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To: 'planning.development@havant.gov.uk' <planning.development@havant.gov.uk>

Subject: Planning Application APP/20/01223 - 48 Sinah Lane, Hayling Island

FAO. DAVID EAVES, Planning Officer
Planning Department
Havant Borough Council

Dear Mr Eaves

I am writing as the owner of [REDACTED] Sinah Lane regarding the above planning Application, as discussed last week. I hope this may be a more constructive route than objecting formally at a later stage. While not opposed to the development of the site in principle; I outlined aspects where insufficient information has been provided or clarification is required to enable a reasonable evaluation of the Application in regard to planning considerations.

Similarly if information is forthcoming but contentious, I would hope these matters could be 'managed' by suitable planning conditions or specified construction methods rather than an outright rejection of those parts of the Application. To that end some possible mitigations are included.

To summarise, the specific areas of concern are as follows:

- Summer house (roof ridge). Height of roof ridge
- Landscaping and use of soil from the building works (drainage)
- Western Boundary No 48/50. Proposed boundary 'structures' and plantings.
- Work within RPAs. Tree Protection
- Main House, North elevation – terrace and balcony. Privacy
- Garage (scale, visual appearance and utilisation). Impact on Sinah Lane

More detail (including references to drawings and documents contained on the planning portal) is provided below:

1. Summer House (Drawings Nos Elevation & Floor Plan). Height

No height is shown for the proposed new sea wall. This is relevant as it is effectively the datum point for the adjacent deck area/platform which butts up to the top of the wall and thus is the same height. In turn the base/floor of the summer house is either constructed on or to the same height as the decking (the whole structure described as being on "stilts"). The overall result is that the height of the summer house's ridge line above the indicated ground level is some 5m. This is excessive for a building located so close to the foreshore and beach, which it will dominate. The problem is aggravated by the height of the pitched roof itself (approx 1.3m) and would be the only such pitched roof summer/boat-house along the Sinah Lane foreshore. On this scale it is out of keeping and detrimental to Langstone Harbour conservation in this area.

Furthermore the pitched roof is not consistent with the Applicant's stated design ethos, within their Planning Statement, in favour of shallow mono-pitched roofs throughout the other buildings.

Proposed Mitigation. A shallow mono-pitch roof, sloping down from a reasonably low west elevation, would considerably reduce the visual impact and scale without reducing the available floor area.

2. Landscaping & use of soil arising from building works. Drainage

Details on the proposed landscaping are limited. The gardens of those houses in Sinah Lane fronting onto Langstone Harbour naturally slope down to the foreshore by as much as 2m (layman's estimate) from road level. This natural feature is most pronounced in Nos 48 & 50 Sinah Lane; as a result both gardens suffer from regular periods of standing water (rainwater not seawater) throughout the winter months (typically 150mm deep and occasionally more), with some variation from year to year. Photographs forwarded separately.

The concern is the possible use of soil from footings and basement excavations to landscape at the bottom of the garden, in particular to raise the ground level. This landscaping could be for reasonable aesthetic reasons or inadvertently by a contractor looking to save money on disposal without realising the consequences. Notwithstanding, it would help to alleviate the problem of standing water across the surrounding area, as a whole, if carried out in a planned and controlled manner. However altering the present status quo independently, between the levels of the two gardens, would simply result in the run-off of this standing water (along with general drainage) from No 48 to No 50, potentially doubling the volume of water in No 50. This would be highly detrimental to the enjoyment of No 50 and in the long term damage the nature of the ground, turning it into a boggy area all year round.

The writer has informed the Applicant of the problem of standing water and has proposed a joint solution (with an element of cost sharing) should the Applicant wish to use excavated soil for landscaping. Namely, to use the soil to raise the levels of both gardens modestly (say 150- 200mm in the worst affected areas) and if necessary bring in additional soil through No 48. However no definitive response has been received. It should be noted due to access problems at No 50 for plant and materials that it would not be possible to raise the ground level in this garden should the Applicant proceed unilaterally.

Proposed Mitigation. Notwithstanding any engineering requirements by HBC on such a proposal, it is requested that a planning condition be placed initially on the Application that all soil arising from the development of the property should be removed from site and/or that existing ground levels across the site are not altered materially without express planning permission. Ideally it should be possible to remove this condition by mutual agreement eg. joint planning application if proceeding jointly

3. Western Boundary (Nos 48 & 50). Hedging and fencing arrangements

The Application makes reference to the provision of "*boundary hedging and estate fencing*" running north from the existing houses to the foreshore along the Western Boundary. Despite requests the Applicant has not provided further details as to either the extent or nature of these and in particular the meaning of estate fencing. There is a degree of confusion within the Application, however, as there are existing stretches of old and new hedging (interspersed with trees) along the edge of the boundary, as shown in the relevant drawings, which are the property of No 50 due their position inside the boundary line. There is also a block wall (as shown on the drawings) and, since 1980, a significant stretch of "open" boundary (approximately 30m) with occasional shrubs, which was the preferred choice of the then respective owners. A photograph of the open boundary stretch is forwarded separately.

