

The proposed National Trust Visitors' Centre on Langdon Cliffs

Meeting : 21 Oct. '93

LG JG LW MR

For the N.T. : Peter Griffiths (Regional Director); John Chesshyre (Historic Buildings Rep) M. Goddard (Planning Consultant)

LG in the chair began by formally and strongly congratulating the Trust on what had already been achieved on Langdon Cliffs.

He then started the discussion, as devil's advocate, by referring to a local view, which, he said, could be defended, that there should be no development on Langdon Cliffs.

However, there would seem to be no internal NT discussion and the project must be assumed to be "on".

We successfully made the point that it was vital to consult and win public opinion in Dover.

We recommended and they agreed to make and keep contact with :

DDC, in particular Planning and Tourism

The White Cliffs Countryside Project

Environmental groups

The people of Dover

There had been some contacts but they said they should be formalised.

Our primary objective at this stage was to learn as much as possible about the proposed development about which almost nothing is known in Dover.

The attitude of the three NT representatives was all sweetness and light.

The Project

Its uses are clear. The form is decided only to the extent of the design brief.

The uses :

A NT information centre. This is the most important. It will offer all types of information relevant to the site and also information concerning NT activity other than heritage buildings : Operation Neptune etc.

JG offered D.H.B. assistance, with information and material, for an information board relating to the Harbour.

A shop : Area \pm 35 m² out of a total development area of \pm 700 m²

Tea Room

Residence for 2

Workshop, machinery store, entrance lodge.

The Design

This is not a virgin site. There are the terraces foundations, skidding sheds etc.

A basic aim is to balance the development with nature.

A building which benefits from a view of the sea but is invisible from the sea.

A worthy building but not a monument

Parking : Total to be kept as now:

400-500 cars = + 2000 people

Coaches ? Access ?

Materials : a wide choice : to be a good response to the site.

Cost : ± £700,000

Will employ ± 12, some part time.

Problems : Security

Landscaping the entrance lodge.

Timetable :

Eliminating rounds have reduced the competing plans from 50 to 12.

The winner will be selected from 6 finalists in Jan. '94.

The finalists will be exhibited : we suggested at the Town Hall or at IMPACT and with a Visitors' Book for comments.

DDC will be represented on the jury.

Planning permission may be sought in Feb. '94

Work might start in October '94, to last 8 months

May 1995 opening, as the S.E. National Trust contribution to the NT centenary.