

One Council

Our last edition of the Newsletter dealt exclusively with a proposal by SHDC and West Devon Councils to fully integrate both their services and their management by forming a single local government authority. Since then they have been out to consultation over the proposal and we start this Newsletter with the results of that consultation. We reproduce them here in the same format that has been used by SHDC.

Only 3% of the population in the South Hams and 2.5% in West Devon responded to the consultation. The majority of responses came from the councils' online survey (73%). However a "statistically sound", independent telephone survey was also conducted to give a "genuinely representative view" from residents across both councils and a number of paper responses were also taken into consideration. Headline results are:

Telephone Survey : South Hams 41.4% said 'yes' and 58.6% said 'no'
West Devon 61.1.% said 'yes' and 38.9% said 'no'
SH&WD combined 51.15% said 'yes' and 48.85% said 'no'

Overall Results: South Hams 14.02% said 'yes' and 85.98% said 'no'
West Devon 44.54% said 'yes' and 55.46% said 'no'
SH&WD combined 23.61% 'yes' and 76.39% said 'no'

Note: No breakout of separate figures for the online survey or the paper responses received has been published. From the figures that have been given we estimate that the results of the online survey, the one that attracted by far the greatest number of responses, was as follows¹:

Online Survey: SH&WD combined 13.5% said 'yes' and 86.5% said 'no'

No explanation has been offered as to why the disparity between results is so large. In our view it must bring into question the validity of the methodology used in one of the surveys as almost 4 times as many people per hundred who were 'cold called' replied "Yes" compared with those who completed the online

¹ There will be a small margin of error in this estimate in view of the fact that we have not been told what percentage of the returns were in paper form.

survey. Accordingly we would very much like to hear from any members who may have been approached by SHDC over the telephone with a view to establishing how the survey was conducted.

We believe that SHDC did go to considerable lengths to try to publish the event and a 3% response rate is therefore very disappointing. We do not know whether they failed to reach many people or whether the level of cynicism about 'consultations' is so high that people just did not bother to respond. We would be interested in your experience and whether you believe you were adequately informed - other than through your very excellent Newsletter!

SHDC will be deciding whether to proceed with their plan at a Council meeting on 31st October.

The Post Office/Community Shop

Public Meeting: 6.00PM FRIDAY 10TH NOVEMBER

You will have read the update on the Post Office and Community Shop from the Directors, David Stembridge and Jenny Powlett, in Newsletter 06/2017. They now wish to report on the first year's operation and hear your comments and suggestions regarding the future of the enterprise. Therefore, a public meeting will be held at 6.00pm Friday 10th November at Newton Ferrers Primary School.

Talk on the Geology of the South Hams

THURSDAY 26TH OCTOBER

The South Hams Society is a local amenity group with similar interests to ourselves. Despite its name, its main focus is the Kingsbridge Estuary and Salcombe. SHS is sponsoring a talk by a local geologist, Tom Wintle, at 7.30pm Thursday 26th October in Churchstow Church Hall. The talk is entitled "A Beach Cleaner's Guide to the Rocks – an illustrated talk on the geology of South Hams". The talk is open to all and is free, however you do need to book a place by 24th October with Penny Fenton (01548 561539 or preferably penny545@googlemail.com).

