

Ramsgate Town Council Meeting

24th March 2010

I am here to speak on behalf of the Elms Avenue Residents Association and to present objections to the planning application to change the use of Satis House to that of a children's Home.

The applicants seek to house boys aged 11 to 18. Taken from their own purpose of function statement they declare that they seek to accommodate "highly vulnerable young people, predatory young people or young people unable to keep themselves safe". The applicants statement also refers to housing schedule 1 offenders. These types of offenders include those who have committed sexual assaults, criminal damage and assault.

- This proposal is totally inappropriate within a residential area

- The proposers have said they are amending or withdrawing the reference to schedule 1 offenders. To date this has not happened. They have stated to the press they have no intention of housing sex offenders, however
 - Due to child privacy, we will be unaware of the children's backgrounds, this will make the community fearful that offenders could be housed in close proximity to their own homes, families and children.
 - It is totally unacceptable to have such a home bordering Clarendon House school and near to other schools in the area.
 - Public safety and security and/or the perception of public safety or security will deteriorate as a result

- The proposed home will give rise to noise, nuisance, disturbance and more callers including as Acorn Homes expects, the emergency services
 - Acorn Homes have included in their statement, procedures for de-escalation, restraint, absconding and fire emergencies, which shows an expectation these will occur. This will impact on the surrounding houses and areas.
 - Satis House has previously been a care home and neighbouring properties suffered unacceptable levels of nuisance involving the police on a number of occasions

- Central Harbour Ward has the 3rd highest crime rate in Thanet, there is a correlation between looked after children and high crime rates as detailed in the Kent Child Protection Committee report.
 - We have problems with anti-social behaviour and drugs, it is not an area to house vulnerable children where they may be exposed to this or add to the problem themselves

- Acorn Homes do not have any children's homes, this will be their first and none of the people mentioned in their statement have experience or a track record of running this type of home

- They say they will promote an activity based programme but the choice of property is at odds with this as the only outside space is devoted to parking. If the parking is converted to garden space, the plot is still too small for the number of children housed there.

- Thanet has had more than its fair share of children's homes in the past, we shouldn't have to house serious offenders and other local authority's children

What is clear is the depth of feeling against this application from the surrounding areas, not just from Ramsgate but from across the whole of Thanet. An online petition has been signed by over 270 people against the proposal and more than 400 people have joined a facebook group, again opposing the application. Many, many more have submitted online objections on the planning site and/or written in objections to the council direct. Many residents have said they have never felt such strength of feeling from the community over one issue.

“A community at tipping point where this explosive mixture will have potentially serious consequences for those people who are placed there and the local community”

**Kent Child Protection Committee
Thanet Board of Inquiry**