SHRA
Sovereign Harbour Residents Association
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Head of Planning
Eastbourne Borough Council
Eastbourne Town Hall
Grove Road
Eastbourne
BN21 4UG

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By e-mailto: customerfirst@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

Dear Sir or Madam

Planning Application 240561 Martello Tower 64

We commented on an earlier, very similar planning application for Tower 64 in October 2024, stating that although we received some positive feedback about the plans from members who would wish to see these historic buildings restored, we also heard concerns from residents living near to the Tower about several issues the development may cause. The principal concerns are:

Parking on the Beach

The proposal seeks approval for two vehicles to be parked on the beach alongside the tower, but we have not seen evidence or detail on how vehicles accessing the beach will be controlled and managed. The only vehicles allowed on the beaches are emergency services and Environment Agency-approved vehicles (replacing shingle and other coastline defence work). A concern is that if private cars are seen parked on the beach, others will try to follow.

How will the number and type of vehicles accessing the Martello Tower be controlled? If guests are given the key to the barrier on the access road from Pacific Drive, what guarantee and/or controls will be in place to ensure the keyholder closes the barrier once they have arrived or departed the holiday let?

Vehicles moving to and from Tower 64 on the North Beach must cross a pedestrian walkway without any traffic control. Residents are concerned that they will have to watch out for cars on the beach. We are confident that the broader population of Eastbourne does not want to see private vehicles start to encroach onto the beaches either.

Waste Removal

The new proposal states that “as often as required, the waste will be disposed of off-site by the user or the designated cleaning company in Eastbourne Household Waste Recycling Site, located at a five-minute drive [it is more like ten minutes] from the tower, in St Philip's Avenue.”

This is a bit vague. Can we really rely on “the user” to take their domestic waste to the recycling site? While we share the owner's and the architect's desire not to have waste bins outside the Martello Tower, the solution must be specific, controllable, and written into the conditions of any planning approval.

Control of the Type, Length and Management of Holiday Lets.
Local residents are extremely concerned about the Tower being used as a holiday let. Will there be any restriction on the number of lets per year or the number of guests per let? Also, will there be a fixed period when letting the Tower is not allowed, or will it be able to be booked all year?

Holiday lets can and do become anti-social and a residential blight if used as party venues and other large social gatherings. Whilst we respect and value the owners' assurances that the Towers will only be used by family and selected paying guests, there is no enduring or independent control over this situation. It is preferable that the change to residential use is restricted to the owner/occupier alone or that specific, defined and binding conditions relating to the use of holiday lets be incorporated into the application.

Loss of Privacy
Adding circular, 360-degree top-floor windows to Tower 64 will intrude on the privacy of the flats directly behind the Tower on Caroline Way, as Tower guests could have direct sight into their bedrooms and living rooms.

This situation could be resolved by reducing the glass windows and creating a 180-degree view out to sea and along the coastline. A 360-degree inland view adds no legitimate interest or value, as the back of the Martello Tower overlooks only residential apartments.

Lights
We have some concerns regarding the proposed external lighting around the Tower. Given the Tower's unlit location and the new external staircase, external lighting will seem essential. What type of lighting is proposed? Always on? Or motion detection? Will it illuminate every time a pedestrian, resident or animal walks past? This could create light pollution and disturb residences on Caroline Way and Eugene Way.

In closing, we reiterate that most residents favour sympathetic development and preservation of the Martello Towers. However, this new application fails to fully address valid concerns and objections to aspects of the development raised previously, and we trust you will consider these issues, understand the residents' concerns, and refuse permission for this development in its current form.

Yours faithfully,

Dave Rogers

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