



THE LYMINGTON SOCIETY

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Lymington Society Submission to The Public Inquiry into The Appeal of Renaissance Home Against the Refusal of Planning Permission for The Erection Of 44 Sheltered Flats at The Site of The Rise and Three Other Properties Stanford Hill Lymington APPEAL REF: APP/B1740/W/20/3265937

History of the Lymington Society.

The Lymington Society, which was established in the 1960s, is what is described nationally as an Amenity Society or Civic Society, represented at a national level by organisations such as the Civic Trust and more recently Civic Voice which coordinates the activities of civic societies nationally and represents their views to Government. Civic Societies are recognised nationally as an important part of the planning process and in many parts of the country are Statutory Consultees for planning applications.

The Lymington Society has a proud history of representing the views of local people, especially when it comes to matters of planning and development, which reflects on the character of the town of Lymington.

“Planning Watchdog”

The Society is commonly described as a “planning watchdog” by the local media and have been successful in obtaining listed building status for buildings in the town, as well as helping to stop unsuitable developments such as a plan in the 1980s to build a holiday camp inside Buckland Rings an Iron Age Hill Fort on the outskirts of the town, now thankfully owned and protected by Hampshire County Council

More recently the Society has taken part in or has attended several Public Inquiries into contentious planning applications, such as the plan to build retirement flats in the old bus station site in Lymington which was turned down on appeal by the Planning Inspectorate.

Lymington Society Helped Draft much of the Lymington Local Distinctiveness SPD

The Society also help draft much of the text of the Lymington Local Distinctiveness Supplementary Planning Document adopted by the New Forest District Council in 2011, a fact that was acknowledged in the preface to that document.

Works Closely with The NFDC On Planning Matters.

The Society takes part in consultations on new developments and local plans organised by the NFDC on issues such as the recent updating of the Statement of Community Involvement and is currently in discussions with the Chief Planning Officer about the preparation of a local list of historic and important buildings in the area which falls short of official listing criteria, but which are nevertheless important to the local community

Importance of The Lymington Local Distinctiveness Supplementary Planning Document

Until the development of the Lymington Local Distinctiveness Supplementary Planning Document, applications for developments which the Society and many others felt were unsuitable and which harmed the character of the town,

were regularly approved at appeal due to the lack of any supplementary planning guidance, against which developments could be judged.

Character of Milford Road Where Development Is Proposed.

The character of the area where this development is proposed, is the start of what the Society has termed the “green arteries” of the town of Lymington, which are characterised by attractive houses in good sized plots with trees, shrubs, and often green hedges. Lymington is unusual in many respects compared with other towns, where the major arteries into the town are still comprised of similar properties, family homes in attractive plots with trees and shrubs rather than the uniform blocks of flats which now line many main roads into other similar size towns around the country.

Importance to The Historic Georgian Town of Lymington To Keep Its “Green Arteries”

The Society is determined wherever possible, to oppose the transformation of these green arteries into the historic Georgian town of Lymington into the anonymous roads of large, dominating, ugly, blocks of flats which characterise many towns and the strength of the Lymington Local Distinctiveness Supplementary Planning Document is we feel essential, if this unique character of the town is to be preserved - which is after all the purpose of having a Local Distinctiveness Supplementary Planning Document in the first place.

Damaging Effects of Approval to The Local Distinctiveness SPD

If this application is approved, the Society feels that the current protection offered by The Lymington Local Distinctiveness Supplementary Planning Document, will be fatally undermined and it is likely that we will see a rash of similar planning applications working their way along the major arteries into the town, with the results that can be seen in other communities around the country.

The Society is not the only organisation that feels that this would be a retrograde step with the Lymington and Pennington Town Council being opposed to this application on many grounds and the application being turned down by the District Council in an almost unique unanimous rejection of this application.

Unsuitable Scale and Mass

Looking at this particular application, it is clear that the size and mass and scale of the building is totally inappropriate in this location and will dominate the entrance into the town and extend the presence and ambience of the centre of the town into what is now currently a purely residential area. The sheer scale of this four-storey building is totally inappropriate for this location,

Effect on Listed Buildings nearby

This is especially important bearing in mind the presence of listed buildings of considerable importance on the other side of the road, in what is effect the curtilage of the listed buildings at Highfield. Such a development is bound to cause considerable harm to the settings of these important historic buildings, so near to the proposed building site.

More Sheltered Homes not needed.

I would now like to look at whether these buildings are in fact needed in the town. As councillor Ash-Vie from the Lymington and Pennington Town Council has pointed out, there are currently some 50 similar unsold apartments in the town many, of which have been for sale for many months - if not years. There is already clearly plenty of supply for these sheltered homes in the town and no need whatsoever for yet another block of 44 sheltered flats.

Effects on The Community from Even More Accommodation for Old People.

Finally, I would like to touch on the on damaging effect that evermore sheltered homes have on the town of Lymington, which already has a shortage of homes for families which will be diminished further by the loss of these four family homes. What Lymington does not need is yet more old people moving in to increase the proportion of elderly people in the town, rather than the younger people needed to revitalise the community and help to maintain the economic vitality of the town.

Lymington Needs Affordable Homes Not Elderly Sheltered Flats.

What Lymington really needs is more affordable homes for young people driven out of the town by high house prices and family homes for the people that can bring economic vigour and vitality to the town.

Summary

In summary the Society would propose that this proposed development is unsuitable, and that this Appeal should be refused for the following main reasons:

- It is contrary to the Lymington Local Distinctiveness Supplementary Planning Document,
- Approval would fatally undermine the usefulness and force of the Lymington Local Distinctiveness Supplementary Planning Document.
- The scale and mass of the building is totally inappropriate for the area
- The dominance of the proposed building would have serious implications for the setting of some of Lymington's most attractive listed buildings on the other side of the road
- a further development of this type is completely unnecessary, given the current difficulty of selling existing apartments in the town
- the destabilising effect that large numbers of elderly people moving into the town will have on the vitality and economic activity of Lymington.

The Lymington Society urges the Inspector to reject this Appeal and confirm the unanimous rejection of this application delivered by the New Forest District Council Planning Committee.

The Lymington Society.

13/05/2021