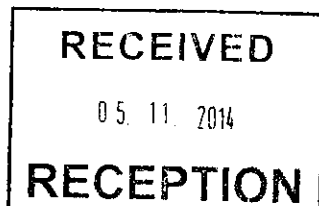


Rochford District Council Planning Department
3-19 South Street
Rochford
Essex
SS4 1BW



(This is not a pro-forma letter)

For the attention of Mr Mike Stranks

Date: 5th November 2014

Dear Sirs,

Re: Planning Application No: 14/00678/FUL iro proposed CAR PARK iro Foot Ferry Crossing, East of Former Shellfish Packing Station, South Fambridge.

We wish to be kept informed of any progress of the above application and wish to be advised of meetings at which the application will be discussed. We would also like a copy of the planning officer's report to the planning committee in advance of the meeting.

This is a letter of Objection (on 2 specific points) and concern on others and would ask that this be taken into consideration when making your decision on this matter.

In principle the idea of the reinstatement of the ancient Ferry in the form of a Pedestrian only Ferry across the River Crouch may be seen as appealing and we can see there may be limited benefits to such a proposal but there may be a case of possibly the negative impacts outweighing the positive for South Fambridge, especially by way of its extremely rural location. It is, after all, a more appropriate development in keeping with the natural surroundings, but, despite this, we do feel that consideration should always be applied when there has been substantial development in an area since the time of the Original Ferry and therefore it is not always appropriate to allow such weight from an applicant based on historical events and therefore all aspects must be considered in light of current infrastructure and development.

With this in mind, there are a number of factors that should be reviewed as a possible negative consequence of the Car Park/Ferry and could affect the amenity of the local area for residents and visitors. Our primary reason for our **overall objection** to this application are points **number (1) and (2)** and the remainder are our concerns which are listed below and are dealt with in more detail under the point headers in blue italic print:

1. **Vehicle Access** from South Fambridge road to access point into proposed Car Park. Shared access point.

We would refer you to the Planning applications with Autoval 12/00094/FUL and 13/00370/ful and more specifically the shared access between walkers/bridle path users and vehicles which was a key factor of the refusal and the dismissal of the appeal on application 13/00370/FUL (see points 10,11,12 and 13 on Appeal Decision statement). These are relevant issues with this currant application. This conflict of access was never resolved and there remains a danger at this access point today. The requirement of the gate at the point of entry to the bridle path/footpath remains the essential barrier to allow safe passage and is acknowledged through the previous planning consultation and Appeal (point 12 & 13). The Transport statement makes no acknowledgement of possible conflict of access or resolution. In fact it states there are "no safety issues in respect of access and increased use of access" which is in conflict of the Appeal Statement previously mentioned. The proposed

change of positioning of the gate is noted and further gates being erected however this is still inadequate to resolve bridle path/public foot path access conflict with vehicles (acknowledged in the Appeal statement). The Highways Agency consultation on previous applications were found to be made without due care and attention and their comments dismissed by the appeal process in favour of their own conclusions(point 19.) This must be taken into account and we would hope the Highways Agency take a more responsible role in their future consultations for this site.

2. **Highways infrastructure** – the use of the South Fambridge Road specifically the narrower parts of the more rural lane and the stretch of road within the main village leading down towards the shared access point.

The proposed Car Park will lead to an intensification to the use of the South Fambridge Road by vehicles and this coupled with the possible increase of foot traffic along the length of the South Fambridge Road from walkers using the ferry from the North of the River to South and the absence of a regular bus service/Fambridge amenities, may result in safety issues especially with an unpaved road with speed limits of 60 mph along certain areas. In particular there is access to a footpath along the road on which there is a 60MPH speed limit which has been flagged in previous applications as dangerous. Consideration of commercial vehicles likely to enter/exit the Former Shellfish Packing Station must also be taken into account in mind of the supposed B2 permission. The transport statement also makes a comparison of the use of the road journey from South to North Fambridge versus distance by boat. We feel that this statement is irrelevant and bears no weight in this application in the context of a ferry for leisure purposes only and is not intended as an alternative regular route based on such variable factors such as tide/weather/seasonal closure for conservation purposes.

