

Ref A: **Your Ref: NATTRAN/SE/S247/3254**

Ref B: Design South East (d:se) Design Review , Princes Parade Hythe dated 19 December 2016

Anne Clarke

4 October 2021

Action To:

Caroline Williams Programme Officer:

Copy To:

Neil Crass, National Case Worker
Folkestone & Hythe District Council

OBJECTION TO THE RE-ROUTING OF PRINCES PARADE

I strenuously object to the re-routing of Princes Parade, Hythe for reasons listed below.

1. Loss of Amenity to the population of Hythe, Sandgate, Saltwood and surrounding areas.

Princes Parade, and its parallel swath of natural greenspace between the road and the Military Canal, is the last stretch of road directly abutting both **public** green space and the beach between Dymchurch and Folkestone. While the golf course associated with the Hythe Imperial Hotel is green it is not in public hands and is not public greenspace and could be developed in the future.

This public greenspace, easily accessed by the public by means of Princes Parade along which parking is possible, is a greatly valued public amenity. Both before, and particularly during the Covid, and now, I often drive to Princes Parade, park and am able to sit and read and take a walk along the promenade and/or the greenspace. As I have, what I hope is a non-permanent, difficulty in walking any distance, I rely on being able to park, next to both the promenade and the public greenspace, to be able to access this extremely valuable amenity. It provides (or did until very recently when stretches of trees were literally raised to the ground) quietude, serenity and beautiful; trees, plants, a great variety of birds, insects, badgers, foxes, field mice, in fact a microcosm of the natural world – a complete and complex micro environment supporting indigenous flora and fauna.

Every day of the year many members of the local public use Princes Parade to access the greenspace for recreation, dog walking and simply to “be” in nature: Princes Parade lies adjacent to a local wildlife site and any re-routing of the road will destroy this wonderful wildlife space.

Ref B: page 2.

“we believe the proposal to re-route Princes Parade to the north is misconceived, introduces unnecessary costs and undermines the character of the site. We would also want to see alternative options explored for distribution of the housing to consolidate the open character of the site”

“This is a very sensitive site because of the scheduled ancient monument, archaeological and wildlife sites and its general amenity value. Apart from the public rights of way the site is currently not accessible to the public but many enjoy walking alongside and through it. However, the past use of the site has left a legacy of contamination needing to be addressed. Although it has sometimes been used insensitively in the past its open character is valuable. The views from the community around Seabrook Road to the beach and sea and back the other way are valuable as is the view down to the site from the higher parts of Seabrook. We note the local opposition to this scheme and the concerns of Historic England.”

2. Extensive and Extended Disruption of Traffic Flow through Hythe and Saltwood during the proposed re-routing of Princes Parade

Hythe roads, particularly the one-way system circulating past Sainsbury's and one of Hythe's petrol stations, which allows access to the A259 (heading West) serving West Hythe, Dymchurch and beyond, is already at peak traffic. When traffic is constrained for any reason (road works, traffic accident, closure of the M20/restrictions on the M20), Hythe's the one-way system grinds to a halt with only few cars, sometimes only one, managing to get through the traffic lights in the vicinity of the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway during each traffic light sequence. This bottleneck already causes regular, significant delays to traffic on Palmarsh Road during our local rush hours.

Disrupting Princes Parade traffic while it is re-routed will put incredible, if not catastrophic, strain on traffic flow and traffic management through Hythe, particularly round the one-way system.

Ref B: "it is a very expensive move, adding costs to the development which might be better spent elsewhere, and potentially creating as many problems as it solves. It brings an intrusive roadway close to the scheduled ancient monument, and to the series of trails and paths which run along side it, urbanising it and creating the need for it to be protected by a bund. There is currently on-street parking along Princes Parade and this would have to be moved to the north of the site with visitors then walking through the residential closes. There would be problems of parking enforcement in the residential areas as visitors would want to get closer to the beach. The character of this site is of a vibrant sea-front and a quiet canal area. The realignment proposal does not respect that character bringing a busy access and through road, which will be hard to calm, close to the canal"

"there is an alternative approach which calms Princes Parade through a series of public squares, tables, broad pedestrian crossings, build-outs, parallel or perpendicular parking areas, etc. There are plenty of sea-front roads around England, which are not particularly radical in their street design, but which achieve slow traffic speeds because they provide access to perpendicular parking spaces and are generally busy with people accessing the beach. Aside from these sea-front examples there is also plenty of experience of achieving calmed streets through the introduction of the measures listed above. We do not believe that such a transformed Princes Parade would reduce the value of homes located behind it. Indeed, it might be seen as more attractive than the widened promenade proposed, which at certain times of the year could feel very desolate. This alternative configuration could have wider benefits such as being closed on weekends or holidays to allow special events helping to create the sense of place. It might be possible, using a barrier or rising bollards, to close Princes Parade to through traffic while retaining the possibility of opening it when it was needed to provide relief to the A259.

Moreover, the "Buildings for Life 12 Review" which ends the report at Ref B has a number of provisional assessments under the headings; "Integrating with the neighbourhood", particularly relating to; Connections; Character; Working with the site in its context; Creating well defined streets and spaces; Ease of finding your way around; Streets for All and Car Parking; Public and Private Spaces **assessed as Red and Amber**

It is evident the Shepway District Council Planning Committee had not paid much, if any, attention to the specific advice within the report at Ref B that re-routing Princes Parade is inadvisable, unwarranted and fraught with ill-considered difficulties and great, unnecessary, additional costs.

3. Local Plan – Princes Parade is designated Open Space and Recreation

Within the Local Plan, Princes Parade is currently designated for open space and recreation – it is not a previously developed site nor is it brownfield. Any change to the designation of Princes Parade should be carried out through the proper democratic process, via the Local Plan, not secret Planning Committee decisions

4. Environmental, drainage and ecological issues; financial liabilities and fiduciary competence

There are extensive environmental, drainage and ecological issues yet to be addressed as well as proving the financial viability, yet to be ascertained, of re-routing Princes Parade: the financial liability is huge and would fall on the pockets of FHDC residents for decades to come – and re-routing the road is absolutely NOT necessary.

Princes Parade is certainly not the cheapest and quickest means of providing a new swimming pool for Hythe. There is an ideal alternative location for the leisure centre available to the Council for £1 at Martello Lakes on the west side of Hythe which would better serve the residents of Palmarsh and Romney Marsh where there is a real need for a swimming pool.

The Public of Hythe would be better served in keeping Princes Parade in its current position, refurbishing the current Hythe pool in its current location, and building a new swimming pool at Martello Lakes to the west of Hythe where it will provide public swimming facilities for many of the more economically disadvantaged. There is private swimming provision through the Spa club within the Hythe Imperial Hotel; Folkestone has its own, good public swimming pool as well as private provision through various private sports clubs, whereas Palmarsh and Romney Marsh need a public swimming pool.

I greatly question the financial liability Shepway DC is taking on in re-routing Princes Parade, its value to the public of Hythe, Sandgate, Palmarsh and Romney Marsh and I also question the fiduciary competence on which it has been predicated.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Clarke