

Patrons  
The Rt. Hon. Lord Prior of Brampton PC  
Sir Timothy Colman KG  
M G Falcon CBE JP DL  
J G Bell CBE

Chairman Alan Bagley  
Secretary Laurence Monkhouse  
MA, MRTPI (Retd)  
Treasurer Chris Monkhouse



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7<sup>th</sup> February 2008

The Planning Inspectorate  
Room 3/20  
Temple Quay House  
2 The Square  
Temple Quay  
Bristol BS1 6PN

**Reference APP/W0340/A/08/2064920/NWF**

Dear Sirs,

Appeal by the Consuta Trust – Floating Boathouse on Beale Lake

I write as Honorary Secretary and Trustee to the Lydia Eva and Mincarolo Trust, a Charity which operates two historic fishing vessels as museums and memorials to the East Anglian Fishing Industry. Formerly I was for twenty five years Director of Planning to Waveney District Council; my Department was responsible for Development Control in substantial areas within the Broads National Park and the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and I therefore have considerable experience in the planning of areas with many problems and opportunities comparable to the Thames Valley.

It does seem to me that the decision to refuse the application of the Consuta Trust paid insufficient attention to the unique circumstances of the case. I have read the letters in support of the application from Martyn Heighton, Director of National Historic Ships, and from the River Thames Society, and will not reiterate the points put forward in these letters, save to say that I fully support them. I will rather speak from my own experiences.

The Lydia Eva and Mincarolo Trust was established in order to ensure that the steam herring drifter *Lydia Eva* would be restored and displayed in her home ports of Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft to commemorate the once great herring fishery. Subsequently we were able to acquire the diesel side trawler *Mincarolo* to represent the local trawling industry.

The *Lydia Eva*, like *Consuta*, is on the National Register of Historic Vessels, and so is comparable in status to a Listed Building. Both Great Yarmouth Borough Council and

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Waveney District Council recognise the importance of this ship – and the *Mincarlo* – to the history and cultural heritage of their areas, and since the foundation of the Trust have been generous with support, with small financial grants and the provision of land and moorings. In particular permanent moorings for our ships have been provided in both Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft with the aid of European Funding.

It seems to me that in just the same way *Consuta* is of great historic and cultural importance to the area of the Thames Valley in which the Appeal site is located, and arguably would in the same way justify positive support from the Local Authority. The West Berkshire District Council's website speaks of 'Fascinating Heritage' and the River Thames Society letter speaks eloquently of the place *Consuta* holds within this heritage.

The proposed floating boathouse is an imaginative solution of how to provide a building to meet special needs yet comply with local traditions. I am reminded of the solution which was found to a similar problem in Southwold, in the AONB, when provision was needed to house and display an historic Lifeboat, incidentally also on the Register of Historic Vessels. At first I feared that Planning Consent could not be given because of the effects on the AONB, but ultimately a fine Victorian Lifeboat shed which was surplus to requirements was acquired and relocated from North Norfolk to produce the perfect solution, enhancing rather than detracting from the historic Southwold Harbour scene. It seems the greatest pity that in the case of the *Consuta* the Local Planning Authority could not have been more positive and supported a solution which similarly could offer so much without any severe detriment to Planning objectives. I cannot see that the greater use of the waterway into Beale Park by a single vessel – which takes a long time to raise steam – can possibly affect local amenities and safety, nor the ambience of the AONB.

I do hope that the Inspector will support this Appeal

Yours Faithfully

Laurence Monkhouse, MA, MRTPI (Retd)  
Secretary and Trustee

