

Planning Committee

Graham Margery - Co Chairman

Although the summer holiday period has brought fewer planning applications for us to review overall, the work has continued unabated. In total we have reviewed some 71 applications that are potentially of interest and made formal response to Dover District Council in respect of 25 of them. As ever we would encourage members to look at planning applications that may be of interest to them and make comment to Dover District Council as they feel appropriate, or contact our Planning Committee with their views. Applications can be found on the DDC website or the Dover Society Website under Planning.

Planning Applications update;

Dodds Lane: We mentioned in the last newsletter an approved planning application for a dwelling in Dodds Lane at the end of the existing terrace effectively restoring the building destroyed in the war. Subsequently the developer has submitted a fresh application for a reduced-cost project comprising a flat-roofed bungalow on the site of the former bowling alley of *The Three Cups* pub. The Town Council and the Dover Society have objected to this scheme as being out of keeping with the locality and a number of local residents also objected, but the application has, nevertheless, been granted planning permission.

North Military Road: Dover District Council had submitted a planning application for a three-storey building comprising twenty self-contained flats on what is currently the car park at the bottom of North Military Road. This application was subsequently amended slightly to reduce cost, but remains essentially the same. The scheme has now been granted planning permission, subject to seventeen planning conditions involving the approval of sample materials and details of

doors and windows to ensure their suitability for the location, and also a landscaping scheme. Approved schemes can take years to come to fruition or even be started so don't hold your breath, but since this is a DDC project it might start more promptly.

Bench Street: I'm sure many people will have seen that numbers 14 & 15, the former *Funky Monkey* bar, have now been demolished to ground level and one of the cellars has been excavated. Demolition work is currently underway on number 11, the former *Castle Amusements*, the so-called Banksy building. We understand that the contractor is responsible for the demolition rubble and will own any fragments of the Banksy that remain. It's intriguing to imagine what might happen to them. Perhaps they will be sold as souvenirs like the old Berlin Wall! There are still no detailed plans for what will replace these buildings and it may be some time before anything new comes along, but we continue to engage with Dover District Council to try and influence the plans before irreversible decisions are made.

Section 215 Enforcement: About nine years ago, The Dover Society together with Dover District Council and the Town Council worked on a project to identify properties in and around the Town Centre that were becoming an eyesore and were in need of repair or redecoration. Some 70 properties were identified. Under Section 215 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, the Local Planning Authority (DDC) has the power to request and, if necessary, compel property owners to carry out remedial work. Initially, DDC made good progress in this, with the result that about 50 of the identified properties completed or at least started on the remedial work, but sadly the project stalled for various reasons. Subsequently things have

progressively declined. Earlier this year the Planning Enforcement Department at DDC was moved out of Legal Services and transferred into the Planning Department and this has resulted in a marked change in approach. Representatives of DDC Planning Department have made a visual survey of the town and have produced a list of properties that are in need of remedial work and progress is being made to bring about the necessary improvements. You may have noticed a number of properties in the Town with scaffolding erected at the front and some of this will be as a result of these actions. We firmly believe that when the town centre looks scruffy it is a deterrent to visitors and is depressing for residents, so these improvements are vitally important for all. Long may it continue but hopefully not be necessary in the future.

Local Plan: According to the DDC website, the Local Plan sets out the vision, strategic objectives and overarching development strategy for the growth of the district over the period to 2040. It provides the planning policy framework to guide the future development of the area, addressing needs and opportunities for housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure, as well as the basis for conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment, mitigating and adapting to climate change, and achieving well designed

places. There have been two drafts of this plan published in January and October 2021 and we made detailed comments to both of these drafts in the hope of making improvements that we see as beneficial for the future. The plan has since been passed to the Planning Inspectorate who will examine the plan and hear oral evidence during November and December 2023. We await the final publication of the Local Plan with great interest as it will be used to guide and justify decisions that are made, and we too will refer to it in our responses to planning applications and other major developments.

De Bradlei Wharf: Since the sad demise of the *De Bradlei Wharf* retail outlet in Cambridge Road, Dover Harbour Board has submitted a Planning Application for the demolition of the buildings. They were built in the mid-19th century and were used as boat building yards and for other marine related activities, until becoming redundant due to changes in ship design and changes in requirements by the Royal Navy. Interestingly, they were used in Operation Fortitude, as part of the 1944 deception plan to make the enemy believe the invasion of Europe would come from the Dover area. This involved the use of dummy tanks and landing craft, many of which were built or stored at these yards. The popular restaurant, *Cullins Yard*, uses the name of one of these earlier boat building enterprises.

Dover Society Visit to The Duke of York's Royal Military School [now a Royal Military Academy] Alan Lee

On Thursday 3rd of August, following this talk at the AGM, Andrew Nunn, School Trustee, accompanied by Rachel Robinson, School Alumni & Development Officer, welcomed a group of fourteen Society members. There then followed a most interesting, comprehensive and

knowledgeable talk and guided tour which took in various buildings including the original dining hall and the school chapel. The Society wish to thank Andrew and Rachel for their help and organisation that made the day a huge success.