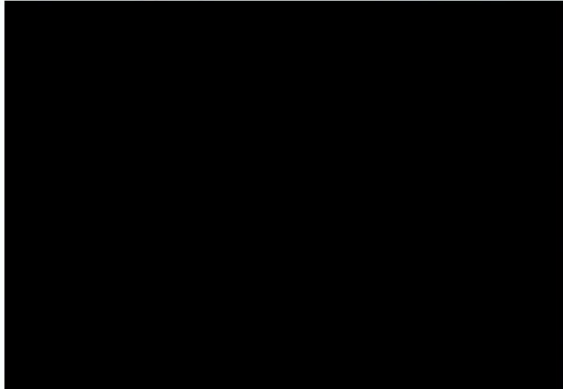




Head of Planning  
Folkstone & Hythe District Council  
Civic Centre  
Castle Hill Avenue  
Folkstone  
Kent  
CT20 2QY

21 MAY 2019

May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Dear Sir,

**Planning Application Y19/0362/FH  
Romney Cottage, Madeira Road, Littlestone**

I am writing to oppose the above planning application which, if granted, would undermine the whole basis for one of the Council's most important Conservation Areas.

**1. The development does not accord with conservation guidelines and the Local Plan. (Policy BE4)**

Romney Cottage is part of the Madeira Road, Littlestone Conservation Area. This designation was made specifically to preserve the character of an area which contains large individually designed detached houses in large gardens of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In the report to this designation, Report Number 3507 dated January 10<sup>th</sup> 1990:-

Para 1.2 states: *'The Northern area is of large detached 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century houses set in large grounds and has a distinct character overall of special significance.'* The paragraph continues: *It is therefore considered that policies should be adopted for this area to protect the existing buildings and grounds from unsympathetic development and/or alterations. Designating the area a Conservation Area would enhance such protection and give control over demolition.'*

Para 1.3 states: *'The special character is created by the unique collection of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century detached, houses in their own extensive gardens. Styles typical of the period range from Scottish Baronial through Mock Tudor to Georgian. Materials and detailing are of particularly high quality and scale is large.'*

Recommendation (c) in this report states: *'Within the area defined by an unbroken black line [the Conservation Area] on the appended Plan 2, the District Council will resist the demolition of existing dwellings and will not normally grant planning permission for development or infill development, as any such proposal is likely to affect significantly the special character which exists in the locality.'*

The actual designation document dated 17<sup>th</sup> April 1990 and termed: 'The District Council of Shepway, Town and Country Planning Act 1971, Section 227 (As Amended) Madeira Road, Littlestone, Conservation Area' states:-

Item (1):

*'Conservation Area Consent is required for demolition of all unlisted buildings in the Conservation Area except those buildings excluded by a direction made by the Secretary of State for the Environment.'*

Item (3):

*'The Local Planning Authority is under a duty to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area, and to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.'* This requirement has been incorporated into the current District Plan which states: *'The District Planning Authority will refuse Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of buildings which contribute to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.'*

**2. The special character of the conservation area will be adversely affected by this development for the following reasons. (Policy BE12)**

(a) The development of a building of 4 terraced houses in the garden of Romney Cottage represents over-intensive development of the site which in itself alters the special character of the area. One needs only to look at the Block Plan and the layout of Romney Cottage in relation to the adjoining houses (single houses with large gardens) to see how the character of the area will be adversely affected by this infill development. This side of Madeira Road is made up of an eclectic range of large houses and it is notable the applicant has not commented in the Design and Access Statement accompanying the application on the setting of the proposed development in relation to the golf course to the rear. The massing,

style and design of the proposed development is totally out of keeping with the 'streetscape' as viewed from the golf course. The view down the 18<sup>th</sup> hole towards the Water Tower, bordering the proposed development, is the iconic view used by Littlestone Golf Club to market the course to visitors from all over the UK and beyond. This proposed development will seriously intrude on this special aspect contemplated within the Conservation area designation.

(c) Residents have strongly opposed previous applications to change the special character of the Conservation Area. Three previous applications to build flat blocks have been refused by the Council, namely:

Re 'Chatsworth' Madeira Road Y06/0791/SH

Re 'Prospect' Madeira Road Y10/0846/SH

Re 'Steynes' Madeira Road Y16/0140/SH

This application is trying to increase the development density whilst not creating a flat development which quite rightly the Council has consistently refused elsewhere in the Conservation area. The result is a proposed development which severely detracts from the 'character and appearance' of the Conservation area and as such should be considered a proposal for an 'infill development' which the Council can properly refuse in line with the policies on the Conservation area (see above).

The Council must continue to resist the overdevelopment of the Conservation Area and seek to uphold the policy of preserving the special character of the area as they have done in the past. Any relaxation of policy will send a strong message to landowners that more intensive development will now be permitted with the result the whole basis of the Conservation Area will be undermined.

In similar cases in previous years, after refusal of the application, new plans were developed:

Chatsworth-major refurbishment and extension of the existing house

Prospect-contemporary new build now completed of a single house

Steynes -contemporary new build of a single house in progress

I urge the Council to refuse this application. Whilst it may be tempting to disregard established policies in respect of Conservation Areas to meet targets for new dwellings, the Council must stand firm to ensure the 'distinct character of special significance' of the area is preserved both for this generation and the next.

Yours faithfully

