

David Baker
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I am writing to object to the proposed reserved matters application Y19/0558/FH (the “Reserved Matters Application”) relating to Martello Towers 6 & 7 and land adjoining Military Road in Sandgate. In making this objection I understand that this application is intended to address all matters reserved in application Y11/0137/SH (“the Outline Application”) as the time for submitting reserved matters applications under that application has now expired.

I object to the application on four grounds, detailed below:

- The landscaping plan proposed in diagram AL(0)11 deviates materially from the Tree Removal Plan in diagram 09/14/401 of the Outline Application through the removal of essentially all trees in the Enabling Development.
- The rerouting of the access road depicted in diagram AL(0)10 is a material deviation from the routing that was proposed in the Outline Application; more than doubling the number of trees impacted and materially increasing the impact of this road on the woodland.
- Several of the materials proposed in the Materials List shown on diagram AD(0)59 (inter alia) are inconsistent with the Sandgate Design Statement and will diminish the visual amenity of the area.
- The overall style of the proposed houses in the Enabling Development is inconsistent with the style of their neighbours and the Sandgate village in general.

Enabling Development Landscaping

While the Outline Application notes landscaping as one of the items to be addressed as reserved matters, this is subject to the conditions imposed on the approval of the Outline Application. One of those conditions is that:

“The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans numbers ... 19/14/401, 19/14/402, 19/14/403 [and] 19/14/404”.

These plans form the “Proposed Tree Removal Plan”; showing in green those existing trees to be retained in the development, and in grey those trees to be removed.

Drawing number AL(0)11 in the Reserved Matters Application sets out the proposed landscaping plan for the enabling development – depicting newly planted trees and shrubs in green and existing trees to be retained as grey dots. This diagram shows removal of a large number of the trees that were shown as retained in the Outline Application. As noted above, I understand that the retention of these trees was a condition of approval of the Outline Application. The trees apparently impacted include:

- Several mature trees between Unit 1 and the main retaining wall for the access road to the Martello towers,
- A mature tree between units 1 & 2 which is identified in the outline application as being actively protected in a dedicated garden bed,
- A tree at the front of unit 4,

- Some 5 trees located between units 4 and 5,
- 2 significant trees at the front of unit 5,
- 3 trees along the roadway between units 3 and 4,
- Some 7 trees behind unit 3, and
- Half of the existing trees along Military Road and the path to the east of the site.

Together these represent virtually all of the trees that had been identified as being retained within the Enabling Development in the Outline Application.

In my opinion, the removal of the trees that had been scheduled to be retained as part of the Enabling Development materially changes the nature of the development and the facts on which it was approved. Removal of these trees will greatly increase the loss of visual amenity for neighbouring properties and for users of Sandgate Park. It will also materially increase the impact the development will have on wildlife – most particularly birdlife – which lives on the Sandgate Escarpment, including Nightingales, Owls and Starlings.

The removal of additional trees will also remove their ability to stabilise the hillside – increasing the chance of erosion and land-slips within the development.

Rerouting of Access Road

Drawing AL(0)10 of the Reserved Matters application shows a rerouting of the access road from Military Road to Martello Tower 6 as compared to the route proposed in the Outline Application. In particular, the route depicted is different to that shown on diagram 09/14/401, the Proposed Tree Removal Plan.

The proposed rerouting of the access road has a significant negative impact on the ability to retain the existing trees making up the woodland through which this road will be built. To the best of my ability to count from the diagrams, the routing proposed will more than double the number of trees impacted – from 10 trees on the Outline Application to 23 trees with the new routing. This again is a material deviation from the Outline Application and in my opinion is in breach of condition 4 of the Outline Application's approval.

The proposed routing also proceeds considerably further along the hillside – materially increasing the overall impact on the hillside and likely further impacting on the visual amenity of neighbours and users of Sandgate Park.

Materials Proposals

Building styles within the Sandgate region are governed by the Sandgate Design Statement, which as you will be aware has been adopted by the Folkestone & Hythe District Council as a Supplementary Planning Document. For purpose of this document, the proposed Enabling Development falls within the "Sandgate Hill and Military Road Character Area" with design characteristics set out on page 33 of the Design Statement.

Few of the materials proposed for the Enabling Development are consistent with the guidance on typical materials used by other housing in the region, as set out in the Design Statement. Of particular note:

- The use of raised metal zinc roof cladding is, to my knowledge, unique in the area where roofing standards are peg tiles, slate or concrete tiles.
- While it is unclear from the diagrams where it is to be used, the use of wooden cladding – excluding some painted weatherboard – is not a feature of the area or allowed for in the Design Statement.

- Even for the proposed hard surfaces the use of stone cladding and brown brickwork is likely to be out of step with a region where virtually all properties are red brick and / or rendered (again, in line with the Design Statement).

In my opinion, while the buildings proposed are potentially attractive in the abstract – the use of inconsistent materials will lead to the proposed housing looking alien in its surroundings. In so doing, the houses will impact negatively on the overall character of Sandgate.

Building Styles

In addition to the materials to be applied, the building styles proposed, with predominantly single directional sloped roofs and raised glass balconies, is very out of keeping with the style of neighbouring properties.

The properties in the area are dominated by gabled roofs, dormer windows, defined front gardens and multi-pane and bay windows. None of these features are present in the proposed designs. In my opinion, this will result in the new properties standing out like the proverbial 'sore thumb' - again damaging the overall character which the Sandgate Design Statement is designed to protect.

Conclusion

For the reasons described above, I object to the Reserved Matters Application and suggest that it should be rejected. The design details proposed in the reserved matters appear inconsistent with the conditions imposed when the Outline Application was approved, as well as paying little heed to the design principles in the Sandgate Design Statement.

I thank you for your consideration of these points.

Regards,

David Baker