



PLANNING & HERITAGE STATEMENT

Planning application for the mooring of Ramsgate Arts Barge for mixed use as artists studios, cafe/bar, exhibition and community space, together with Planning and Listed Building Consent for the associated installation and access works.

 **Ramsgate Royal Harbour, East Crosswall, Ramsgate, Kent, CT11 9LQ**

Prepared by Hume Planning Consultancy Ltd.

On Behalf of: Ramsgate Arts Barge Community Interest Company

Our Reference: HPC_1420

Date: August 2021

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1. Introduction & Site Description

- 1.1 This Planning and Heritage Statement has been prepared on behalf of the Ramsgate Arts Barge Community Interest Company [the Applicant] to support a detailed application for the mooring of Ramsgate Arts Barge for mixed use as artists studios, cafe/bar, exhibition and community space, together with Planning and Listed Building Consent for the associated installation and access works at Ramsgate Royal Harbour.
- 1.2 The development proposal will transform the historic derelict barge, the Vriedschap' into a thriving creative and community hub at Ramsgate Harbour in the heart of the town. The project is run by the Ramsgate Arts Barge Community Interest Company who is seeking to deliver unique community and leisure space that will also provide workspace and exhibition areas for local artists and will be supported by an on-board ancillary café and bar. For the reasons set out within this Statement, it is asserted that the proposal would deliver community, tourism, heritage and employment benefits, in accordance with local and national planning policy.



Figure 1: Photograph of the Vriedschap Barge as existing

- 1.3 The application site is located is located within Ramsgate Royal Harbour, adjoining Harbour Parade and East Crosswall, and lies in close proximity to cafés and bars along the waterfront. The site is located within the settlement confines of Ramsgate and within the Ramsgate Conservation Area.
- 1.4 In terms of other planning designations, the site falls within the designated Ramsgate Waterfront & Royal Harbour and the Developed Coast Landscape Character Area and falls within Flood Zones 2 and 3 according to the Environment Agency (EA) maps.
- 1.5 The grade II listed inner basin wall of the harbour falls within the application site to the east, which dates back to circa 1750-1790 and was originally conceived by Smeaton to provide a head of water to scour out the outer harbour (List Entry Number: 1031843). There are a number of other listed buildings within the vicinity of the site, including:
- Grade II* listed The Clock House (List Entry Number: 1336325)
 - Grade II listed National Westminster Bank (List Entry Number: 1336670)
 - Grade II listed The Castle Hotel (List Entry Number: 1085380)
 - Grade II listed Royal Oak Hotel (List Entry Number: 1085379)
 - Grade II listed Former Alexandra Hotel (List Entry Number: 1068630)
 - Grade II listed The Queen's Head (List Entry Number: 1085381)

- Grade II listed Custom House (List Entry Number: 1068641)

1.6 The Vriedschap (the name meaning friendship in Dutch, is a 130-year old, 50-metre, 200-tonne, former cargo barge which spent 80 years working the waterways across Holland by three generations of the Van der Veen family, before arriving in the UK in the early 1990's to be used residentially. Comprising a potential 700sqm of space over two main decks, the Vriedschap will be fully renovated and converted to create the Ramsgate Arts Barge.



Figures 2a & 2b: Aerial & Streetview Images



Figure 3: Extract from Historic England listing map (nearby listed buildings shown by blue triangles)

