



# R. A. D. I. O.

RESIDENTS AGAINST DEVELOPMENT IN OTFORD

## NEWSLETTER – OCTOBER 2007

### DARENTHMEADE, 4 HILLYDEAL ROAD

Plans to build 3 new houses on this site, linking in with the adjoining site at Bramber House to form, in effect, a new estate of 6 houses were contested by RADIO and by local residents. Speaking against the development at a site visit made last week by members of the SDC Development Control Committee were our local councillor, Michelle Lowe, Tony Woodrow-Clark on behalf of OPC and Keith Stockman on behalf of RADIO and the local community. Almost 50 Otford residents, from all parts of the village, attended to voice a unanimous disapproval of the proposal. We are pleased to advise that, at the close of the visit, the application was unanimously recommended for rejection by the DCC delegation. **This shows that with concerted action from the community we can make a difference!!**

### 64/66 WELL ROAD

Here we go again!! A new application from G. Wimpey has been received by SDC, again applying to build a massive 21 houses, this time with a 40% 'affordable' housing element. Once again, we are asking for your support to have this application rejected by writing to SDC expressing your concerns. We believe the major issues to highlight are as follows:-

**Location:** The application repeatedly refers to the site as an 'urban' area – obviously this is not the case as it is in a rural village, clearly designated as such in local plans. Local policy H10A states that no development of more than 5 units should be built in Otford.

**Environmental:** The majority of the site is within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Views into and out of the AONB would be compromised by the proposed development. Legislation strengthening the protection of AONB's has been introduced in new Government policy PPS3.

The site is also in a designated Area of Archaeological Importance which means that, at the very least, an archaeological survey should be undertaken before any building work is considered.

**Design:** A majority of the houses have 3 storeys, and most have high steep-pitched roofs. The development clearly does not conform to the character, scale, layout and context of the surrounding area. This contravenes Govt policy as stated in PPS3, paras 13 and 16 in particular.

**Sustainability:** The application makes much of the fact that the development is sited in a location within walking distances of local shops, services and public transport. In reality, everyone will use their cars as there is only one convenience store locally, the bus service is poor and the train service benefits only commuters. Residents would inevitably use cars as transport to local supermarkets and towns. This contravenes Govt policy PPS1.





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**Traffic:** The application uses traffic data taken in 2004 to make its case. Everyone is aware how much the traffic problem has increased in the village in the last 3 years, especially around the busy Bubblestone Road/Sevenoaks Road junction. This element needs to be re-examined at the very least as increased congestion will inevitably result from the additional car movements generated by the development.

**Affordable Housing:** The application proposes that 40% of the new houses will be affordable, but gives no detail of how this will be managed or achieved. It may well be that the developer is simply paying lip service to this requirement in order to push the application through, when in fact what they are really offering is 'cheap market housing' which is entirely different from 'affordable' housing as defined by Govt.

**Consultation:** The application infers that it has been compiled after extensive public consultation. As we all know, no consultation with the local community whatsoever has taken place. The local community is entirely opposed to the development.

**Supporting Data:** As well as the traffic data, the Ambient Noise data and Tree Report used in support of the application both date from mid-2004. It is very questionable whether any of this data is at all relevant 3 years on, as rail usage (particularly freight traffic) has increased in this time and trees and vegetation don't stop growing just for the convenience of a developer!

RADIO has managed to have the initial, restrictive, deadline for submission of comments (11 October) extended as we pointed out to SDC that they had not posted Site Notices as they are obliged to do. As a result, the new **deadline for your letters is 30 October.**

Your letter should be addressed to Mr. A. Bryne, Community & Planning Services, Sevenoaks District Council, P.O. Box 183, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 1GN or they may be e-mailed to [planning.comments@sevenoaks.gov.uk](mailto:planning.comments@sevenoaks.gov.uk). In either case, please use **case reference SE/07/02776/FUL.**

**PLEASE SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY, SEND A LETTER OR E-MAIL.**

### **OTFORD TO GREATNESS PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY**

Tarmac, who are seeking to extend their workings at Sevenoaks Quarry for another twenty years, are attempting to divert this footpath to the south of Otford. This is a historic Right of Way which appears on the 1840's Tithe Map, and on each O.S. Map thereafter, as a direct link between two long-established areas, Otford and Greatness.

Tarmac now seeks to re-route a considerable section of the public footpath, so that instead of progressing by one short and direct length, it will be diverted around the perimeter of their industrial quarry complex, which more than doubles the distance and considerably degrades its viability and usefulness. The proposed new route leads directly alongside the high-wired (litter strewn) fence of the land-fill, rubbish-tip – an area of constant vehicle movement as waste lorries carry rubbish to the tip. Progress along this 'facility' will prove unpleasant and foul-smelling!





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Tarmac are citing 'Health and Safety' as reasons (as did Railtrack in their attempt to extinguish Footpath SR49 over the level crossing) to divert the route away from Greatness Oast, however they have recently introduced a system of safety barriers and overhead way-signs that ensure safe passage through this short length. Tarmac would appear to be on somewhat 'shaky-ground' in their concerns for health and safety, as the proposed route runs alongside a deep lake – whose proximity to the children of the Watercress Drive and Greatness Lane housing estates will act as a magnet, and can hardly be considered desirable or safe!

Tarmac's aims would mean a considerable degradation of the Public Right of Way, which if it were accepted, would dissuade walkers from using the footpath, and add to the case for its closure. Managers at the quarry enquiry admitted that keeping the original 'direct' route through the site would not affect Tarmac's plan to continue quarrying, but conceded that diverting it would "make the path more a 'dog-walk' for local residents, than a serious and useful footpath".

At present this Public Right of Way from Otford gives access to the land between the M26 and the railway line to Maidstone – a valuable buffer of green space between southern Otford and Sevenoaks. We should seek to keep the footpath open and fit for purpose.

**If you wish to express your concerns, please write to: Donna Cook, Tarmac Ltd. Estates Department, Shepperton Office, Littleton Lane, Shepperton, Middlesex, TW17 0NF**

### **RADIO AGM**

RADIO's Annual General Meeting will be held in Otford Village Memorial Hall at 8pm on **Thursday 6th December**. All members are invited to attend and express their views. The meeting will be followed by a cheese and wine party to which everyone is cordially invited.

### **RADIO XMAS DISCO**

Last but not least! RADIO'S Christmas Disco will be held on Saturday 15 December at Otford Village Memorial Hall commencing at 8.00 pm. There will be a free reception drink for all, free food and a licensed bar. Dancing until late will be to the Fabulous Del Monte Brothers Disco. The theme will be Christmas, so come as festively attired as you like!!

Members and their guests are cordially invited to attend, tickets cost £5.00 each and are available from Keith Stockman (tel: 07798 767770) or Bryan Symons (tel: 07733 228828). Please do come along, we'll have fun and **the funds raised will go directly to support RADIO.**

