



The Counties Residents' Association

Protecting the interests of the community

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10 September 2009

Dear ,

The Serious and Imminent Threat to our Heritage: deadline 30 October 2009

We are writing to ensure that you are aware that the government's proposed revision to national heritage and conservation policy [PPS15] will abandon the protection which current national policy [PPG15] provides. The consultation document on this can be found at: www.english-heritage.org.uk//server/show/nav.21135.

The press release which the DCLG published on 24 July 2009 is glowing in its praise of the great improvements which PPS15 will bring:

John Healey, the Housing and Planning Minister says: *"Our historic assets are hugely important for local people and for the tourist industry and we need to conserve and protect them for future generations."*

Barbara Follett, the Culture Minister says: *"Historic places are a vital part of living communities. They inspire and delight those that live and work in them."*

Much of PPS15 is highly laudable. However, in the midst of many excellent proposals, is material which dismantles the level of protection which conservation areas and heritage have at present, under PPG15 3.19 which states: *"subjective claims for the architectural merits of proposed replacement buildings should not in themselves be held to justify demolition of any listed buildings."*

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In the consultation documents the DCLG defines significance as: *“The value of a place to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic.”* However, the proposed PPS15 HE9.10 states: *“Where loss of significance is justified on the merits of new development*” PPS HE 9.8 states: *“... it can be demonstrated that the material harm to or removal of significance is outweighed by the wider social, economic and environmental benefits, including climate change that will be delivered by the proposed development.”*

This new policy would mean that planning departments could put social, economic and environmental considerations above those of heritage and conservation, opening up the floodgates to unsuitable and often damaging development. Local authorities would get the short term gain of meeting government targets, while the community would lose the long term gain provided by living with heritage. The innate value of our historic environment provides wide social benefits too – civic pride, sense of place, culture, history – all of which are ignored in this new policy. This is a developers’ charter – not one for our communities, a charter which will allow much of our heritage to be destroyed – gone forever, for us and future generations.

Barbara Follett says of PPS15: *“This will be a major milestone in the Government’s Heritage Protection Reform.”* We believe it will be a major tombstone in the protection of our heritage and would be grateful for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

HELEN E ZAMMETT
Chair



*The Counties
Residents' Association*



THE WANSTEAD SOCIETY

NATIONAL PRESS RELEASE DISTRIBUTION LIST

Helen Davies	Sunday Times
Ian Hislop	Private Eye
Sheba Khan	Evening Standard
Andrew Gilligan	Evening Standard
Adam Ross	CPRE
Matthew Saunders	Heritage Lottery Fund
Marcus Binne	Times
Caroline McGhie	Daily Telegraph
Beth Hale	Daily Mail
Edward Hollis	Lecturer, author and journalise on Heritage
Maev Kennedy	The Guardian
Paul Gallagher	The Observer
Roger Horrabin	Daily Telegraph
Bryan Appleyard	Freelance
Jeremy Hunt MP	Shadow Secretary for Culture, Media and Sport
Caroline Spelman MP	Shadow Secretary for Communities+local gov
Baroness Warsi	Shadow Secretary for community cohesion and social action

LETTERS SENT TO

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HRH Prince of Wales	
Griff Rhys Jones	
Tony Robinson	
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Dr Heyworth	Director of the Council for British Archaeology
H Cohen MP	
I Duncan Smith MP	
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LETTERS SENT TO



The Counties Residents' Association

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Member All Party Cttee on Arts and Heritage
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