2. Relevant Planning History

- 2.1 There is no planning history relating directly to this site.
- 2.2 Other recent proposals elsewhere in Ramsgate Harbour have been approved for the siting of a wet fish and seafood stall with customer seating at the Pier Yard in 2019 (LPA ref. F/TH/18/1530) and the erection of platform to facilitate use of slipway for the siting of tables and chairs off Military Road in 2015 (LPA Ref. F/TH/15/0569).
- 2.3 In line with best practice, prior to the submission of this application, pre-application advice was sought from the Local Planning Authority (LPA). On 11th June 2021, Hume Planning Consultancy and the Applicant has a site meeting with the LPA and the verbal advice received at the meeting and the subsequent written advice (ref. PRE/PRE/21/0094) has been used to inform the submission. The feedback on the proposal was positive with the LPA concluding that the proposal will provide economic benefits in the form of new community and tourism facilities and the use would facilitate the restoration of a historic barge. The advice is summarised as follows:
- The creation of a community/tourist/leisure use in the harbour area is supported and there is no objection to the principle of the positioning of the barge.
 - The restoration of the barge could be of some visual interest and add to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Details of the precise nature of the works to the barge will need to be provided and assessed.
 - In general terms, the proposed pontoon would not appear out of character from the immediate area. Specific details of access and associated works will be key in the determination of the proposal to ensure there is no harm to the conservation area, listed buildings or landscape character area.
 - The site is within a location that has night time economy uses but information including clarification on food/drink, amplified noise, artists studio use and refuse storage, is required for a full assessment on the impact on neighbouring uses.
 - The scheme is within a sustainable location in Ramsgate, close to public transport links, regular bus routes, public car parks and the town centre, so considers the use would not generate on street parking demand.
 - The site is within flood zone 3, however the proposal for a barge is water compatible. A simple statement FRA should be provided.
 - Opportunities should be taken within the development to enhance biodiversity and a construction management plan may be required to take into account ecology during construction.

3. Proposal

- 3.1 The proposal relates to the mooring of the barge at the location identified within Ramsgate Harbour and its restoration and reconfiguration in order to create high quality multi-purpose spaces, offering creative, community, tourism and employment benefits which will be run by the Ramsgate Arts Barge Community Interest Company.
- 3.2 The primary objective of the barge is to provide community and event space, with a supporting role provided by the catering and bar use and also offering small scale studios for hire by local artists. Supporting the café and bar use, the Applicant is planning to have hot food on offer which will require a flue and the location of the flue is demonstrated on the proposed plans.
- 3.3 The boat is 51m in length and the floorspace will be arranged over the upper and lower decks. The proposed plans demonstrate the following key spaces:
- Upper Deck - main deck, upper deck, viewing platform
Lower Deck - artist studio, small event space, large event space, bar/kitchens, lobby, reception, and toilets
Engine level - artist studio, small event space, large event space, lobby, reception, and toilets
- 3.4 As part of the proposals, the historic barge will also undergo significant restoration and refurbishment works, which includes the following:
- Exterior to have 'dazzle camouflage' design
 - Outdoor space created
 - Clerestory windows added to allow light into the plan
 - Inverted V shaped roof, constructed with original boards

ACCESS & INSTALLATION WORKS

- 3.5 The venue because of its physical size has a limited capacity at any one time but will create a community hub and complement other existing visitor attractions in Ramsgate's Royal Harbour, bringing much needed year-round tourism and footfall.
- 3.6 The proposed number of employees associated with the proposal is 10 full time additional jobs along with several part time jobs. Full time jobs created will be across operations, catering, events, teaching, and educational posts. There will also be learning opportunities throughout the project and creates valuable 'hands on' work experience for students.
- 3.7 To support the flexible, mixed-use floorspace of the building, the following hours of operation will be observed:
- Monday - Friday: 11am - 11pm
 - Saturday, Sunday & Holiday Periods: 8am - 11pm
- 3.8 The principle access for visitors and deliveries to the barge would be via a new gantry structure that is attached to the harbour wall. It is currently the design intent to have

any invasive fixings or anchorage installed past the marble stones into the paving or pier yard thus avoiding too much harm to the listed basin wall.

- 3.9 A rubber mat will be put in place to protect existing granite blocks and a Galvanised Steel Gate with galvanised fish net fencing will be put in place.
- 3.10 The existing Stanchions will be modified to suit, having the Diamond Core drilled and epoxied into granite set.
- 3.11 If the Ramsgate Arts Barge was to cease trading and the barge was no longer required in this location for an alternative use, then the barge would be moved from Ramsgate Harbour and potentially relocated.

