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COPY

Luke Stubbs  
Councillor  
City of Portsmouth

25th September, 2008

Thank you for your letter of 18<sup>th</sup> inst.

Whereas I am still awaiting a response from the Chair of the Committee with a full explanation of the grounds upon which the committee rejected the points in our unanimous petition, you have taken the trouble to write to me and so I provide below a response to your letter.

You state that in your view, “..the planning officer’s report to committee was fair and balanced..”, but since we have not been shown the contents of this report it is not possible to make any judgement as to the rationale of your support for the decision.

No one is asking the planning committee to determine things whatever way it sees fit. However, there is a natural expectation that they would follow common sense notions related to the achievement of a “balance” between types of properties and equivalence in standards of development. There is a limit to many units can be squeezed onto available sites especially when this causes loss of amenity and where, in this case, ***the application is a downgraded (deficient) proposal when compared with past recent proposals for equivalent unit sizes.***

I am not sure if you are aware of the fact that during the last 15 years, within 150 metres of Coniston Avenue, various planning committees have approved some 90 separate small to tiny units. I attach the results of a reconnaissance survey related to this matter, prepared for and distributed to all residents with an interest in this issue.

Unfortunately your letter, rather than serve to explain why the committee has chosen to ignore reasonable concerns enjoying unanimous support from all of the residents in the immediately affected area, seems to provide a convincing case as to why there is no need for local councillors; any refusals being appealed against and reversed. If you feel this way why don’t you support the residents rather than act as an apologist for a top-down central government policy. In any case we were quite reasonable and did not stand completely against the proposal but made constructive suggestions as to the basis upon which we would drop our objections.

It is somewhat disconcerting that a local councilor can point at central government as being to blame for a local inability to represent the interests of constituents while the MP for Portsmouth North asserts that local planning issues do not come under her remit. On top of this there has been no transparency, so far, as to the rationale applied by the committee in rejecting the objections of the residents. In terms of open and participatory governance this is unacceptable. You will therefore, perhaps, understand why your letter has provided no reassurance concerning your assertion that the committee is mindful of residents’ concerns.

Yours faithfully,

Copied to: all signatories to original petition  
Members of the Development Control Committee  
Head of Planning & Development Control Manager  
MP Portsmouth North, APE syndication  
Attachment: Reconnaissance Survey Report

Hector McNeill