

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc:
Subject: APPEAL A: APP/E2205/W/20/3259450 Former Wye College, Wye, Ashford
Date: 25 January 2021 20:45:45
Attachments: [Wye Alumni Letter 2021 01 25.pdf](#)

Dear Leanne

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[APPEAL A: APP/E2205/W/20/3259450 Former Wye College, Wye, Ashford](#)

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[Wye College Alumni response to the WyeCRAG Scheme](#)

Ahead of the Public Inquiry, I am now attaching a written submission signed by Judy Rossiter, Michael Jackson and Malcolm Alexander, on behalf of a further 20 Wye College alumni (names attached).

As you know, Judy Rossiter and I will use this as the basis for the points we would like to make at the Inquiry.

Would be grateful if you could be kind enough to acknowledge safe receipt.

With best wishes, Malcolm

Malcolm Alexander



APPEAL A: APP/E2205/W/20/3259450 Former Wye College, Wye, Ashford

Wye College Alumni response to the WyeCrag Scheme

Relating to: the Complex of Listed Buildings on the High Street / Olantigh Road, previously used for a combination of teaching and student residential accommodation for Wye College.

Introduction

We write as a group of Wye College alumni and former staff. On 15th January 2021, a number of us met online to hear proposals from the Wye College Regeneration Group (WyeCrag) for the re-development of the historic centre of the former College. The WyeCrag plans differ markedly from those submitted for planning approval by the development company, Telereal Trillium. We were impressed by WyeCrag's concept of keeping the most historic buildings as a publicly accessible resource and open for community use. In this way, the site's social and educational *raison d'être*, that has existed for 570 years, would be re-instated. We therefore found the WyeCrag case compelling and wish to add our support to their proposals.

We would like to expand on the following points:

1. Background and delays

We were dismayed by the original decision to close the College in 2005 and so soon after it was acquired by Imperial College, London. Subsequent events led to the cancellation of the original Imperial College plan and then to a regrettable 15-year hiatus that is still with us. Wye and Hinxhill Parish Council, the people the Council represents and a great many who live well beyond the parish boundary, deserve better. Wye and Hinxhill was one of the first councils to prepare a Village Design Statement and one worthy of the special conservation status of the older College buildings. More recently the council completed a Neighbourhood Development Plan of the kind specifically intended by central government to be used as a planning tool. Policy 2 of the Neighbourhood Plan is especially relevant to the historic college buildings that are our major concern, viz "*Applications proposing unsympathetic designs which fail to respect the connections between people and places, or are inappropriate to its location, landscape or biodiversity considerations, will be refused.*" This accords well with the principle, that where possible, historic places such as Wye College should be treated as a publicly shared resource to be managed with respect for the significance of place and history. The College has been integrated with the village for centuries and we believe this connection should be built upon rather than closed to the community by private ownership.

2. The Tradition of Education

Each of us has our own personal recollections of our time at Wye but our objection to the conversion of this magnificent heritage into private homes is not just a matter of pure sentiment. These listed buildings have been at the heart of communal life for almost 600 years and we feel strongly that this privilege should be available for many future generations. The recent huge rise of interest in adult education indicates that the facilities included in the WyeCrag plan would be in demand by organisations offering tuition, specialised meetings, conferences and workshops. The success of West Dean in West Sussex as a centre for the Arts is a notable example of what can be achieved (<https://www.westdean.org.uk/>).

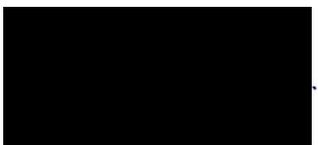
3. International Reputation

Many hundreds of Wye College's overseas students have taken home formal London University qualifications and many revisit Wye on a regular basis. Four hundred and seventy-five of them from 67 countries think sufficiently highly of their *alma mater* to be members of the alumni association, the Agricola Club. Their numerous contributions to the annual Agricola Club Journal testify to their wide-ranging influence on the development of agriculture and horticulture worldwide. Clearly, they still look to Wye for inspiration and opportunity. Some could well use the educational facilities described by WyeCrag for future international meetings. Others will be concerned about the fate of the institution to which they owe much.

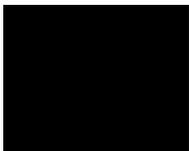
We fear that Wye College's reputation, and that of our country as a whole, will suffer if overseas alumni were to find that the best we can do, after so much prevarication, is to break up the most architecturally and historically notable parts into privately-owned dwellings. Like those from the UK, overseas alumni will be dismayed at the loss of a locally, nationally and internationally significant asset that could no longer be put to public use or be properly appreciated by interested visitors and tourists. They will also lament the severing of the link between the former Wye College and its long tradition of public education. As guardians of similar institutions in their own countries, they will see this as a poor example and one low in inspirational value. The WyeCrag proposals address many of these concerns and we commend them to you without reservation.



Judy Rossiter, BSc, PhD



Michael B Jackson, BSc, MSc, DPhil, DSc, FCIHort, FRSB



Malcolm Alexander, BSc, FCCA

On behalf of:

Glenn Allison, BSc

Prof. Brian Alloway, BSc, PhD

Mo Brown, BSc

Richard Brown, BSc

Tom Bryson, BSc, MA

Rob Callaby, BSc

Neill Enstock, BSc, MPhil, DMS

Harry D Franks, BSc, DTA

Malcolm Harrison, BSc

Patrick Haworth, BSc, MSc.

John G. Killick, BSc

Richard D Long, BSc, DMS

Robin Lowe, BSc, PhD

Prof. Graham M Milbourn, BSc, PhD

George W Noble, BSc

Karen Noble, BSc

Malcolm Ogilvy, BSc, MSc

Sally S. Osgerby, BSc

Prof. Roger G Packham, BSc, MSc, MEd, PhD

John Walters, BSc, PhD