

October 18th 2016

Corporate Planning

21 OCT 2016

Mrs. Wendy Simpson,
Shipway District Council,
Civic Centre,
Castle Hill Avenue,
Folkestone,
CT20 2QX

Re: Planning Application Y16/1017/SH, alt. Ref. PP-05365286

Application address COAST DRIVE CAR PARK, COAST DRIVE, GREATSTONE, KENT

Outline Application for the erection of 20 units, consisting of 13 Apartments, 4 Detached Houses and a Terrace of 3 Town Houses.

Dear Mrs Simpson,

I wish to object in the strongest terms to the above-numbered Planning Application referring to the site at the rear of my property.

On specific technical grounds relating to Land Use Issues, the Application should be refused. The site currently sits outside the Settlement Boundary and should, therefore, be rejected. I am aware of Local Council proposal to extend the Settlement Boundary and will similarly object to such a motion. Development of the nature proposed would cause a completely unacceptable infringement on the privacy of the local residents who are currently not overlooked and would lose all privacy from their homes. In addition, any new buildings being erected on this this natural uninterrupted skyline will lead to a very significant loss of daylight for the existing homes.

There will be ongoing noise and disturbance from any built development on this site, which currently offers a calm and peaceful environment for local residents on their return from work. Occupation of buildings across a previously natural skyline is bound to cause noise and disturbance which, alone, form grounds to refuse development. I believe it could also constitute the basis for a Human Rights case for the potential removal of the Right to Enjoyment of Family Life.

Romney Sands Beach and Greatstone Car Park provide a busy and much needed local amenity not only to the community and neighbourhood of Littlestone and Greatstone, but to considerably more diverse groups of people including, but are not limited to, holiday makers, picnickers, tourists, equine enthusiasts, kite surfers, nature watchers, birdwatchers, artists, photographers, sunbathers, the local Sea Cadets, Emergency Services and the local RNLI as well as the community at large. It is much more than just a car park. Many disabled and elderly people are frequent users of the site with its level surface and its unique access to the Beach, the English Coastal Path and the area of Special Scientific Interest that surrounds it on three sides. Indeed, it serves as an enhancement to the SSSI site, being the only place where vehicular access allows larger vehicles (motor homes, vans and coaches) to park while visiting the area. It should be pointed out that there is no other coach parking facility with easy access to the beach anywhere else along this stretch of coastline.

Many visitors travel to the area in large vehicles, required as part of their leisure use of the Beach and it's environs. Their equipment is often too heavy or too bulky to carry any distance and needs to be brought right on to the sea's edge without obstacle or interference. Similarly, there are frequent visits by coachloads of school children, who use the area as an educational resource, and tourists using the area's amenities, including the conveniently situated and popular restaurant. Any development of the car park will destroy their peaceful and legitimate enjoyment of the Beach. It is worth noting that the restaurant clientele is likely to need at least as many, if not more parking spaces that the proposal sets out.

This car park is part of a Category 3 Flood Risk Area as defined by the Environment Agency, with a high risk of flooding from the sea and from the waterway leading to an outfall near one end of the site. It floods regularly after heavy rainfall and is extremely unsuitable for any form of development whatsoever. The introduction of hard surfaces will not only greatly exacerbate this problem dramatically but will also greatly increase the flood risk to the existing joining properties, including my own, potentially exposing the permitting Authority to litigation for allowing this to take place. It should be noted that all properties bordering the car park are at a lower level, and that the ten properties in Channel Watch have bedrooms on the ground floor. Frankly, I have no confidence that the proposed scheme for drainage of the proposed development will have any beneficial effect.

I challenge all the reported assertion that the "development should not increase the flood risk elsewhere". Reference to information provided by the Environment Agency appears to support my argument on this point. Any properly conducted survey of the area would show that, in particular, the established business and homes on the opposite side of Coast Drive lie considerably below the level of Coast Drive highway itself and are extremely vulnerable to any run off locally. Surely development of the car park as proposed, with the additional volume of drainage and surface water has the potential to lead to catastrophic flooding of homes and businesses.

I note that no Environmental impact Assessment has been carried out, nor is there a proposal to do so. How odd that a site that sits adjacent on three sides to a Site of Special Scientific Interest should be so dismissed - or does the applicant believe that all forms of wildlife, including protected species, simply avoid the area? Development of the site will doubtless have an impact on the the sensitive botanical communities associated with the adjoining SSSI areas and to the various species of invertebrates that migrate across the site. This is a soft-landscaped car park which acts as an environmental buffer between the sea shore and the built environment. It is a stopping place for a wide variety of sea birds and migratory birds and there is a delicate and wonderful eco system of wild flowers and sea shore flora upon the site that would all be irreversibly damaged by any development. Development of this site will visually damage the natural landscape and access to the beach which runs directly counter to Shepway's Local District Plan Policy SD1 para. C. It runs counter to both Policy SD 1 para. i on Amenity land protection and SD1 para. j on preventing negative impacts on coastal protection, flood defence and land drainage. There is also the question of whether or not there is still possibly unstable ordnance (the area was mined during the Second World War) buried beneath the site.

It is my belief that residential development here is inappropriate. This car park is a civic amenity far more suited to development as a community hub - perhaps a Heritage Centre or Village Hall with parking available for both cars and coaches. It would attract visitors to the area and benefit the local economy and provide a much-needed local resource. I trust this will be given due consideration. It is also my hope that proper consideration will be given to the fact that the local infrastructure is already under considerable strain - the local doctor's surgery and dentist are struggling to cope with the number of patients they already have and the local primary schools are already full. Further residential development will only exacerbate these problems.

I appeal to Shepway District Council to consider the negative impact this proposal will have on the locality and to reject the application.

Yours sincerely