Planning Applications

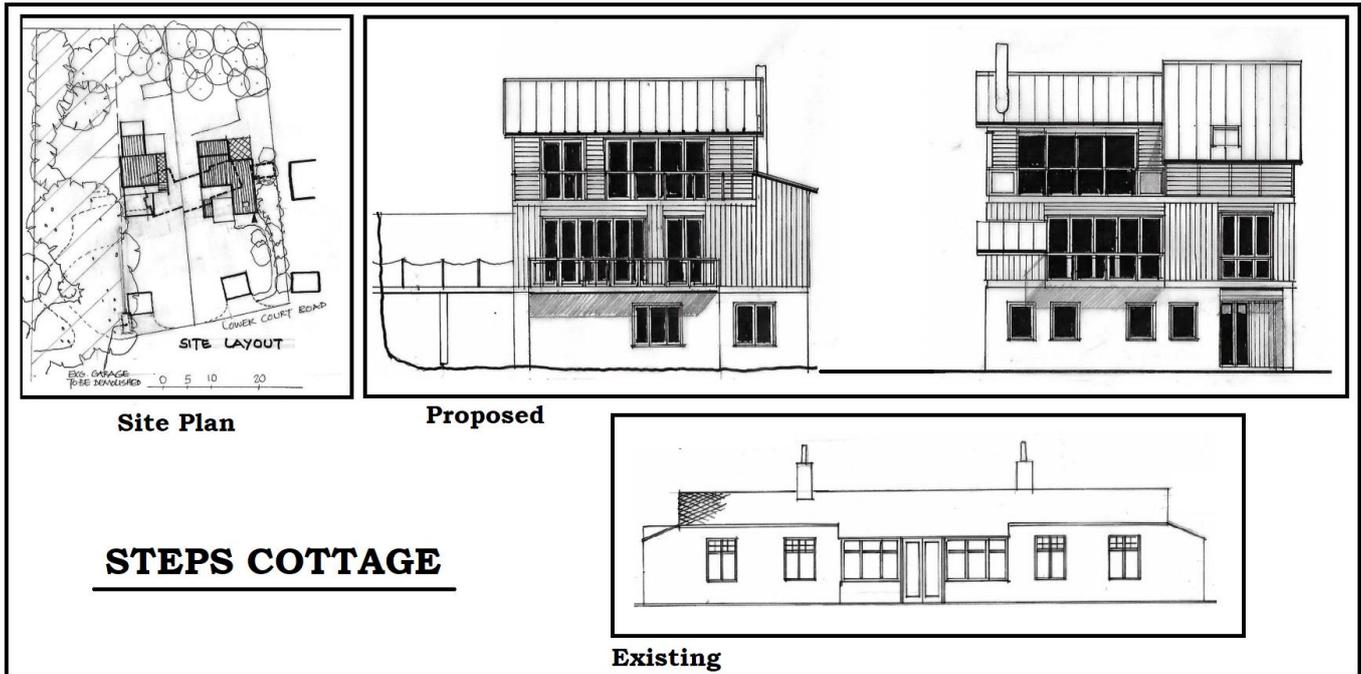
In this edition we have three planning applications which, by their significance, we think are worthy of your consideration. Recently we have detected some reluctance amongst members to offer us their views. We would therefore encourage you to drop us an email if you have any thoughts on what follows. We will be delighted to receive just a single sentence from you as your Committee feels it very important to



accurately reflect your views in any action that they may or may not decide to take on your behalf.

Steps Cottage

This is currently a single storey detached bungalow situated right at the end of Lower Court Road next to the Court Wood boundary. There is also a small detached garage by the roadside. The application, made on behalf of an investment company, is to knock down the bungalow and replace it with 2 three storey detached houses. These will be located side by side on the plot and facing the estuary. Below are diagrams showing the disposition of the houses and their NW elevations (as seen from the river).



We think that there may be 3 possible things wrong with this application.

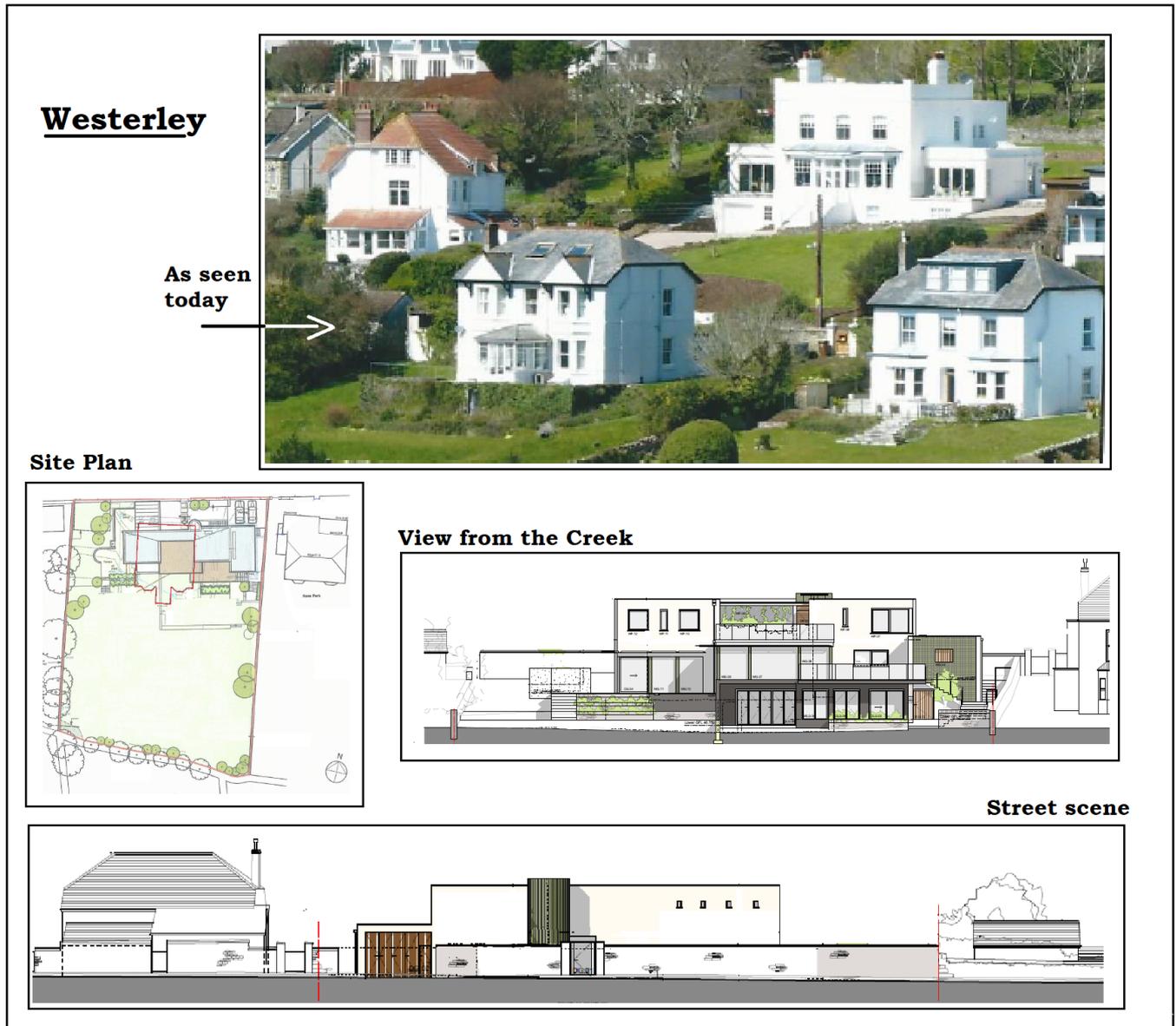
- The buildings are located right next to an area of Court Wood officially designated as ancient woodland whereas there should be a 15m buffer zone between woodland and buildings.
- The great bulk of the proposed buildings compared to the existing is out of proportion to the site and will be an unacceptable intrusion into the landscape. This will give rise to damage to the AONB contrary to NPPF para 115.
- The site is likely to have right of way privileges to use Lower Court Road for access but only for a single dwelling. If this is so, then there will be no access to the second dwelling. This may be a significant issue for the Lower Court Road Association to resolve, having an impact on traffic usage and thus maintenance of the road.

