

Residents bring in lawyers over plan

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RESIDENTS of Sandbanks have brought in lawyers to fight plans to replace the Haven Hotel at the gateway to the millionaires' resort with a 'soulless' block of flats.

The opposition to the £250million project that will see the demolition of the historic Haven includes over 3,000 letters of objection.

The National Trust has also backed the millionaire locals by slamming the development.

The three-storey hotel was one of the first properties built on the sandy peninsula in 1880 at a time when there were no roads there.

In the late 1890s Italian engineer Guglielmo Marconi used the hotel lounge to conduct his pioneering work on wireless transmission to effectively establish the radio.

Planning consultant Richard Carr has lodged one planning application to bulldoze it and build a six-storey block of 119 luxury apartments that will fund the redevelopment of another two hotels on Sandbanks that are owned by the same company. Some 250 residents have mobilised to form the Protect Sandbanks action group.

The group, who include a retired



FIGHT: Residents in front of the Haven Hotel. Picture: Phil Yeomans/BNPS

solicitor, architect, town planner and film maker, have brought in a planning barrister to fight the plans and say they are prepared to go to court if necessary.

David Morley, the chairman of Protect Sandbanks, said: "Sydney Harbour has the iconic Opera

House, Poole Harbour gets a block of flats.

"The first sight for millions of visitors would be this out of scale, soulless tower block on the beautiful face of Poole Harbour. Yes there are some very wealthy people on Sandbanks but there are

some quite ordinary people who believe in keeping Sandbanks a beautifully unique place for everybody, not just those who live here.

"It would be completely wrong to say we are just a bunch of rich nimbys. We have consulted a planning barrister and as a result have written a letter to the local planning authority to say this application is unlawful. It is not right to have what would otherwise be an unacceptable development in one area just move to another.

"We think they should be separate applications dealt with on their own merits. The Haven Hotel sits at the entrance to the harbour. It is free for anybody to go there and enjoy a meal or a drink and take in the view."

The National Trust said: "We have significant concerns in relation to the proposed redevelopment of the Haven Hotel site and the height and scale of the proposed blocks. This includes the impact on the character and appearance of Sandbanks and the views and setting of the Dorset Area of Natural Beauty." If approved, as well as the Haven becoming flats, the Sandbanks Hotel would be redeveloped as a new five star 185-bedroom hotel and the Harbour Heigh as a 38-apartment hotel and spa. The plans have been submitted on behalf of the owner of the sites, FJB Hotels.