

9<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

Mr Gary Lugg,  
Head of Planning,  
West Berkshire District Council,  
Council Offices,  
Newbury,  
Berkshire,  
RG14 5LD.

Dear Mr Lugg,

Ref: - Planning Application 07/0171/FUL.

I am writing in support of the appeal against the decision to refuse the above planning application for a floating boathouse at Beale Park.

I am a boatbuilder, I build and restore wooden Thames boats and, as such, I am very much part of a long and well established Thames tradition. In its heyday, Thames boatbuilders represented the pinnacle of fine craftsmanship and innovation. Today the same tradition is still very much alive albeit at a smaller scale. I am also a trustee of The Consuta Trust.

It is here, in my boatyard, that "Consuta" was rebuilt for the Consuta Trust. This project defined the importance and significance of "Consuta" to the Thames and the history of boat design in this country. Without question "Consuta" is an extraordinary steam launch, she is recognised nationally for her historic importance and her keepers, the Consuta Trust, have proven their ability to restore, maintain and exhibit her on the Thames.

Keeping a museum quality vintage steam launch afloat and in commission requires a very high level of stewardship. Few maritime museums have managed to achieve this with their exhibits, and are forced to keep craft under their care in buildings remote from the element that brings them alive. "Consuta" is now 110 years old, and thanks to the Trust, the public are able to take a trip in her and experience first hand the excitement of a powerful and beautiful steam launch in action. They can learn about the hull construction and understand why she is so fast and clean through the water, they can see the fire in the boiler, the engine turning and feel the pulse of the propeller pushing her through the water. None of this is possible in a static and sterile museum.

MEMBER OF



**Henwood and Dean Boatbuilders Ltd.**

Company No. 4555380

Registered Office: Greenlands Farm, Dairy Lane, Hambleden,  
Nr Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire RG9 3AS

Directors Colin & Lucie Henwood

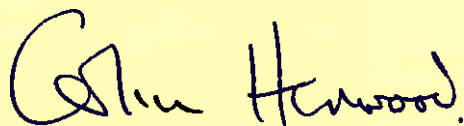
To date the Consuta Trust have not only rebuilt "Consuta" to a very high standard but have operated her on the Thames without the benefit of a permanent base. This situation cannot continue. At present, in the summer, she is moored on the main channel protected by a fitted cover. In winter, she is craned out and moved by road to a barn where maintenance work is carried out before she is re-launched the following season. These arrangements expose the launch to considerable risk from poor ventilation jeopardising the wooden hull structure and mechanical installation; the risk of wear and tear on a mooring exposed to normal river traffic and the considerable strain on the hull from repeated craning and transport. All these arrangements prevent access by the public and severely restrict the efficiency of the volunteers that look after "Consuta" during the summer and winter.

The proposed boathouse will address the issues of future maintenance and access to "Consuta". She will be moored without any part of the hull rubbing continually against the side; she will be well aired and kept ready for steaming. In the winter, she will be gently lifted inside the boathouse structure and carefully chocked up on a floor fitted under the hull where easy access will be possible for maintenance. At any time visitors can see her, learn how the steam plant works and become involved with her care.

Not only is the floating boathouse essential to the future of "Consuta", but it is beautifully designed and will compliment the lake at Beale Park. The application is simply for a boathouse in an entirely appropriate location that will care for an historic launch and allow the public first hand experience of an extraordinary part of our national heritage.

I believe that there is a responsibility on everyone who can influence the future of "Consuta" to understand the significance of this remarkable launch and the Trust that cares for her, and exercise that influence.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Colin Henwood". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Colin Henwood.