Proposal for two new bungalows and management of retained woodland, Balmoral Road, Kingsdown

Exhibition of Planning Proposals
St John’s (Kingsdown) Village Hall

Saturday 5th May 2012
1 THE SITE

The site boundary is shown on the plan below. It has a total area of approximately 0.3 hectares (0.75 acres). The land is wooded, and is subject to a Woodland Tree Preservation Order dating back to 1968.

Although the site contributes to visual amenity, it has unfortunately attracted problem uses over the years, including dumping of rubbish, bonfires, and unsociable uses of the land, which have led to resident complaints.

The extent of undergrowth also renders the land less useful than it might be, by restricting public access.

This exhibition sets out proposals to combine limited development on part of the site (less than half the overall site area) with enhancement of the remaining part as woodland, subject to a management agreement.
2 THE PROPOSAL

The site lies within the village confines of Kingsdown, a location where proposals for new development will usually be supported. Indeed, two new dwellings have recently been constructed on land nearby, to the rear of 41 and 43 Balmoral Road, on land which also previously formed part of the woodland area on the north side of Kingsdown.

The site has always been intended to be developed, as evidenced by the road frontage provided to Balmoral Road, when the Balmoral Road Estate was constructed.

Although subject to a Woodland Tree Preservation Order, the woodland is in poor condition, and would benefit from improvement and active management, to secure improved amenity value, and increased ecological value.

The proposal to be the subject of a planning application in the near future is for two modest bungalows, fronting onto Balmoral Road; a number of trees will need to be felled to allow the new dwellings to be constructed, however trees will be retained on the rear (northern) boundary, securing both screening from the north, and providing a wooded back drop, to the bungalows, when viewed from Balmoral Road.

The remaining area of woodland, forming more than half of the existing area, will be retained as woodland, and subject to improvement and management, to secure its long term future. The improvement and long term management of the woodland will be secured through a legally binding Section 106 Agreement, associated with the grant of planning permission.

Notwithstanding its poor condition, the woodland remains in better condition than the area to the west, and there is still scope to secure the retention of significant trees, and the provision of new planting, to secure its long term future.

The bungalows themselves are similar in size and height to bungalows in the vicinity, accordingly the proposals will fit well with the existing character of the area.
3 MANAGING THE WOODLAND

Detailed surveys of trees at the site have been carried out, and many of the existing trees are either nearing the end of their natural life, or in need of significant management to ensure their survival.

Part of the site, towards the eastern end, previously accommodated a building, of some size, and the concrete base remains on site. Indeed, the Land Registry Title describes the land as "land and buildings on the north west side of Sea Road, Kingsdown, Deal."

As part of the management of the site, the concrete hardstanding areas will be removed; undergrowth will also be removed, where appropriate, and new tree planting will take place, to enhance those trees which are in good enough condition to be retained. Appropriate species will include holly, hazel, pine, white beam, and field maple.

There is at present an informal footpath through the site, from the frontage to Balmoral Road; subject to the views of local residents, it is proposed that a route will be provided through the development site, to join to the footpath at the rear of the site.

It would also be possible to accommodate a small seating/picnic area, again subject to the view of local residents on this matter.

The long term management of the retained woodland area could be achieved in several different ways.

Firstly, the land could be conveyed to a Charitable Trust or similar body, subject to appropriate covenants, ensuring that it was retained as woodland for the future.

Secondly, the land could be retained by a Management Company associated with the two new bungalows, who would be responsible for long term management of the woodland area.

Local residents' views would be welcome on this point also.
4 CONCLUSIONS

The proposal to combine small scale modest residential development, of two bungalows, together with improvement and long term management of the retained woodland area will maintain and improve an important local amenity for local residents, which can make a much greater contribution to local amenity than at present.

The proposals will be the subject of a planning application to be submitted shortly, and residents’ views will also be welcome at this stage.
Trees 3 - 13 and 15 - 24 felled to allow construction of new properties. [See elevations below]