

## Stubbs, Lilian

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**From:** Allan, Robert  
**Sent:** 11 October 2017 15:36  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** FW: Princes Parade Planning Application - Formal Objection

Y17/1042/SH objection

Robert Allan  
Major Projects Team Leader  
Major Projects Team  
T: 01303 853454  
F: 01303 853502  
Shepway District Council, Civic Centre,  
Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 2QY  
E: [robert.allan@shepway.gov.uk](mailto:robert.allan@shepway.gov.uk)  
W: [www.shepway.gov.uk](http://www.shepway.gov.uk)  
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**From:** Nick Walne [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 11 October 2017 15:34  
**To:** Allan, Robert; [damian.collins.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:damian.collins.mp@parliament.uk)  
**Subject:** Princes Parade Planning Application - Formal Objection

To whom it may concern.

I wish to **strongly register** my objection to the application to develop Prince's Parade for the following important reasons:

### 1. The Leisure Centre

I fully recognise the need for a new swimming pool in Hythe but it needs to be sited in the correct location both aestichally and demographically. The Princes Parade location ticks neither of these boxes. Sport England have already resolutely put their support behind construction at Martello Towers where such a facility would be easily accessible for Hythe West and Romney Marsh Residents. Where is there logic of building a new pool 3 miles down the road from Folkestone Sports Centres already refurbished (£1.5m 2010) and excellent facilities - it makes absolutely no sense from either a practicality point of view and a commercial point of view - you would effectively be putting the 2 facilities unnecessarily into direct competition. The Martello Towers location is another 3 miles east of Princes Parade in an area any population heat map overlaid with competing facilities would indicate is by far the preferable location. So 2 key points need to be made here 1) as this facility is to serve the public of Hythe and beyond why build it in an area which would cause increased travel time for most users - especially to those reliant on public transport to access the facilities. Build it where the demographics dictate the population most benefit and are most likely to use. 2) From a commercial point of view the location does not stack up - locating 3 miles from an existing and impressive facility is counterproductive both financially and demographically. I would also question whether the ground conditions are suitable at Princes Parade - making it a costly site to develop. Given that the site is from a footfall / commercial perspective is less attractive than alternatives - factor in the cost of build on such a site and I think the financial viability of such a project is questionable - especially given other viable and workable alternatives.

### 2. Historical and Environmental Significance

Previous multiple applications by SDC to develop PP have been halted with inspectors stating unequivocally that Princes parade has one of the "finest vistas in the district", that "this part of Seabrook is deficient in every sort of public open space." and that "residential development would be out of character with the site's open nature". It was concluded in 2003 that "I find this one of the rare occasions when the need to preserve the open character of a site, and its relationship to both the sea and the canal, is so important that it outweighs the imperatives of PPG3". Nothing has changed here since 2003 apart from open spaces have been more encroached upon making this area even more significant. I am fully accepting that we should look to improve Princes Parade but any changes should be sympathetic to the both the historical significance and beauty of the area. These plans clearly do not do that and would create a stretch of coast dominated by a poorly located leisure facility, a hotel (when we have seen many hotels struggle to exist in recent years) and 150 properties - when recent developments in the vicinity have struggled to sell flats and when economic indicators are uncertain and the housing market appears to be starting to stall. My concern is that this is **not** the appropriate development for this site and once this very special bit of coast and "one of the finest vistas is gone - there is no bringing it back.

From a heritage perspective I believe English Heritage / Historic Britain - have made their views clear and were against such development when 36 properties were sited. I am assuming given proposed property numbers have increased to 150 their viewpoint will not change. The harm done to the Royal Military Canal and its environs will I believe far outweigh any potential public benefit and the development of Princes Parade would sadly change the unique character of Hythe town, with its surrounding view from the seafront both from above and below, "the finest vista in the district".

Ultimately the Royal Military Canal is a Scheduled Monument and is central to the heritage of the Nation and hence **must** be protected. The proposed development must comply with the advice of the NPPF, protecting and enhancing the designated heritage asset that forms a major feature of the site and its surroundings. The proposed application without doubt neither protects or enhances and to the contrary harms this designated heritage asset with the proposed development set to interrupt the present undeveloped and quintessentially English vista running along the canal to the Imperial Hotel. I struggle to see how buildings sitting between 8 and 10 metres above the road and therefore 15 metres above the canal cannot dominate and the Royal Military Canal from all angles.

### 3. Leisure Facilities + Wildlife

Currently I am one of the many many recreational users of the area - as a keen cyclist, runner and dog owner. Additionally both the seaside and the canal side are used by fisherman, walkers both young and older and people just wanting to escape and get away from it all. Many of the faces I see on a daily basis on Princes parade I have seen at the marches and meetings held to protest against the proposed development - a strength of feeling all the more surprising given the sleepy nature of Hythe town. Princes Parade also provides an important habitat and eco-system for many documented species of wildlife - including many migrating birds and tin forms an important and vital wildlife corridor that I believe we must protect. Over 130 different types of bird have been recorded on this site and it is also flourishing habitat for invertebrates, wild flowers and associated insects. SDC plan to completely "de-vegetate" this abundant ecosystem - with the natural habitat for many being irrevocably damaged - including a well established bat population. Wildlife relocations we know scientifically rarely are successful.

Additionally from a wildlife perspective we should not ignore the critical presence of the invasive Japanese Knotweed - largely brushed under the carpet by SDC.

As expressed I know the area very well and have found but a handful of individuals who seem convinced the development is progress for the better - instead I believe the proposed plans will negatively impact on the canal making it less attractive to all these leisure users. To add weight to this both the local sailing club and cycling club have both stated their objections to the development.

### 4. Road Re-Location

The relocation of the road and parking restrictions will undoubtedly negatively impact the opportunity to use the beach for leisure and the current tranquility of the canal (one of its key attractions is it provides a much needed green finger) will be destroyed for ever by the development and the relocation of the road. It will in effect be turned from a green and peaceful wildlife corridor in an area of already "deficient in every sort of public open

space” into just another faceless canal path / sea view full of properties maximising on the potential of offering a “waterfront view”.

We must also bear in mind car traffic would be drastically increased if the development goes ahead - 150 properties + times 2 cars is a further 300 cars plus factor in the mooted hotel - and this added into an area already creaking road and transport system. This impact will be felt both directly on this minor seaside road itself and on the wider road surrounding road and transport network and is amplified by the increased traffic due to the development at the top of Horn Street on a road already ill equipped to deal with current car flow. Thats before we even bring into the debate the undeniable increased pressure on local schools, doctors surgeries and other key infrastructure.

### **In Summary**

There many other reasons I believe the proposed hybrid proposal should not happen - but hope the above effectively outlines my key objections. In summary I am not opposed to sympathetic development aimed at making Princes Parade more accessible to the general public however I remain unconvinced that sufficient benefits could be delivered or have yet been identified from the proposal to outweigh the very real harm the proposed development would impact on this special and unique bit of historic coastline.

Many thanks and happy to discuss.

Nick Walne