4 Planning Policy Context

- 4.1 Decisions on planning applications must be made in accordance with the policies of the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance the Development Plan for the purposes of S38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) comprises the adopted Thanet Local Plan (June 2020).
- 4.2 In addition to the policies of the Development Plan, there is other guidance which is material to the determination of planning applications including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). The relevant development plan policies are identified below and, these together with relevant NPPF references are addressed where appropriate within the planning assessment section below.

ADOPTED THANET LOCAL PLAN 2020

- Policy SP02: Economic Growth
- Policy SP11: Ramsgate
- Policy SP26: Landscape Character Areas
- Policy SP38: Healthy and Inclusive Communities
- Policy CM01: Provision of New Community Facilities
- Policy HE02: Development in Conservation Areas
- Policy QD02: General Design Principles
- Policy QD03: Living Conditions
- Policy CC01: Fluvial and Tidal Flooding
- Policy TP02: Walking

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF) (2021)

- 4.3 The NPPF defines the purpose of the planning system as contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and divides this principal objective into three overarching and interdependent objectives, that need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. The three objectives are economic, social and environmental.
- 4.4 Great weight is given to promoting attractive, vibrant and competitive town centres, upon recognition of their role at the heart of local communities. Paragraph 86 states that planning policies should “promote the long-term vitality of town centres by allowing them to grow and diversify and allow a suitable mix of uses which reflects their distinctive characters”. This Section of the Framework goes on to say that when considering edge of centre proposals, preference should be given to accessible sites which are well connected to the town centre.
- 4.5 Section 8 of the Framework further emphasises that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which promote social interaction and the role of planning “to deliver social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs”. To achieve this, planning policies and decisions should plan “positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities

and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities” (Paragraph 93). Further emphasising the point of multiple uses is Paragraph 120 which states that planning policies and decisions should “encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes...”.

- 4.6 Section 6 of the Framework seeks to build a strong, competitive economy whereby planning policies and decisions “should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt... (whereby) significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development” (Paragraph 81).
- 4.7 The Framework at paragraph's 126 and 130 recognises the need to create high quality buildings and places and that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.
- 4.8 Paragraph 167 states that “when determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere”.
- 4.9 Paragraph 206 of the Framework equally advocates the opportunities provided by development to “enhance or better reveal...(the) significance” of Conservation Areas, listed buildings and their setting. The impacts of any proposal upon the character and appearance of heritage assets should also be considered and weighed against the public benefits.

5 Planning Evaluation & Opportunity

Principle of Development

- 5.1 The proposal has been driven by the following key aims and objectives:
- a) Delivery of a unique community and creative hub, through the creation of an accessible, family and LGBTQ+ friendly, multifaceted arts, events and performance space for Ramsgate and Thanet community. The Barge will host visual arts exhibitions, art installations, comedy, cabaret, theatre, acoustic music, film screenings and poetry.
 - b) Operating as a Community Interest Company (CIC), the company profits will be used to help disadvantaged children (2-16 years of age) living in the Thanet District through complimentary multidisciplinary arts classes, courses, workshops and programmes. The CIC will be working in conjunction with the EKC Group to provide learning opportunities throughout the project and creating valuable 'hands on' work experience for students.
 - c) The project will form learning partnerships with schools and educational establishments across Thanet and will provide complimentary community studio hire to schools, colleges, charities and not-for-profit organisations within the District.
 - d) Creation of a visitor attraction in Ramsgate's Royal Harbour, bringing year-round tourism and footfall into the area to stimulate the local economy by increasing 'day-trippers' and 'overnight stays' to Ramsgate. The project seeks to attract internationally established artists, putting Ramsgate on the map as a 'must visit' destination for the arts.
 - e) Creation of new employment opportunities across Operations, Catering, Events, Technical and Educational posts associated with the proposed mixture of uses (based on the current plans, a minimum of 10 full time jobs will be created in addition to part-time job creation with the number to be confirmed).
 - f) Restore the historic boat to a seaworthy state and occupy a mooring at a focal point within Ramsgate Royal Harbour in order to promote Ramsgate's Maritime Heritage and connection with the sea.
 - g) Support and champion artists from across the local area via regular exhibitions and events throughout the year, as well as providing the opportunity for studio hire for local artists for both short and long term artistic projects.
 - h) Creation of safe access from a secure location within the harbour and to conserve the developed coast landscape character and listed buildings, whilst adding character and interest to the conservation area.
- 5.2 The site located in sustainable location, close to town centre, close-by to services and retail uses, walking. The barge location (Council confirmed no objection at the pre-app stage). Proposal result in new community use in the harbour and will provide