3. **Use of Car Park/Ferry**

Subject to a resolution of point (1), the application shows little direction of how this car park will be managed now or in the future and as it seems that it is for the use of members of the public primarily we would ask there be certain conditions imposed in order to maintain the original intended use especially as it is a privately owned site. There should be a number of clear conditions pertaining to the use such as:

- *No commercial traffic, height barrier must installed maximum head height 2metres.*
- *No overnight stay.*
- *No Trailers permitted.*
- *Security gates locked at the end of the day/overnight with clear opening and closing times specified.*
- *The car park should be manned whilst open to ensure no misuse e.g. parking for commercial business in the building adjacent, a key requirement of planning application for the former shellfish packing station was for additional parking and was refused.*
- *No unloading of good/stores for transport by Ferry or any other means. The term goods or stores should be clearly defined as the application could infer commercial implications which could put more pressure on the highway by commercial traffic.*
- *Will there be a cost to the parking at this site? If so this venture may encourage more visitors who may not be prepared to pay for parking and may park inappropriately within the village thus putting more pressure on already limited public parking.*

Our reasoning behind our concerns is that, it has been our experience within the village that, sought planning permissions are negotiated by concessions of the applicants and then these concessions are removed to the benefit of the owner and easily approved with further planning applications to the detriment of the village. An example of this is the Anchor pub, the only public amenity in South Fambridge, demolished and replaced by flats, with a

concession of a bar to compensate for the loss of an amenity...which was taken away from the village by approval of change of use from bar to a flat despite vast objections!!!! Therefore a private car park is not likely to be maintained for use of the public based on past experiences and there is simply not enough here in South Fambridge to receive regular visitors from North Fambridge and therefore there will be virtually no economic benefit due to its isolated location with no public transport unlike North Fambridge.

4. Anti-social behaviour and miss-use.

This is a key factor regarding this site. We base our comments on historical problems resulting from a car park previously sited at the bottom of the access steps to the sea wall to the east of the former Shellfish Packing Station. It is our understanding that there were many issues at this site resulting in its closure and the erection of a locked gate at the main access from the South Fambridge Road. To illustrate this we have attached a number of recent photographs showing the results of anti-social behaviour along the South Fambridge Road and by the river bank and our concern is that this will migrate to this area. (some of these occurred during daylight hours including cars park in the church lay-by as a meeting place)

(See photos fly-tipping/fire/rubbish at Church lay-by)

5. Pedestrian Access from Car Park to Sea Wall –

Disabled access to the sea wall must be considered.(although it is understood the pathway on the sea wall is not responsibility of NFYH (so signs must be erected) but this stretch of pathway could be altered to allow safe access to disabled visitors with possible seating.

6. Car Park Evacuation – Fire prevention/flood issues

As this is a low lying area, this should be evaluated for field run-off flood risks and sea wall breach in light of recent extraordinary weather events in the last few years. With regard to possible fire on this site there must be a managed barrier around the site to avoid ignition of surrounding wild grassland (Recent incident field fire Canewdon link -<http://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/incidents/17072014.5/>).(See field run-off flooding photo)

7. Pontoon-Usage and implications –

It was suggested in the consultation documentation (Design Access Statement – Crouch Harbour Authority) that there could possibly be a storage facility of dinghy's on the pontoon side so it must be clear that now or in the future the car park cannot be used for the purpose of transporting dinghy's to gain river access be it that it is a pedestrian (including bicycles) access only and that public mooring on the pontoon should be limited to daylight hours only and no overnight mooring so as not to disturb residents and wildlife with regard to noise and light pollution which is visible at high tide...(See Photo.)

8. Noise Pollution

There will be social disturbance with regard to vehicle noise. (see Autoval case) And so, this factor must be considered and if it is deemed acceptable a restriction of times open must be applied and benefits to South Fambridge must be weighed against the loss of amenity to residents. (see point 24 of Appeal Decision statement iro 13/00370/ful)

9. Air/Chemical Pollution–

Long term use of a parking area in this site and possible leaking of vehicle fluids such as oil must be considered based on the proposed grasscrete material suggested and close proximity to the borrow dykes and the river. Air pollution of fumes from cars entering the site should be evaluated in light that the area is enclosed by banking and adjacent to a building and is low lying and particularly near to residential dwellings. This may have an impact on the amenity of those residents. The Transport Report show a possible stay time of 2 hours with 40 vehicle spaces – relating this to the hours of operation with a ferry journey every 30 minutes may result in a maximum usage with a lot of vehicle movement especially if there may be additional services to new destinations such as Wallasea Island/Burnham which we understand that RDCPD will have no control over!