The Applicant has stated his requirement for both increased privacy given the location of the new house (the main elevation is westward facing) and for a more secure boundary for domestic security reasons (dogs). The writer supports this and is willing to work with the Applicant. However, the existing hedges (and open boundary) are unlikely to meet these requirements. Similarly new planting will not achieve the desired effect in a reasonable time frame. Thus extensive or continuous fencing is likely to be required (and as indicated in the Application) and may further include the replacement of the block wall with one of a better quality.

Whatever option(s) are chosen, however, will have an enormous visual impact on No 50's garden, potentially changing its nature substantially. Certainly the enjoyment of this property will be damaged if the design and nature of the boundary structure(s) are not sensitive and appropriate to the area. In addition, the timing for the installation of the new boundary structures is critical. The owners of No 50 should not be faced with perhaps 18 months of construction work on an open/exposed site. NB. This is in addition to the limited local screening around the house for tree protection.

Proposed Mitigation Consent to the Application should include conditions requiring a clear and detailed plan for the design and establishment of boundary structures (with the materials to be used eg. man-made and/or hedging) commensurate in style and quality with the respective properties. Further, this should be installed as early as is practical following commencement of works, not towards their end.

4. Works within RTAs (excavation) - Protection

In addition to the footings for the main house, there are proposed "*lightweight*", "*low impact*" terraces, planters and ramps shown within the RTAs of trees situated on the western boundary of the property. These are likely to

require excavations of varying depth and extent, if only to remove the top soil. No details are provided, however, as to how deep the foundations/bases/membranes for these structures will be. Removing the top soil, possibly on a wide scale, along with deeper footings in specific areas, risks causing direct and indirect damage to the root systems. This would be aggravated by the use of mechanical diggers/plant. Without technical details it is not possible to make any evaluation of this risk.

Proposed Mitigation. Any removal of top-soil/excavation works within RTAs should be confined to the absolute minimum required and should only be undertaken manually and specified as a planning condition

5. Main House, North elevation – terrace and balcony. Privacy

The foot prints (dimensions) of the above terrace and first floor balcony are excessive both absolutely and relative to the respective floor areas of the main house. They also appear to stretch the development of the site closer to the foreshore, beyond the notional 'building line' of the existing houses to the west, as indicated by the dashed line in drawing []. (The 'flexing' of this line to take account of buildings to the east is unduly generous as it includes houses where the foreshore swings to the north!).

The main concern, however, is the side and orientation of the first floor balcony. This is far more consistent with a major social/recreational area than is warranted by a bedroom balcony. (drawing/floor plan). It is both physically overbearing and intrusive, providing an 180° view overlooking the entire length of No 50's garden. Thus resulting in loss of privacy and enjoyment.

A proportionate bedroom balcony is not unreasonable but there is a clear difference between neighbours in close proximity while in their respective gardens at ground level, separated by hedges or fences, as opposed to being overlooked from a 3m high balcony by one party. It should also be noted that recent house developments with balconies, located to the West and in the middle of gardens (eg. Nos 56 & 60A (60B?), do not have (were not permitted?) such extensive and overhanging balconies. Furthermore, there are side shielding arrangements (walls and/or opaque glass screens at first floor level) to prevent overlooking.

Proposed Mitigation. The balcony should be scaled back considerably so it does not become a focal point for social gatherings and be nothing more than a modest sitting area for the occupants of the bedroom (reduced to say 25% of the proposed floor area). Side screening could also be considered.

I appreciate that a number of the points above are a result of 'local knowledge' of the two sites including their history as well as an obvious personal interest but I hope that you are able to take them into consideration. If, however, you feel they would be better made as formal objections please do let me know.

6. Garage (scale, visual appearance and utilisation) – impact on Sinah Lane

While not objecting to the requirement for a garage or its proposed position, which is sensible, I completely agree with the Council's own Landscape Team namely that this is an "excessively large garage". To what purpose such a large non-residential building is required in an entirely residential area is questionable. However, reasonable objections can be made on a range of other planning considerations which may be summarised as:

- inconsistent with Applicant's own stated design ethos (Planning Statement) in relation to compatibility with the local neighbourhood (a wooded "leafy vernacular" lane);
- an overly industrial/commercial appearance, being two rectangular boxes on top of one another (ie. no attempt to replicate the "angular" aspects of the house, say on the upper story). This industrial/commercial appearance is severely at odds with Sinah Lane where all the buildings fronting the Lane on both sides are exclusively residential dwellings.

The Landscape Team's comments are predominantly aimed at reducing the impact through landscaping measures. However, the overall size is such a problem as to warrant a formal objection via your planning portal.

Proposed Mitigation. However, the following proposed changes could be beneficial in achieving a mutually acceptable outcome:

- i. reduction in the ground-floor foot print

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- ii. reduction in first-floor foot print rather than the present overlapping of floors thus reducing the visual appearance (site lines), perhaps utilising a mansard style line design
 - iii. better use of existing materials to blend in with the Lane eg. wooden cladding on ground story rather than render and zinc cladding on first storey

I hope these observations are of some assistance but do not hesitate to contact should you require any further information. I would be most grateful if you would also confirm receipt

Yours sincerely