unique and good quality tourism, leisure, community and event facility that will serve the local area.

- 5.3 Policy SP11 of the Local Plan refers to the Council seeking to support the continued regeneration and development of Ramsgate focusing on its maritime heritage and developing leisure role. Under this policy, land at and adjoining Ramsgate Royal Harbour is identified for development for a mixture of leisure, tourism, retail and residential purposes. The proposals have also been developed in regard to the Ramsgate Maritime Plan whereby;
- Shore-based attractions and pedestrian access within the Royal Harbour need to be enhanced
- in order to achieve better integration with the historic waterfront,
- Any new development should enhance the Royal Harbour,
 - The inner and outer areas of the harbour will focus on the development of their core heritage, commercial activities and leisure strengths in order to enhance their appeal to mariners, yachtsmen and visitors alike.
- 5.4 In both local and national planning policy, great weight is given to promoting community facilities and shared spaces to meet local needs, as well as supporting regeneration and employment generating development. Adopted Policy CM01 supports the creation of new community facilities and Policy SP02 also encourages regeneration and employment generating development. The principle of the development is further supported by Policy SP38 which states that proposals will be supported that "create social interaction and safe environments through mixed uses", which would be met by the proposals.
- 5.5 For these reasons, the principle of the creation of the proposed uses in this sustainable, harbour location is therefore considered to be acceptable.

Character & Heritage

- 5.6 The 'dazzle camouflage' design was used on ships in both World Wars I and II as a defence mechanism. The intention of dazzle camouflage was to confuse enemy ships as to the direction of travel, thus more likely to avoid attack from enemy ships. The 'dazzle camouflage' has been selected as the proposed exterior hull design for the Ramsgate Arts Barge as a nod to Ramsgate's unique maritime heritage and links to the world wars including the Dunkirk evacuations.

