



**Planning Application Ref: 4063/19/FUL**

**Replacement dwelling with associated landscape work (amendment to design previously approved 1125/17/FUL)**

**Sandnes, Beadon Lane, Salcombe, TQ8 8LU.**

## **LETTER OF OBJECTION FROM THE SOUTH HAMS SOCIETY**

### **The South Hams Society interest**

1. For the last 50 years, the South Hams Society has been stimulating public interest and care for the beauty, history and character of the South Hams. We encourage high standards of planning and architecture that respect the character of the area. We aim to secure the protection and improvement of the landscape, features of historic interest and public amenity and to promote the conservation of the South Hams as a living, working environment. We take the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty very seriously and work hard to increase people's knowledge and appreciation of our precious environment. We support the right development - in the right places - and strenuously oppose inappropriate development, as we believe to be the case with this application.

#### **Location of the proposed site**

2. The South Hams District Council has a legal duty to protect and enhance the AONB. It is in a nationally prized landscape, which is the county's major economic asset. Although the current dwelling is, to a great extent, screened from public view by the trees which stretch down on sloping land to the Beadon Lane track, it is clear that the nature and scale of the proposed replacement dwelling will significantly increase its visibility and therefore visual impact.

#### **National Planning Policy Framework**

3. NPPF paragraph 172 requires that "Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited." The SHS consider that the scale and design of the proposal is detrimental to the character and natural beauty of the protected landscape, and therefore conflicts with this policy. We also believe that it poses an immediate and long term adverse harm to the woodland that predominantly surrounds the development site.

#### **Salcombe Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)**

4. A key objective of the Salcombe NDP is that 'any future development must have due regard of its impact on the AONB, undeveloped coast, the rural landscape character and *green*



*infrastructure* that surrounds the separate and distinct settlements in the Parish, and the natural valleys and landforms’.

Section 2.1.1 states: ‘Salcombe lies entirely within the AONB. Conserving and enhancing the natural landscape within and surrounding the Parish is *the highest priority* of the Plan ‘.

### **Proposed increase in scale**

5. This application proposes the construction of a dwelling that is significantly larger than the existing dwelling on site. The significant increase in scale, and the very extensive use of glass within the design, would dramatically increase the visual prominence of the proposed dwelling within its sensitive woodland setting.

The South Hams recently expressed its support for a change within SHDC’s Supplementary Planning Document, TTV 29.2 Clause 11.76 on Replacement Dwellings. The proposed measure aims to clearly limit the floor space for Replacement Dwellings in the TTV area. This application illustrates why the proposed clarity is needed. Too many unsympathetic over developments have already had a negative impact on the visual quality of the landscape, especially within Salcombe. The SHS considers that the proposal fails to conserve and enhance the character and natural beauty of the area, and does not respect or contribute to the local distinctiveness of the tranquil, sylvan location.

### **Increased visual impact**

6. In order to facilitate the considerably larger replacement dwelling (containing much more glass in its construction) and the consequent increase of built form in this location, the applicants plan the removal of many trees. The consequent reduction in the current level of screening by trees conflicts not only with JLP Policies DEV 23 Landscape Character, and DEV 25 Nationally Protected Landscapes, but also DEV 25 (8), which specifically requires development proposals to:
  - ‘ii. Be designated to prevent the addition of incongruous features.
  - iii. Be located and designed to respect scenic quality and maintain an area’s distinctive sense of place, or reinforce local distinctiveness.
  - iv. Be designed to prevent impacts of light pollution from artificial light on intrinsically dark landscapes.’

### **Loss of dark skies**

7. The SHS has serious concerns about the amount of glass that is incorporated within the design of the proposed replacement dwelling. The development site and adjacent environs of Beadon Lane and the North Sands Valley currently enjoy the benefits of a dark night sky. The prevailing dark skies are a key characteristic of what makes this location unique and distinctive.

AONB guidelines state that ‘natural nightscapes and dark skies are defining special qualities of the South Devon AONB: they are of natural, cultural and scenic importance. Experiencing these valuable qualities contributes to a sense of tranquillity and remoteness.’ The extensive presence of glass will inevitably compromise these guidelines with the introduction of light pollution into this sensitive environment adversely impacting local wildlife and migrating birds. The SHS consider that the Sandnes proposal presents detrimental overdevelopment



of this locally distinctive landscape and is therefore contrary to the Salcombe Neighbourhood Plan (see above) and, specifically, Policies SALC ENV 1 and ENV 7.

### **Planned tree removals**

8. The proposal makes it clear that the Applicants plan the removal of many trees. These trees are protected by Woodland TPO Ref: 86 and this Order covers protection of trees and saplings *of whatever size* within the Sandnes Woodland. It is stated in the application Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) Report that - 'the impact of C quality tree losses is negligible and will not negatively impact the TPO'. The SHS completely refutes this statement as we believe it shows an insensitive disregard for the unique visual amenity, tranquillity and sense of place that the woodland provides in the sylvan location of Beadon Lane.

It is further stated in the AIA Report that - 'it may be necessary to prune perimeter trees in G3 to accommodate the north east corner of the roof of the new dwelling. These trees are early mature and will tolerate this level of management which will entail a small amount of canopy pruning or selective tree removal. This would not negatively impact the overall amenity value.' The SHS considers that this casual assertion which intimates the inconvenience of perimeter trees to the enlarged construction amply illustrates the unsuitability of introducing additional built mass into this environmentally sensitive site.

The loss of individual trees and erosion of overall tree cover compromises the integrity and natural function of the Woodland TPO and conflicts with JLP Policy DEV 28 which seeks to avoid the loss or deterioration of trees.

### **Conclusion**

9. The South Hams Society's view is that this replacement dwelling proposal is ill considered in scale and design and therefore inappropriate in the context of its setting. The development would not only result in the loss of trees to facilitate construction but also increases the likelihood of future pressure on the management of adjacent trees. The proposal fails to conserve, let alone enhance, the landscape character and visual amenity and is therefore contrary to Planning policy, both national and local.

We therefore respectfully request that this application is refused.

Mike Richards - for and on behalf of South Hams Society – 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020

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