



TENT 1 – Approved

As expected, Ashford Borough Council's Planning Committee has taken the decision to approve the detailed planning application for TENT 1 (Phase A). This is the area of land between the back of the Leisure Centre and the rear of Tesco's Car Park. Given the amount of work devoted to this application over the last 2 years by the Steering Group, it is no surprise that this has, subject to some minor alterations, been approved. This will lead to the construction of approximately 250 dwellings (64 of which will be flats) and it is expected that work will start in the spring of 2015.

Although TDRA has been an ever-present member of the Steering Group, there has never been an option to prevent this development, as it has been part of ABC's core strategy. We have thus sought to ensure that all the desirable aspects of TENT 1 have been enshrined in the planning, such as Useable Public Open Space, high quality design and building materials, sympathetic architecture, appropriate mix of housing and the highest possible proportion of affordable housing. We continue to have concerns over infrastructure provision, especially water supply and health facilities. We are extremely sceptical, to put it mildly, over the effects on traffic in Tenterden High Street (apparently there will be little or none!!).

With regard to the other large-scale proposals which have been put forward (Tilden Gill, Hopes Grove, Westwell, to name but a few), we oppose them all until the whole of TENT 1 has been completed (including Phase B). Our view is that, upon completion of TENT 1, a full review of Tenterden's housing needs should be undertaken. It is worth pointing out that for the last 15 years an average of 20 dwellings a year have been constructed in infill and windfall sites (eg the old police station in Oaks Road). This level of building is likely to continue, as there is almost nothing that can be done to stop it. We have repeatedly said that significant housing developments should be considered in a Borough-wide context due to the effects on infrastructure. We should bear in mind that 9 miles away in Chilmington Green, plans for a new TOWN the size of Paddock Wood are well advanced. Watch this space.....

Later in this Newsletter we outline the specific objections which TDRA submitted to the planning application for TENT 1.

Coffee Morning Saturday 15th November, 1000 – 1200 hours

Both members and non-members are welcome to join us at an informal get-together at our Coffee Morning, which will be held at the White Lion Saddlery on Saturday 15th November from 1000 – 1200 hours. This is your chance to discuss some of the key issues which affect Tenterden residents and in addition we'll have a cuttings exhibition showing details of some of the many current and potential future developments. We look forward to seeing you there.

Action on Parking!

Parking in Tenterden is about to take a giant leap into the limelight following the recent approval by Ashford Borough Council of proposals for free parking on Sundays and Bank Holidays in the Bridewell Lane car park. This will come into effect from 19th October. This is one of the measures which had been discussed and recommended by the town's Parking Forum following surveys of usage of local car parks by TDRA members.

Other measures to control dangerous parking and ease traffic movement are also due to be carried out in the coming months, including restrictions on parking on the South side of the High Street on Sundays (also proposed by the Parking Forum) and restrictions on parking at various other locations (including Turners Avenue and elsewhere) for reasons of safety and to alleviate congestion. These measures require formal consultation and notification of adjacent householders as part of the official legal process before they can be implemented – hence the expected delay of a few months. There is also the thorny issue of getting to the top of the 'priorities list' which ABC wisely use as a planning tool in these times of restrictions on financial and staff resources. Hopefully by the end of 2015 we will all be able to enjoy some of the benefits of the planned improvements.

Looking further into the future, Phase A of the TENT 1 development will provide a further 42 car parking spaces at the Leisure Centre as well as 50 on-street car parking spaces within the development in line with ABC's current parking standards.

TENT 1A PLANNING APPLICATION – ‘WHAT WE SAID’

1. Phasing

We queried the order of the phasing: “... Phase 5 (linking Phase 1 to the town centre) should be part of Phase 1 or at least become Phase 2?”

2. Design and Build Quality Expectations

We commented on the level of design detail submitted: “Typically a full planning application would be made at RIBA Stage C or D. This looks like a Stage C submission. Usually an outline specification forms part of a Stage C report, detailing the materials and finishes to the buildings. For example – whether the bricks are handmade or mass produced, timber window frames versus plastic, etc. As the decision was taken to follow a traditional style of housing, we need to avoid blatant cheap looking pastiche. This is a very sensitive issue as the quality of the materials and the details will make all the difference – for example an extract from the document showing a typical elevation – and images of typical new build properties in Ashford. We need to push for better documentation of the actual materials and some typical details for doors, windows, roofs, porches, etc.”

3. Public Artwork

We suggested selecting local artists: “A piece of public artwork is being proposed – which is being agreed between developers and ABC. We should push for involvement of local artists to bid for the contract.” In addition, it may be more beneficial if this artwork had a function, for example creative seating, innovative play equipment or wild life homes.

4. Monitoring the Quality of the Design and Build

We suggested pursuing pre-construction full size mock ups: “TDRA should push.....suggestions of pre-construction full size mock ups of typical details for comment and approval by the Steering Group Committee and Ashford Borough Council.”

5. Traffic Implications

We expressed our concern about the traffic implications to Tenterden’s roads: “We are not convinced about the conclusions stated in the application regarding impact on traffic, particularly at peak times. We are also not convinced by their suggested mitigation. Traffic is an issue now at peak times.”

Proposals for traffic management are unclear for the East Cross area:

TENT 1A – Planning Statement

West Cross – *The traffic resulting from the development will increase marginally within this location, with queues and delays at this junction not increasing significantly above the existing situation. Any delays that may occur could be mitigated through the adjustment of signal timings.*

East Cross – *This junction will see an increase in delays during morning and evening peak hours. However, the developers are willing to provide Kent County Council appropriate funding to adjust the operation of the junction, which would be the most suitable solution.*

Smallhythe Road – *This is the principal access to the site from the West and it has been concluded that the access junction will continue to operate effectively with negligible queues and delays.*

Sir Donald Sinden CBE A Tribute to our President

It was with great sadness that we learned of the passing of our long-standing President. Following a distinguished and varied acting career, Sir Donald lived near Tenterden for a number of years and enjoyed his retirement whilst maintaining a keen interest in local events. He was also patron of our local theatre and a great supporter of TDRA. A truly larger-than-life character with a big personality, Sir Donald will be greatly missed.

Help Needed

The Association is a charitable organisation and we need members who would be willing to help with distributing the Newsletters (3 – 4 times a year) plus the annual magazine ‘The Resident’ and collecting annual donations each Spring.

If you can help, then our membership secretary Mike Lyons would love to hear from you, either:

- at the Coffee Morning (details above) or
- by email: michaeljohnlyons@sky.com or
- by telephone: 01580 765423
or 07887 687327