointing must be better than that in progress on the stream wall where there is as much mortar as stone. The bin store is not shown on the site plan, where should it be and how is it accessed.
- 4.2 Private Reps: 28/0X/0X/0R. No response.
- 4.3 EMCG: The ECMG submission to planning application TM/05/405/FL included pictures of the building that have been digitally modified to demonstrate the benefit of increasing the wall by 1m to hide the bridge and lower portion of the door, thus reducing the visual impact of the added openings to this elevation. We understood that this was accepted by the previous owner of the building and formed part of the approval of the said application. The letter that accompanied this application questions whether this was necessary, but the drawing only states an increase in height of 0.4m, not the 1m increase as stated.

4.3.1 I would also like to draw your attention to our earlier submission: *Kent Archaeological Report: The recommendations made on the KCC report dated the 28 September 2004 which are based on the report by the Canterbury Archaeological Trust dated the 4 August 2004 states that the insertion of windows would make the building harder to read in terms of its former use. The report must be taken into consideration when assessing the application. Taking this into consideration the Ragstone wall must be increased in height to 1m to mitigate some of the visual impact of the bridge and door, especially as the area can clearly be seen from Mill Street.*

4.3.2 The new access is through a ragstone wall, we are aware that it is in very poor condition, only 300mm high in places, but it forms part of the historic boundaries in the Conservation Area. Therefore the complete removal as proposed is unacceptable. Our letter to Cllr Simpson dated the 25 April 2005 describes what would be acceptable as it defines a reasonable opening for access whilst still preserving the line of the original boundary. These pictures were distributed at the APC3 meeting when the application was discussed.

## **5. Determining Issues:**

5.1 The main issue to be considered are whether the proposed ragstone wall details either preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

5.2 The condition was principally imposed to screen the metal bridge and the applicant has also included details of rebuilding a new ragstone wall to the west of the building by the stream. The applicant is proposing to raise the height of an existing ragstone wall by 400mm to a height of 1.8m, which is a similar height to the adjacent bin store serving the neighbouring Mill Court apartments and meets the PC's aspirations. The increased height of wall is for a length of 5.2m from the adjacent bin store and then will slope down to the height of the existing ragstone wall. The increased section ends at the corner line of the Mill Building. The EMCG consider that the height of the wall should be raised by 1m rather than 400mm, as they consider that the approved metal bridge and door can be clearly seen from Mill Street. However, whilst Mill Building can be seen from some limited public vantage points along Mill Street, the lower section of the building, which includes the approved metal bridge and door are not visible from any public vantage points, as views being from blocked by buildings, walls and vegetation. The Mill Building was previously far more prominent from Mill Street, prior to the erection of the two storey terraced houses fronting onto Mill Street. Moreover this would lead to a wall in the region of 2.4m high.

5.3 The metal bridge will be partially visible from the entrance of Mill Court & the Oast offices from Upper Mill and also from limited views points along Upper Mill. However, the metal bridge will be partially screened by an approved 1.8m close boarded fence in the garden of House 2, which the EMCG did not oppose under the landscaping and boundary treatment application TM/06/02749/RD. The

increase in the height of the ragstone wall will be most visible from the car park of the Mill Court apartments, which is private property. Whilst a one metre increase in height would completely screen the metal bridge and a large portion of the door opening, the proposed will significantly help to screen the metal bridge, as the existing 1.4m high ragstone wall will also screen the lower sections of the metal bridge. In addition, given the less prominence of the lower section of the Mill Building in the wider streetscape and Conservation Area, on balance I consider that the 400mm increase in height will be sufficient to help screen the metal bridge appropriately.

- 5.4 The PC have raised concerns over the use of tile creasing, however, this is not proposed for the ragstone walling details, but rather the southern boundary brick wall, which is already approved under application TM/05/00294/RD. In terms of the quality of the ragstone wall built at the adjacent property, 40 Upper Mill, this matter is under investigation by the Enforcement Section.
- 5.5 Finally, EMCG has requested that the low level ragstone wall by the vehicular entrance should be retained as much as possible. This matter was considered as part of the landscaping and boundary treatment details application TM/06/02749/RD approved at the October APC3 meeting. In this instance, it is related to a very low level wall of less than 300mm in the majority of places. The original planning permission TM/05/00405/FL did not propose the retention of this wall, as this area is the access to the parking and garaging serving the converted building. The applicant has since deleted the garaging from the scheme and shown an open bonded gravel access and parking area in this location. Members will appreciate that no planning or conservation consent is required to remove this low level section of ragstone wall, therefore, the Council was unable to support the EMCG request under approval of TM/06/02749/RD.
- 5.6 In light of the above considerations, I find the ragstone wall details acceptable.

## **6. Recommendation:**

- 6.1 **Approve Details** as detailed by letter dated the 22 September 2006 and by plan 1582/12B.

Contact: Aaron Hill