10. Light pollution –

The low level lighting in the car park should be on a timer so as not to effect the residents/wildlife nearby. When the car park is locked there is no necessity for lighting. Also there should be no mooring on the pontoon with the exception of the ferry as lighting in yachts is visible over the sea wall at high tide. (See Photo)

11. Ecology/habitat protection-

*We have read the Preliminary Ecological Assessment and are pleased to see the recognition of importance of conservation of habitat/species and possible disturbance both in a construction stage as well as the general use of any development. This grassland meadow has been unused for many years and is a frequent hunting ground of the barn owl (Note the occupied nesting boxes at Blue House farm North Fambridge and we have seen the barn owl regularly hunting at dusk over this meadow). Therefore further disturbance is a concern. We have noted on your on-line correspondence relating to this application there is confirmation of a recent change of use from grassland/meadow to residential use on 2 properties in close proximity to the proposed site and would like to see a copy of the ecological survey relating to that change of use and details of the planning applications. We can see that of course this information will be of importance to the further survey work although this alteration of land use has not been mentioned or acknowledged in the Ecology Report Desktop study and is not shown on the applicants photograph of the site (page 57 point 5, view of site access looking south) or in the aerial mapping of the site. This recent change of use could intensify the habitat and use of that land by wildlife and have lead to migration thus making further development less desirable. We would ask that this data already collected for the change of use be made available to the survey company undertaking further survey work on this site. The NFYH state that the use of coastline pathways cause an already present element of disturbance (albeit fairly limited on the South side of the river) but with the addition of substantial increased vehicle movement and pedestrian visitors the disturbance is likely to increase significantly above that at present. (see Photos lizard, shrew , barn owls use this site for hunting) There must be careful consideration of species data with regard to **age of the data** available bearing in mind work undertaken at Blue House farm regarding conservation and successful breeding of barn owls, water voles etc and we welcome further survey work. (See Photos)*

12. Openness of Greenbelt.

No storage should be permitted within the area of car park e.g. trailers, dinghy's etc

13. Future Site Development - sprawl and implications –

We feel that this proposal must not be considered as an opening for further development as so close to residential dwellings (Policy GB2 -Green Tourism must be small scale) – must be for the good of all and not allowed to become exclusive to Yacht haven members in the future. Monetary gains from parking fees may encourage illegal parking within the village which already has very limited parking. This venture could lead to an exclusive economic gain for NFYH and so it is very important that future implications be considered. RDCPD (Rochford District Council Planning Department) were advised of an intention to increase the ferry destinations which could in turn lead to further intensification of this site which could prove very harmful for the amenity of residents and habitat. It is our understanding that the RDCPD will have no control over increased use of the river activities.

14. Archaeology –

Again we would refer to the recent change of use to land nearby and would ask if consultation regarding Archaeology was obtained on this permission. If so we would ask that the findings be passed to the company dealing with the archaeological surveys and would like a copy of those surveys undertaken.

15. Economic benefits -

There appear to be no economic benefits for South Fambridge village and very limited

benefits further afield due to the remote location and lack of public transport services. The economic benefits appear primarily for Yacht Haven owned enterprises with limited benefits further afield.

16. Specific unique proposal –

In light of the Former Shellfish Packing Station fiasco where the Boatyard application was supposedly protected by a condition which was erroneously shown on the approval as an "informative" thus allowing no protection hence the disastrous outcome in recent years, the following must be included:

A CONDITION (not informative) should be imposed that as a result of the unique status of this application the permission for a car park is for the exclusive purpose of access to the river for the use of the ferry and leisure purposes associated with the River Crouch. Any future alteration to the ownership/use would require further planning consent.

17. Parking in North Fambridge –

It is quoted in the Design and Access statement that there is likely to be increased usage of the North Fambridge Yacht Club and its facilities and it is inferred as a benefit and a suggestion of additional parking at the yacht haven is offered. Will this be exclusive to North Fambridge Yacht Haven members at this location or all public and is there sufficient public parking on the north side of the river so as not to adversely affect the current enjoyment of visitors or resident of North Fambridge. This may be seen as a primary economic benefit to the Yacht Haven limited business as a whole and the application may be seen to be a smokescreen to allow further development to that business to the detriment of public and residential amenity. In such an unusual planning case it is important in this planning process the RDCPD liaise with the Maldon District Council Planning Dept in that they are sure that their actions on the South of the river are for the good of all.

In conclusion we **OBJECT** to the above planning application under the grounds of intensification of the highway be it that parts of the Fambridge road are narrow (see photo). The combined use of this road by commercial traffic relating to the Former Shellfish packing station (which has B2 use) and potential commercial vehicle movement now and in the future plus the additional Vehicle and pedestrian traffic along the Fambridge Road in connection with a proposed ferry will place unacceptable pressure on this only access road in a naturally quiet rural village location. In addition there is conflict of safety at the junction entering the site from the Fambridge Road to the Private Road accessing the site with regard to a shared access of the bridle path/public footpath/commercial vehicles entering the Former Shellfish Packing Station and potential vehicles/pedestrians for the ferry. (See 13/00370/FUL Appeal Decision Statement which is relevant to the above comments).

