Design and Access Statements in connection with the Lancing Parish Council's planning applications to provide more beach hut plots on the Lancing foreshore.

Planning Applications ADC/0116/10 – 30 beach huts at Shopsdam Road fronting Golden Sands and ADC/0117/10 – 10 beach huts at Beach Green.

Background

The Council has licensed beach hut sites along its beach and foreshore for many years. Beach huts are a popular and long standing tradition of the Lancing beach scene and as expected there is a high demand for plots. A waiting list exists, which is restricted to Lancing and Sompting residents, and some persons have been on the list for a number of years. There are currently 47 names on the waiting lists, 17 for Widewater and 30 for Beach Green.

In order to satisfy some of this demand, 40 perspective sites have been identified and is the subject of two planning applications. The first application, for thirty plots is fronting Golden Sands and the second for a total of ten plots, is adjacent to Beach Green.

The Council was also contacted by a number of local residents, who rented private beach huts on Golden Sands immediately adjacent to the cycle lane, as they were concerned with the danger of speeding cyclists. This issue is an ongoing WSCC concern.

In October 2009 the Council undertook a review of beach huts. As part of that review, in December 2009, the Environmental Agency (EA) was approached to seek their views of possibly providing new plots on the foreshore. Two matters of discussion were the access for maintenance and beach replenishment works and the vegetated shingle. Negotiations were successful and subsequently two consents were granted in Jan 2010, FD/2009/S/180 & 181, for the placement of huts in two proposed locations.

If planning approval is granted method statements will be produced and the exact locations of the huts will be agreed with the EA on site to ensure that the vegetated shingle is undisturbed. A bio diversity study was not required although conditions of the consent do exist in respect of the vegetation which will be adhered to.

The owners of Golden Sands were contacted (letter dated 2nd December 2009) and the proposal discussed with them and prior to their replacement programme of their huts at Golden Sands.

A beach hut review was presented to Council on 3rd March 2010 and one of the resolutions passed by Council was to apply for two separate planning permissions. One for Shopsdam Road and the other for Beach Green.

Design

The Council do not provide beach huts but under licence limit the size and construction of the huts placed on the plots. The original intention was to provide concrete slabs but after consideration it has been decided not to have permanent base slabs on the beach but to permit individuals to provide their own bases. This is normal practice and the majority of existing huts are secured via a variety of methods but the norm is wooden beams. In this manner if plots are left vacant then there would be no scar of concrete visible on the beach

The beach hut licences required beach huts to be of traditional wooden construction with a pitched felted roof and doors opening seawards. The huts are required to be maintained in good order and painted white or pastel shades with stated maximum dimensions of 3.05 m wide x 3.6 m long and 2.44 m high. The gaps between the huts will be 0.7 m to allow maintenance of the side panels. Fixings and security of the huts is down to the individuals licensing the plots.

ADC/0116/10 – Shopsdam Road application.

The possible location of the huts is considered to be restricted for a number of reasons, which are:-

- The beach ledge width in the area east of Golden Sands stretching to Widewater was too narrow to accommodate beach huts and in some places only wide enough to allow the recently established beach patrol buggy to pass.

- The area in front of the eastern section of Golden Sands was considered to be unsuitable as the beach profile was dynamic and steep and I had seen at first hand the force of the waves that hit this area. To locate huts in this exposed area was considered not to be appropriate and is further away from the already limited access at Shopsdam Road.

- The beach profile in front of the western part of Golden Sands is a gentler gradient and less susceptible to violent wave action as the force is better disseminated over the beach.

Access

Pedestrian Access is via Shopsdam Road from the north, Widewater to the east and Beach Green from the west.

Restricted vehicular access exists via Shopsdam Road (RUAPP) which also serves the established row of huts west of the Yacht Club. There is limited kerb side parking on Brighton Road and Old Salts Farm Road and further afield but the huts are within reach of the Council owned car park at Beach Green.

Access across the Green for erection and maintenance purposes is granted by the Council on application, whereby materials can then be either delivered direct or offloaded and transported to locations.

Facilities

Public toilets are in the immediate vicinity at the end of Shopsdam Road and refreshment kiosks are located at Beach Green and Widewater. There are a number of water taps westwards.

In consideration of the options available to place beach huts along the Council owned foreshore, the area in front of the Golden Sands is considered to be the best option available.

In view of the recent conjecture, a compromise has been offered by the Council if one was achievable. The only feasible option in this respect, taking into account the restrictions of the alternative locations, is the placements of the rows.

Originally it was proposed to site three rows of ten huts but a compromise may be for two rows of fifteen huts in locations which would reduce the impact as where there is a scarcity of existing huts and plots on Golden Sands. These are marked as alternative locations on the plans.

ADC/0117/10 – Beach Green application

An option investigated was to extend the line of existing beach huts and fill the gap between two existing rows of huts opposite Beach Green. This would have catered for the majority of persons on the waiting list and been a viable solution. However the presence of vegetated shingle, limits the number of additional plots to ten.

Access

Pedestrian Access is via Beach Green from the north and west and Shopsdam Road from the east.

The Council owned car park is the obvious parking area and serves the other adjacent huts. Access across the Green for erection and maintenance purposes is granted by the Council on application, whereby materials can then be either delivered direct or offloaded and transported to locations.

Facilities

Public toilets are available at Beach Green and at the end of Shopsdam Road with a refreshment kiosk conveniently located at Beach Green. There are a number of water taps in the vicinity.

Conclusions

Beach hut issues have been debated by Council on many occasions and the decisions taken have been done so in the best interest of the majority of residents.

There is a demand by local residents which is demonstrated by a long waiting list.

The Council is entitled to seek permission for the placement of huts on its own land and is following the necessary procedures.

The Council has decided to continue with the application but is open to compromise if any suitable one can be found.

Colin Hunt
Clerk to the Council
June 2010