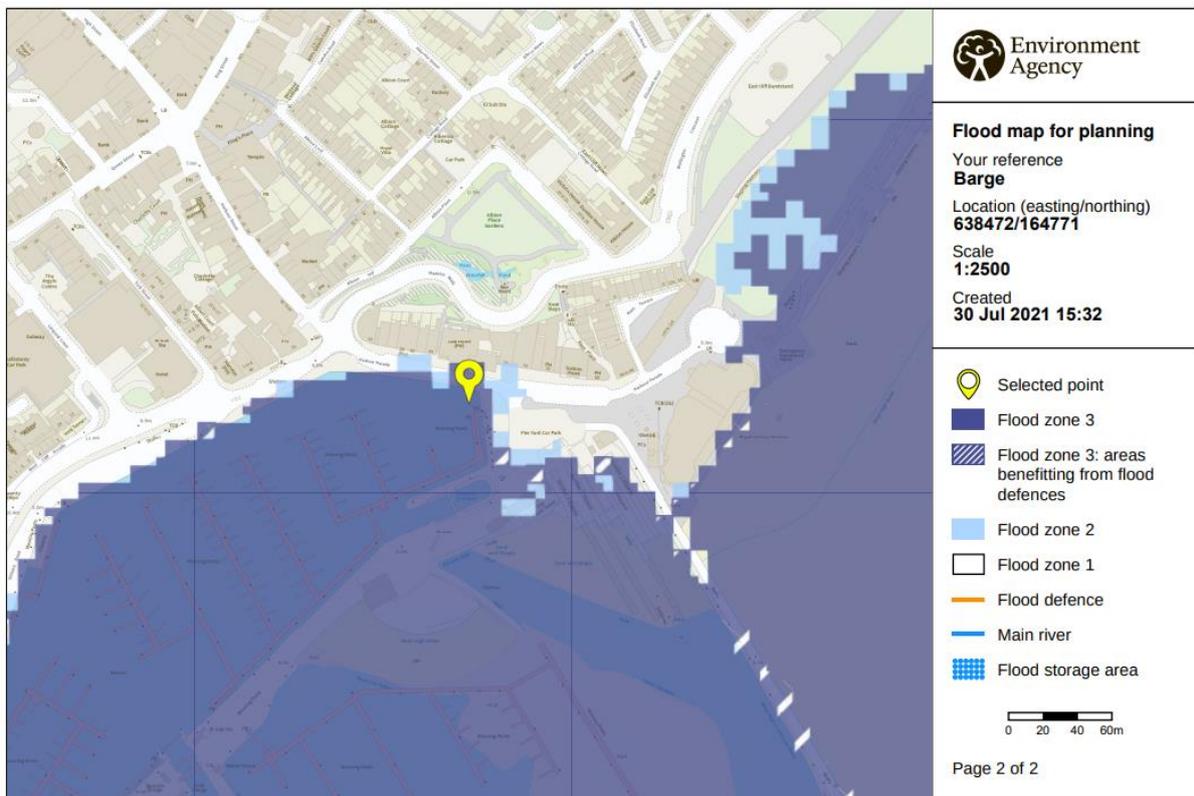
Living Conditions

- 5.7 Because of the physical size (which limits activity) and the position of the barge in the harbour area close to existing commercial uses and late night activity and its physical separation from the nearest residential properties, it is asserted that the proposed community use will have a positive impact on its surroundings whilst safeguarding the living conditions of residential and visitor accommodation nearby. Alongside the hours of operation and controls that can be introduced via planning condition (and via licensing controls) it is contended that appropriate safeguards will be put in place to

ensure that the use will not result in any unacceptable disturbance and will overall have a positive impact on its surroundings within the harbour area.

Flood Risk

- 5.8 The application site is located within Ramsgate Royal Harbour and covers an area of approximately 375sqm and that the proposals comprise the mooring of a barge for mixed-use as artists studios, cafe/bar, exhibition and community space. Paragraph 167 of the NPPF states that when determining applications, LPA's should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere and should be supported by a site-specific flood risk assessment. The site is located within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The NPPF requires all developments in Flood Zones 2 and 3 to be subject to an FRA and to meet the requirements for flood risk reduction. The main source of potential flooding is from the sea and the barge is purpose designed for sea worthiness. It is also relevant that the barge is moored within the inner basin of Ramsgate harbour which is protected from the full tidal range and is doubly defended by the outer and inner harbour walls. It is also relevant that the proposal is categorised as water-compatible development - the lowest flood risk vulnerability classification, where development is appropriate and does not require the exception test to be carried out. The barge will not be fixed to the harbour and will be subject to the lower range of level movement in the inner basin. The relevant extracts from the EA Mapping are set out below.