For further details members should use the link below. Comment to SHDC on the application may also be made there. This should be done by 25th October 2017.

<http://apps.southhams.gov.uk/PlanningSearchMVC/Home/Details/172514>

Westerley

This is yet another application for the demolition of Westerley (the old sailing school) in Yealm Road and its replacement by a contemporary designed new home. Previous applications have not been supported by the Parish Council, have been refused by SHDC and also refused by the Planning Inspectorate on appeal. Grounds for refusal have varied but a consistent theme has been the value, both socially and architecturally, to the community, of the existing building. Below are pictures of that building, a site plan showing the location of the replacement and drawings of its elevations as seen both from the road and from Newton Creek.



The photograph illustrates the architectural context of the area and how the design of the proposed new building will be totally at variance with this. Not shown is Kiln Quay just to the south and members will be aware that this is one of the Revelstoke Grade II listed buildings in the valley. We believe that there is therefore a strong argument that such a design is entirely inappropriate in this location.

There is also the matter of whether it is acceptable to knock down a landmark building which is perfectly habitable. We believe that this is being proposed for no reason other than personal profit as the replacement would not be built to meet any identified housing requirement in the community.

Finally, it can be seen from the site plan that it is not proposed to build in the centre of the plot but close to the east boundary. As a result we understand that this may raise issues of loss of privacy and light for the residence on that side.

For further details members should use the link below. Comment to SHDC on the application may also be made there. This should be done by 18th October 2017.

<http://apps.southhams.gov.uk/PlanningSearchMVC/Home/Details/173117>

Barnicott

This is yet another application where the applicant is hoping to win the day through sheer persistence and members will be aware that quite often they do! On this occasion the application has been significantly modified since the previous attempt. It is proposed to move the building higher up the plot (which is on the east side of Bridgend Hill) thus ensuring that the entrance is no longer onto the lane at its narrowest point. Secondly the building proposed is single storey. However we do note that it would be built on 3 different levels. So the result will actually be a building that is approximately the same height as a 2 storey flat roofed house. These points are illustrated below.



On previous attempts SHDC, supported by the Parish Council, have refused the applications on the grounds that the developments would be outside the development boundary and that it would be most undesirable to open up this part of the river valley for further development over the hillside stretching to

the east. (It is known that the landowner to the east of this site retained his ownership for the specific purpose of gaining permission to build there at some future date if possible.) SHDC took the view that this hillside was strategically important in that it provided a 'green buffer zone' between the developed area in the valley and the AONB in the surrounding countryside. We are in full support of this and believe that the RYDA should do all that it can to limit further urban sprawl in this part of the Parish.

For further details members should use the link below. Comment to SHDC on the application may also be made there. No date has been given for receipt of comments but the application is dated 3rd October 2017.

<http://apps.southhams.gov.uk/PlanningSearchMVC/Home/Details/173125>

As ever, we would be very pleased to receive your views on any of the above applications.

~ ~ ~