Whilst we appreciate the more professional approach by the North Fambridge Yacht Haven regarding their responsibilities and respect their sensitivity to the area of proposed development in this planning process, we have had to take a dogmatic approach to this application in view of recent planning events in this area. Whilst the proposed Foot Ferry is a more suitable development there are lots of factors to consider.

We look forward to receiving the requested documents as soon as possible and trust our views will taken into consideration.



Photos attaching to Letter dated 5th November 2014

(Re Application 14/00678/FUL)

Attaching to point 2

Photo shows how narrow the Fambridge road is....



Attaching to point 3 –



These were just some of the increasing incidents of fly tipping during 2014.



Fire debris at the river at the site of the original car park by the sea wall - photo taken 21st April 2014



Rubbish/drinks bottles constantly being thrown at church layby and cars parking there as a meeting place and even an overnight stays (photos taken on 4th Nov 2014).

Attaching to Point 5 –



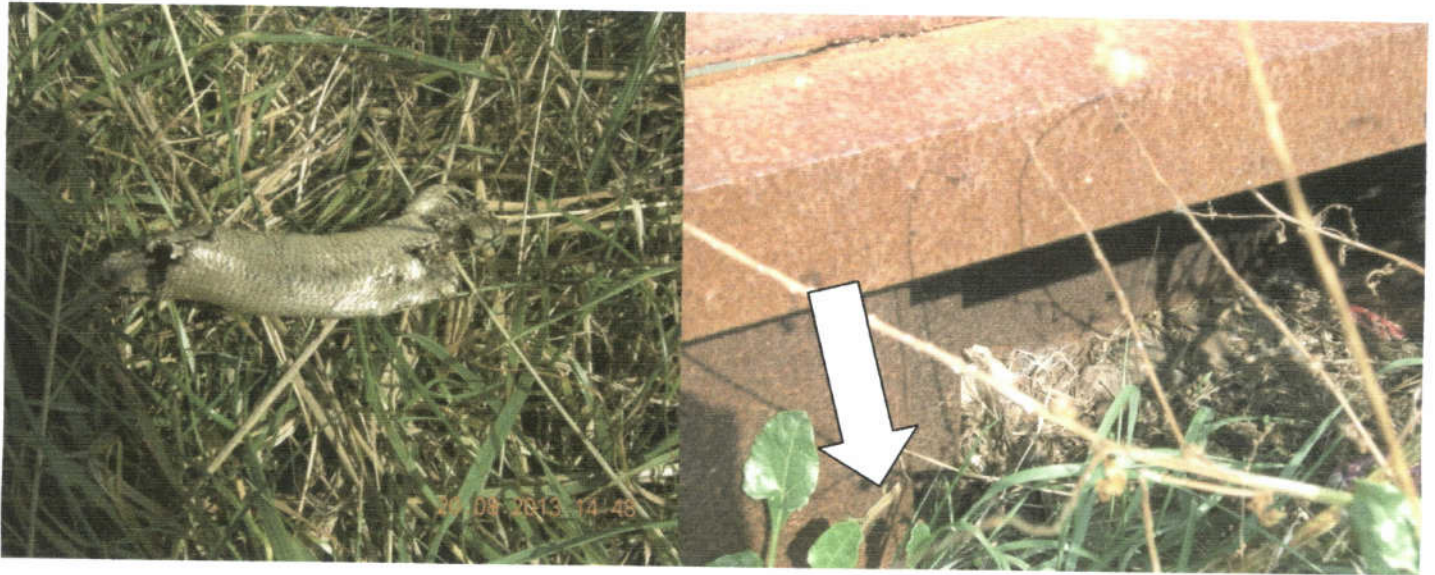
Illustration of field run-off in low lying location with Former Shellfish packing station in the background.

Attaching to Points 6/9



Note at high tide the wheelhouse of the boat is visible above (to the right) of the garage with red doors.

Attaching to Point 10 –



Shed Adder skin found by the river bank and lizard at the bottom of the photo just by the green leaf. Photos taken in 2013.



1st Photo taken 3rd Sept 2013, several shrew were found in a very short space of time on open land as in the photo, this one found at the base of the sea wall. 2nd photo taken 3rd August 2013 and was found along the concrete path on the sea wall a short distance from the wooden stile.



Seals often seen in Fambridge area, this one by the jetty at between North and South Fambridge photo taken 26th July 2013

And one just spotted only last week.



This photograph of a seal was taken on 25th August 2013 by the salt marshes west of the proposed site.



The photo on the left was taken on the 24th of December 2013 and was just south of the site on the edge of fields. The second photo on the right was taken on 18th July 2014, which was in a doorway leading into our property note the regrowth of the tail. (The first time we have seen a lizard in our garden).