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Figure 4: Extract from EA Flood Map for Planning

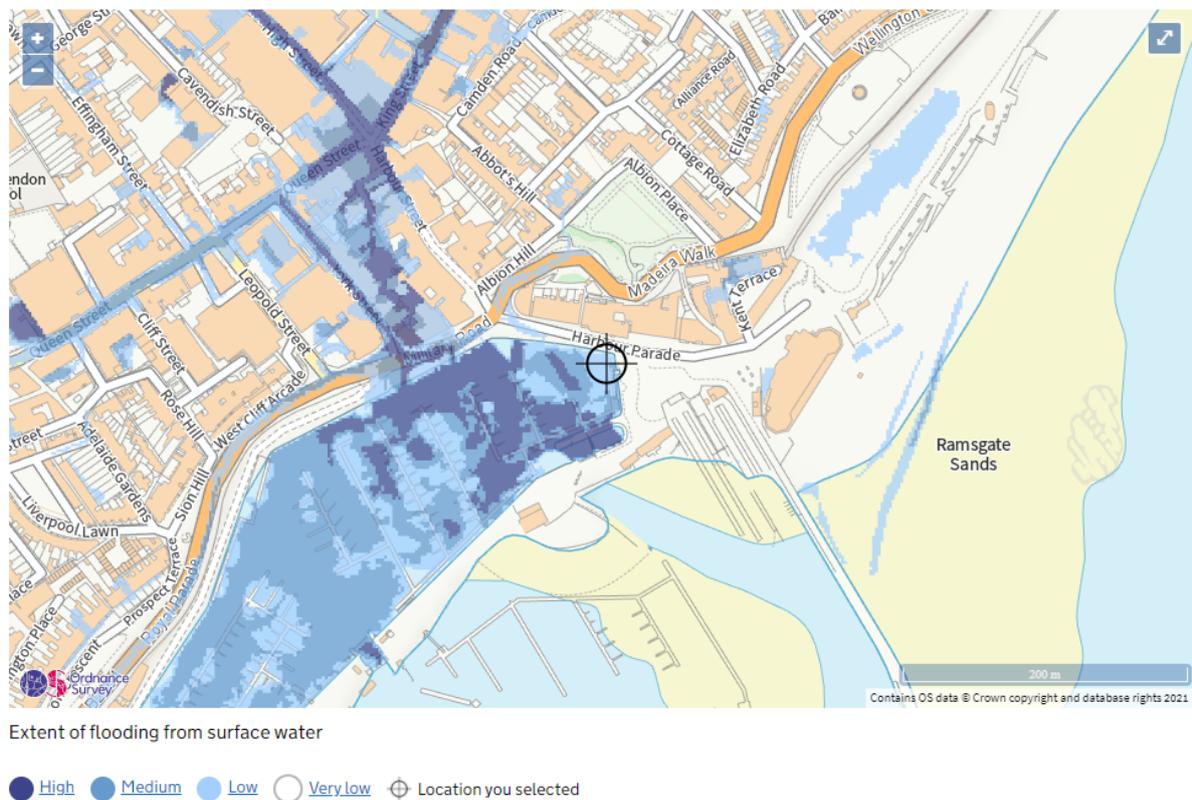


Figure 5: Extract from EA Surface Water Flooding Map

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 This planning application follows pre-application engagement with the Local Planning Authority as well as discussions with local stakeholders.
- 6.2 The proposal relates to the mooring of an existing barge within Ramsgate's Inner Harbour Basin and involves its restoration and reconfiguration in order to create high quality multi-purpose spaces, offering creative, community, tourism and employment benefits to the town and complimenting existing activity in this focal area. The Barge will be run by the Ramsgate Arts Barge Community Interest Company.
- 6.3 The primary use of the barge is to provide community and event space, with a supporting role provided by the catering and bar use and also offering small scale studios for hire by local artists.
- 6.4 The proposal represents an innovative community driven use that will restore a disused barge in need of repair. It is concluded that the proposal accords with the development plan policies and is consistent with broader district objectives to promote community, tourism and employment projects.
- 6.5 For these reasons it is respectfully requested that this community based project is supported by the LPA.