

Reference NATTRAN/SE/S247/3254

Stopping up order – Princes Parade

I wish to object to the stopping up order for Princes Parade and the relocation of the road to a location adjacent to the Royal Military Canal, on the following grounds:-

- The need for stopping up
- The impact on existing residents

I previously objected to the planning application for proposed development on Princes Parade, in 2017, and my objection included grounds relating to the relocation of the road. As the planning application was approved I would like to re-iterate and expand on my objection in order for it to be considered by the Inspector in relation to the stopping up order Inquiry.

Stopping up of Princes Parade

1. The need for stopping up and diversion

I accept the current Princes Parade road can suffer from speeding drivers, but except for this issue, it is an essential road as an alternative to the A259, and a crucial link for residents of Hythe South travelling eastwards. It is not a 'rat run' as others have claimed, but a sensible and logical route. The only alternative routes for traffic from south Hythe going east is via the A259/Stade Street junction and the left turn only junction of A259 and Twiss Road.

Both these junctions are problematic and have safety issues. There are problems exiting to turn eastwards from Stade Street onto the busy A259 and consequent frequent congestion at this junction. At Twiss Road traffic travelling eastwards must exit westwards, with poor visibility eastwards, and traverse a roundabout in order to turn east. . The traffic lights at the pedestrian crossing near Stade Street, are not specifically an object to be avoided (as the 'rat run' proponents argue), but can actually be a benefit to traffic flow in that they allow 'gaps' to be created for traffic to turn right and left out of Stade Street onto the A259. It is not surprising that travellers choose to use Princes Parade to move from south Hythe and exit onto the A259 at the safer and easier junction at the eastern end of the road by Olivia Court, as visibility is very good in both directions and traffic flows are less. Stopping up and diversion has the potential to adversely impact on traffic choices and flows leading to more congestion and poorer road safety.

Problems of speeding traffic on Princes Parade could be dealt with by other means without a costly road diversion which will cause displacement of traffic, and disadvantage to current residents.

The development proposed can be accommodated on the site without any need for this road diversion.

2. The impact on existing residents

In the present day when we are so aware of the polluting effects of motor vehicles, it is short sighted and perverse, to contemplate changing a straight route into a more convoluted one, particularly when doing so would bring additional noise, pollution and disturbance to the current green corridor of the Royal Military Canal.

There is also clearly a safety issue of creating bend 'hazards' in a currently straight road.

Traffic noise is also an issue. The sound of traffic is already audible from the paths along the canal, which at the Seabrook end is sandwiched between Princes Parade and the A259. This would become significantly greater and more intrusive if the road is diverted. Far from 'protecting' the Canal as the Council claim, it will make any hope of quiet enjoyment of the canalside walks very much more remote.

In addition, diverting the road will have an adverse effect on current and future residents in properties at the eastern end of Seabrook Road. As a resident of Victoria Terrace I am already subject to noise and pollution from the A259. Traffic noise is always present during daylight hours whenever outside the house, and sometimes inside, and it can often continue until well into the evening. Noise from the existing road at Princes Parade is also apparent, but being more distant, is less intrusive and I assume less polluting also. If the road is diverted along the Royal Military canal it will no doubt create a more pleasant outlook and environment for the residents of the new housing but will be detrimental to all those residents of east Seabrook, who will become sandwiched between two busy roads. It is surely good practice to mitigate adverse effects of new development on existing residents wherever possible. The need for the diversion of the road has not been justified other than to benefit future potential residents.

It is furthermore questionable what purpose the diversion serves. The Council state it is an enhancement to create a traffic free coastal promenade, which can be used for recreation purposes. Illustrative material provided at exhibitions to promote the scheme, shows a well populated open area vibrant with life. In reality, as most local people know, this would, for most of the year be a bleak windswept sterile area devoid of any people except those hurrying to get indoors to escape the wind. On a sunny day local residents already have convenient access to the seafront and beach. There is no need for any such 'enhancement.' The real reason for the proposed road diversion is to enhance land value by creating an uninterrupted view from the seafront housing units unobscured or impacted by traffic. This, I consider is just not good enough.

Valerie Tupling

