47 Old Fort Road
Shoreham-by-Sea
West Sussex BN43 5RL
28 January 2011

Adur District Council
Att. Peter Barnett
Planning and Community Division
Civic Centre
Ham Road
Shoreham-by-Sea
West Sussex BN43 6PR

ADUR D.C.
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
DEPARTMENT
- 1 FEB 2011

Dear Mr Barnett

Your Ref: ADC/0356/10

We are sending you two letters relating to this proposed development. This letter deals with certain perceived inaccuracies in the documents related to the application. We have sent a separate letter dealing with design issues only.

The reason for dealing with the inaccuracies separately is that we understood in a telephone conversation with you on 21 January that the accuracy of the information in an application and its supporting documents is probably not a criterion that decides whether an application is approved or rejected.

Nevertheless, we would like our concerns about the accuracy of some of the materials relating to the application to be put on record.

The first matter we would like to raise concerns the site location plans. The original site location plan showed the rear of the new building extending further back than the rears of nos 45 and 47. The amended site location plan shows the rear of the new building in line with the rears of nos 45 and 47, giving the initial impression that the amended design has brought the rear of the proposed building further forward. It is not clear to us from the drawings of the building itself on the same page whether this is the case or not.

However, closer inspection of the two site location plans and the use of a ruler show that this effect has been achieved because nos 45 and 47 have increased in length in the amended site location plan. On the print-out of the drawings we downloaded from the council website, no 47 had increased in length by 1 mm and no 45 by 2 mm. On this plan, nos 45 and 47 are consequently no longer the same size as each other; on the original site location plan they are of identical size. (The two properties were designed and built at the same time and are in fact identical mirror-images of each other.) The distance between the rear of the new building and the rear boundary fence was the same in both the original and the amended site location plans. All the other buildings are identical in size on both site location plans. Only the dimensions of nos 45 and 47 differ between the two site location plans.

What is the reason for this discrepancy? The effect is very confusing, even misleading, to say the least.

At our meeting with the developers, they referred generally to problems related to the Ordnance Survey to explain any discrepancies. We find it hard to understand how this could explain the change in the dimensions of nos 45 and 47, while the dimensions of all other properties remain the same.

The second matter we would like to take up concerns certain claims made by the developers in the original Design and Access Statement. They emphasise that the design of the new building is in line with what they call "the new emerging vernacular" on Shoreham Beach. On p. 3.2 they present a bird's-eye view of Old Fort Road showing "Similar Vernacular Properties", shaded in either yellow ("existing") or pink ("under construction"). Presumably, they have done this to support the appropriateness of the design they have submitted for approval by the Council.

Below, we have listed the seven shaded properties closest to the proposed new building, with comments:

No 29/30 A modern semi-detached building with a pitched roof on a wide plot.

No 37/37A A modern semi-detached building with a flat roof. It has a third storey at the rear which is not side-boundary to side-boundary and which has a pitched roof.

No 32 A pre-war art-deco style detached house with a flat roof.

No 36 A post-war single-storey detached bungalow with a pitched roof.

No 38 A post-war two-storey detached suburban-type town house with a pitched roof.

No 50 Similar to no 38.

No 53 A 1920s beach bungalow with a pitched roof, originally constructed using old railway carriages and typical of early "Bungalow Town" seaside dwellings. Ironically, it is the same kind of building being demolished at No 43 to make way for the new building.

We can accept that Nos 29/30 and 37/37A could be used to some extent as reference objects, although their designs differ in certain key respects from the design of the new building proposed for No 43 (cf. our comments on nos 29/30 and 37/37A above and on no 37/37A in our other letter about this proposed development dated 27 January 2011). Quite how the developers believe the other properties they have cited support the new design is a complete mystery to us and our neighbours.

The conclusion we would like to draw from the above is that the design of the new building does not "maintain and enhance the local character..."; fails in the stated design objective of "Fusing the design of the development with similarities between key buildings adjacent to the proposal..."; and does not "...allow the building to merge with the rest of the street naturally" (all quotations from the original Design and Access Statement).

Shoreham Beach is characterised by a preponderance of low-rise buildings, the majority of bungalow or two-storey type with pitched roofs. The appearance, character and scale of the building planned at No 43 are quite different from those of most of the buildings near it, including the majority of those cited in the Design and Access Statement as being "Similar Vernacular Properties".

As we said at the beginning of this letter, we understand that the accuracy of the information provided by a developer is probably not a criterion that decides whether an application is approved or rejected. However, we hope that the planning officers understand that any inaccuracy, whatever the reason behind it, does lead us to ask questions about the competence or good faith of the developers, and perhaps both. It would leave a very nasty taste in the mouths of those who might be affected negatively by any planning decision that may be made on an application including such dubious supporting material.

We look forward to hearing from you with explanations for the anomalies we have drawn your attention to.

Yours faithfully

[redacted]

Patricia Thomas Paul Thomas