

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Wye Appeals at Former Wye College, Wye, ASHFORD 3259450, 3259462, 3259465
Date: 19 January 2021 15:04:56
Attachments: [To Leanne Palmer re Wye , version 13-1-21.doc](#)

Dear Leanne,

The attached note is from CPRE and is I hope self explanatory .

I understand you have scheduled a day on February 5th for such contributions .

CPRE of course recognises it is your decision with the Inspector on how best to manage those contributions .
CPRE would certainly not want to be prioritised over local community contributions.
But we do hope our points can be seen and heard by the Inspector and the Applicant.

with kind regards

Christine Drury

Chair, CPRE Ashford

cc Sandra Dunn , Hon Sec
Graham Horner , Kent Historic Buildings Committee

To Leanne Palmer ,
Case Officer PINS

Inquiry Ref 17/00567/AS APP/E2205/W3259450

Dear Leanne,

Please could you pass the following to the Inspector as a contribution from CPRE. It is obviously the Inspector's decision whether he can accept it and whether as a written or spoken statement to the Inquiry .

1. CPRE , the countryside charity has always recognised the unique character and community of Wye sitting proudly in the AONB. The 180 foot crown for Edward VII was created on the Wye Down that overlooks the village by the students and staff of Wye College in 1902 . Wye College was created by Cardinal Archbishop Kemp in the 1447 alongside other educational foundations of Henry VI including those of Eton and Kings College Cambridge. Wye is a very special place. The community today is as strong as ever. It rarely needs any front line support from CPRE. But the suggestion from the Applicant in this Inquiry that the only outstanding issue is the status of the Latin school is so utterly wrong CPRE must invite the Inspector to resist this attempt to restrict the Inquiry. This brief contribution explains why this is so important now.

2. The planning application 17/00567 has focused on the immediate physical aspects of the buildings: how each could be conserved and repurposed, some being proposed for demolition to enhance the remainder; others being subdivided and changed significantly to meet modern residential requirements and aspirations. The lengthening time since the buildings were in use has encouraged some to panic – the rainwater pipes and roofs are leaking , the buildings are harbouring quantities of asbestos. The strong sense of community that makes Wye so special has also raised anxiety that the college buildings have been shuttered and closed for too long. “Getting on with it’ seems the right thing to do.

3. But is “it” right? Is it really the only solution now: will future generations love us or hate us for how Wye College was looked after and repurposed in the 2020s? CPRE has long campaigned that local community participation brings knowledge and commitment that helps achieve better development . The Government knows this and pours grant money into garden community planning to achieve community involvement because better ideas come forward and outcomes are better.

Here in Wye there is already a very strong and well organised community – with a well established Planning presence : a Village Design Statement, a Statutory Neighbourhood Plan (NP): it was the first NP in Ashford Borough and the Wye NP evidence base on the rural economy was used borough wide for the Local Plan 2030. The Wye community has the capacity to engage in the master-planning required by its Statutory NP.

4. But all this local knowledge, understanding and capacity has been fundamentally ignored and rejected by the Applicant who has put forward a master-plan of their choosing to support a narrow and flawed scheme focussing almost entirely on residential reconfiguration of the fabric. There is no sensitivity to the irrecoverable loss of heritage legibility for future generations nor consideration of the historic setting of the college buildings to the village conservation area nor the historic permeability of the village into the college area. The two are interdependent. In the rush to ‘do something’ this has been forgotten. This Inquiry must, for the sake of the history of Wye for future generations consider alternatives and require the Applicant to work with those who have

that communal understanding of Wye's heritage and potential. That would be much better achieved voluntarily with facilitation, but conditions may be needed : a great deal of work has been done by the parish council and by the Wye College Regeneration CRAG group . The alternatives are already well developed. Any " heritage at risk " issues should be stabilised as part of Telereal Trillium's current maintenance custodianship of these national assets, while plans are being reconsidered and improved in partnership with the Wye community working with and alongside the Wye and Hinxhill Parish council as well as Ashford Borough. We do not underestimate the differences of position, but the majestic and colourful history of Wye College as well as its national designation status delivers a duty to confront what it is that divides and find a way through – for future generations.

5. The Parish Council describe the present plans politely as a lack of ambition. CPRE sees it as a failure to understand what is different about rural communities : they are legibly communal, the built form of the whole settlement is that sense of place, the conservation area its historic centre. Permeability and access is both the belonging and the "neighbourhood watch" . Gated communities are an alien species from urban environments. Access by written appointment is negation of shared heritage. This could be so much better and given the historical time line it needs to be.

6. CPRE Kent which hosts the Kent Historic Buildings Committee has since 2017 supported the principle of a scheme providing a mix of residential and community and educational uses. But this support is conditional : provided it does not harm the character of the listed buildings or damage the scheduled monument or other parts of the site of archaeological interest , and that it provides a sustainable future for all these assets. Among our concerns are that under the Applicant's proposals public access is unacceptably restricted, and there is reason also to be concerned that future maintenance of the listed buildings would be compromised under private separated ownership. A gated residential outcome would be inimical to setting and conservation interests and on the level of detail of the plans as shown remains unproven as satisfactory living spaces.

7. CPRE fully supports the Statements of Case of Wye and Hinxhill Parish Council and Wye CRAG , including the Heritage Analysis by the eminent Kit Wedd for the Parish Council. Others have set out the Planning Analysis in detail, CPRE's view is that these proposals at present are contrary to the Wye NP and Ashford's Local Plan 2030 SP1, ENV13 and ENV 14 but could be modified to be a positive asset to the present and future of Wye , if the starting point is a Partnership for Wye putting the College back at its communal heart with a mixed development.

8. Each year Historic England reviews the mounting evidence that heritage enjoyed and shared is of immense societal value. In the 2018 Heritage Counts HE described the benefits to individuals: the historic environment enriches our lives, is a source of pride and identity , it provides deep emotional connection and a focus for shared experience . For a society [or community] heritage makes sense of our place in the world and helps create a sense of familiarity and belonging, bringing communities together and connecting us to our shared past in all its diversity. Wye college may have evolved out of its full educational function - as it has in previous eras too; part of the campus is still Wye school, its heritage should remain legible through this next phase of mixed use.

Thank you for considering these comments as a contribution to this Inquiry helping to achieve a way forward for Wye.

Christine Drury, Chair CPRE Ashford.