

**APPLICATION DO/06/507 – OUT OF HOURS COMMUNITY BUILDING AT SANDWICH TECHNOLOGY SCHOOL, DEAL ROAD, SANDWICH**

NOTES of a Planning Applications Committee Members' site visit to Sandwich Technology School on Tuesday, 10 October 2006.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr R E King (Chairman), Mrs E Green, Mrs S V Hohler, Mr S J G Koowaree, Mr J F London, Mr T A Maddison, Mr R A Marsh, Mr A R Poole. Mr L B Ridings was present as the Local Member.

OFFICERS: Mr J Crossley and Mr J Moat (Planning) and Mr A Tait (Democratic Services).

THE APPLICANT: Mr R Wallis (Head Teacher), Mr A Fisher (Site Manager), Mrs Hibberd and Mr R Martin (Teachers).

OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES: Dover DC: Mr T Flisher (Development Control Manager); Sandwich TC: Mr B W Butcher (Deputy Mayor), Cllrs P Scott and M B Trussler.

ALSO PRESENT were some 12 members of the public.

- (1) The Chairman had already welcomed everyone to the first site meeting concerning the proposed wind turbine.
- (2) Mr Crossley said that the proposal was to locate the building in the corner of what was currently a tennis court at the south western end of the built up area of the site. The purpose of this building was to enable the School to continue with its "Out of School" activity of making the giant carnival figures and lanterns that it had historically made for the local community. He clarified that the building would not be used for noisy activities such as discos or band practice.
- (3) Mr Crossley went on to say that local residents and Dover DC had raised questions about the impact of the design and finish of the proposed building on the local area, although amendments to the external treatment of the building had been made. Some local residents also had concerns over the impact on their amenity if the building was permitted.
- (4) Mr Fisher (Site Manager) said that the activities that would be supported by this building were community-based. It was essential for the building to be constructed as there was currently no space or facility to make the figures and lanterns. He added that local residents had recently been invited to attend an Open Afternoon to look at what was proposed. As a result a number of fears (such as parking provision) had been allayed. There would be sufficient spaces for parking in the playground.
- (5) Mr Flisher (Dover DC) said that his Authority had no objections in principle to the proposal or to its location. The building would be well screened and had in any case previously been the site of a temporary building. Dover was, however, concerned over the industrial "muscular" form and appearance of what was proposed. This was not appropriate for its location and the District Council saw no overriding reason to set its concerns aside. It was recognised and appreciated that changes had been made but these changes were not sufficiently fundamental in nature.

- (6) Mr Trussler (Sandwich TC) said that the Town Council held similar views to the District. A community building was clearly needed. It was important that its appearance should be less bland.
- (7) Mr Ridings said that the design of the proposed building was appropriate to its purpose. It had to be functional rather than beautiful. The activity that it would be used for would be impossible to carry out in an ordinary classroom. He asked the Committee Members to bear in mind that this would be a building that would benefit the people of Sandwich and East Kent.
- (8) Mr P Scott (Sandwich TC) said that as a supporter of the Support the Arts “Star Initiative” he was very familiar with the community buildings that were needed. They had to be of firm construction and inevitably of utilitarian appearance.
- (9) Mr Martin (Member of staff and Tamboo Bamboo Project) said that the location and design had been chosen after careful discussion with Officers from Dover DC. He had believed that the revisions to the building had made it acceptable to the District Council and was disappointed that this was not the case. If the building was not granted permission, the community activity would cease to take place.
- (10) Mr Wallis (Head Teacher) said that the Planners were suggesting a design that catered for “Champagne Taste”, whereas the School only had “Beer Money” available. He asked the Committee to recognise that the proposed building represented a fabulous opportunity to resume the much admired work that had currently ceased.
- (11) Mr Fisher said that the School had spent a day discussing changes to the design and colours amongst other matters with Dover DC. He was mystified as to why the District Council had continued to raise an objection.
- (12) Mr Maddison said that the design of the building was an important planning consideration and asked what scope there was to improve it. Mr Fisher said that a block building would be completely out of the range of the Tamboo Bamboo Project and of the School itself.
- (13) The Chairman thanked everyone for attending. The notes of this meeting would be appended to the report to the determining Committee.