

FATE OF A TUNBRIDGE WELLS PARK IS BEING DECIDED THIS WEEK

01 July 2008

A planning inquiry is under way to decide the future of Dunorlan Park, in Tunbridge Wells.

Senior Sunrise Living wants to build a giant retirement complex on the park but its first two applications were turned down by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

A third application was submitted in December 2007 but council officers did not make a decision in the designated eight-week time period.

So the firm appealed to the Government's Planning Inspectorate - which is now holding a public inquiry on the fate of the park in a packed council chamber at the Town Hall until Friday. A final decision will be made by the planning inspector Terry Phillimore in six weeks time.

If it is given the go-ahead, it would see the demolition of the four homes overlooking the park and the construction of a 99-room building, 43 of which will be specifically for Alzheimer sufferers. Dunorlan Lodge will be retained as a separate residential property within the application site, with the new building separated into five linked elements to "reduce the mass further".

**Public Inquiry: Tu. 1 July 2008 - Fr. 4 July 2008 – Sunrise Senior Living
Development adjacent to Dunorlan Park** (assisted living home - 99 apartments - for elderly people)

Readers comments:

Dear Sirs,

The Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum is against this planning application and opposes such development. We wish to make it known that we will be representing our views at the planning inquiry and will make every effort to stop such a 'blot on the landscape'.

The previous two comments on this subject are quite correct and should show to anyone that Dunorlan Park should be protected. The comments made are not unique and show that the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum is speaking with foundation and the backing of the people who enjoy the park. The plans and nature of such a development would considerably impact upon Dunorlan Park and should be rejected as soon as possible.

The Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum will do its utmost best to have these plans rejected but we cannot guarantee such a result. Readers who do not wish to see such carbuncles invading the parks and landscape features of Royal Tunbridge Wells should visit our website (www.townforum.org.uk) to find out how they can help the Town Forum in promoting and protecting Royal Tunbridge Wells for residents and visitors alike.

We LOVE WHERE WE LIVE. We need you to help ensure that.

Christopher Thomas,
Royal Tunbridge Wells

9 readers have commented

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Tunbridge Wells already has enough parks! maybe building on this one wouldn't be such a bad idea!! i'm obviously only joking - it would be a crying shame to develop any part of the park, be it all or a small portion.

Andrew Ford, TWells

I'm sure Mr Warwick will correct me if I'm wrong, but surely the whole reason the park is there is because it was originally the back garden to a whacking great big mansion situated above the colonnade where that rather underwhelming 60s box is at the moment. The new development merely returns the park to square one. The questions about congestion on Pembury Road are valid, though.

Andrew Pilcher, Hastings (but still working in TW)

they are not planning on building on the whole park - just the bits near Pembury road where there are existing buildings OVER LOOKING the park

Mr P, T-Wells

I am absolutely amazed by this proposal and staggered that Dunloran Park doesn't have historical protection of some kind! It's a beautiful park which has benefited greatly from the expensive and relatively recent overhaul it was given. It is part of the history of Tunbridge Wells and a very popular park, especially for families with children, and it should be preserved. I totally agree with Belinda too, the roads around it which lead to the A21 are already very congested without more traffic.

Caroline Sims, Tunbridge Wells

Isn't there enough infilling already?

Alan Bullion, Tunbridge Wells

I have lived in Tunbridge Wells and the surrounding areas all of my life. Quite frankly, I am astonished and outraged that this plan to ruin one of our few outstanding natural landscapes has even been given any consideration. Dunorlan has many attractions which draw all ages, from feeding the ducks and boating on the lake to leisurely walks and picnics on the lawns. How dare the council consider selling our beauty spot to developers. It is time we rallied around to stop this. There are already mass complexes that have been built, both for the general public and those of a retirement age which are not selling and have remained empty, sometimes years after development. Why on earth would we want yet more vacant buildings clogging up our beautiful town and becoming a target for vandalism? Tunbridge Wells is popular with all for it's stunning architecture and beautiful parks, however, the town is fast becoming over populated and we will soon lose everything this town stands for. When will enough be enough??

Vicky Cook, Crowborough

I visited Dunorlan Park for many years in my childhood. Now when I return 'home' visiting family I take my children to Dunorlan Park. It is part of Tunbridge Wells' history. Too many of our connections of old are being destroyed. Instead they should be maintained and celebrated. I always thought of Tunbridge Wells as a true Victorian town not a brick and concrete maze which so many of our old towns are now quickly becoming. You can go from South to North visiting towns and there is barely a difference between each. What a shame!

Emma Haworth, Lancashire

This park is a well used green space that we often visit, to have more building could possible ruin it's attraction. Also, the roads around this area are always congested, how would they cope with increased capacity?

Belinda Croft, Fletching, East Sussex