

SRS article March 2015

Planning applications are at the heart of what the Society does. It scrutinises every application made to Waveney District Council - the local planning authority - but only comments on those it thinks will have an effect on the character and amenities of Southwold and Reydon.

Most applications are routine and uncontroversial but there are two current applications the Society is concerned about because it believes they could have long term effects on our community .

The first is in Reydon and involves an application by the Global office furniture company to expand outside the Reydon Business Park and build a large warehouse in the field next door. The company says this will create more jobs and there is no other suitable local site for expansion. They say that if they cannot get planning permission, they will have to think of moving the business to another part of the country and that will mean job losses

The Society on the other hand – whilst recognising the importance of creating and retaining local jobs – is also concerned that the site is in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and that if permission is granted it will set a precedent for future development. Even though the company has offered to landscape the area around the building, we have said in our submission to Waveney council that if permission is granted it would send out a signal to businesses and developers that you can build what you like where you like as long as you plant enough trees round it ! The effect of that would be felt across the whole of Waveney - not just in Reydon.

The other application causing concern is for a big underground extension beneath a Grade 2 listed cottage in East Street – at the heart of the Southwold Conservation Area. This is commonly known as an iceberg development, because most of the building is below ground and although common in London this is the first time we have seen it in Southwold . Our concern is not just that it represents a huge overdevelopment of the site but that – like the Reydon application - it could set a precedent for the future and have a devastating effect especially in our coastal resorts where space is at a premium. It has also in London led to disruption and damage to neighbouring residents and their houses - so much so that in at least one borough, Kensington and Chelsea, the local council has now banned any more iceberg developments. The Society's view is that the application should be resisted.

Finally a reminder that the Society's AGM is on Tuesday April 14 at Reydon Village Hall. This year's AGM is especially important as it's the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Society. Proceedings will start at 7 pm with a brief look back at those first 50 years and that will be followed a look ahead to the challenges of the next 50 years with a panel of experts who will be looking at issues like preserving the countryside, protecting the coastline and maintaining the area's unique character. That will be followed by the ever popular Excellence Awards where local people are recognised for their contribution to the community. The awards will be presented by the Chairman of Reydon Parish Council, Councillor Barrie Remblance.