

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Date of meeting:	18/05/2016
Site:	Former Syngenta Site, Henley, Old Road, Fernhurst, Haslemere, West Sussex, GU27 3JE
Proposal:	Redevelopment of the site for up to 265 dwellings, including retention and potential extension of employment floor space, to include new public areas including a waterside amenity space, a multi-functional community building, a shop with scope for expansion if there is demand, children's play areas and access to the surrounding footpath network.
Planning reference:	SDNP/15/01551/PRE
Panel members sitting:	Mark Penfold (Chair) Graham Morrison Paul Fender Lap Chan Merrick Denton-Thompson Paul Murrain John Starling
SDNPA officers in attendance:	Genevieve Hayes Paul Slade
Committee Members in attendance:	Robert Mocatta Heather Baker Neville Harrison
Item presented by:	Catherine Mason Tony Edwards Julian Brooks Brian Comer
Declarations of interest:	None

The Panel's response to your scheme will be placed on the Planning Authority's website where it can be viewed by the public.

The SDNPA operate a transparent service, whereby pre-application and application details, although not actively publicised will be placed on the online planning register. This is unless the applicant gives reasons why the enquiry is commercially sensitive.

COMMENTS

	Notes
1.0 Discussion/Questions with applicants	<p>The Panel asked why the community garden has been positioned where it is; this area is both isolated and heavily shaded. During the last time the DRP saw this application, it was asked if a year-long shadowing study could be done – Has this been done?</p> <p>The Applicant said that there was some concern about take up of the community garden scheme. By positioning it where it is, the garden has room to expand if take up is high, but isn't using up valuable space if take up is low. Also, its South/South West orientation works quite well, and the tree cover to the North helps to protect it from the wind, which the applicants felt justified its positioning.</p> <p>The Panel raised concerns about the threat to trees in that area.</p> <p>The Panel asked about the main circular street that runs around the development. As the street runs around the development it goes through a series of pockets of development (Henceforth referred to as “pulses”) – How do each of these pulses relate to the primary route? What do they contribute to the character of the development as a whole? Concerns were raised that the breaks in character between each pulse would be an issue, and that the relationship between the pulses and the green fingers seemed arbitrary.</p> <p>The Applicant explained that the current alignment was designed to try and minimise damage done to trees at the entrance of the site. Meanwhile, the character was intended to show a gradual rise in intensity of development as you travel around the site. This has evolved as part of an effort to create more of a streetscape, rather than an urban area. Other efforts to create this feel include the addition of a larger amount of undercroft parking, so as to avoid having to create areas of hard standing in order to facilitate parking. Regarding the road itself, the applicant said that they had felt that keeping the road broadly as it is would be the best strategy.</p> <p>The Panel asked particularly about the split-level housing on the left hand side of the road in the first pulse, which appeared to be facing the rear of the houses on the opposite side of the road.</p> <p>The Applicant said that they'd face perimeter walls, with some softening built in.</p> <p>The Panel asked the applicant to explain if they were comfortable with the way that the final pulse of houses on the left hand side of the road were oriented – At the moment, they do not address the street directly, instead being oriented towards the South.</p>

	<p>The applicant responded that the living area of these houses is intended to be on the first floor, and that by aligning them to the South instead of the road would improve the views, and tilting them like this would give them better quality lighting. It will also provide better views of the water on the far side of the road.</p>
2.0 Panel Summary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The members of the Panel have visited the site on more than one occasion. Understanding this site with its powerful topography and mature landscape is an essential starting point for any proposal. The Panel is convinced that this project must be landscape led. The quality of the existing landscape and its positive extension into the site could provide both the determining character and be the key that unlocks the latent attributes of a remarkable site. 2. The Panel acknowledged therefore that the strategy of using the landscape – first to encircle the site, second to divide it into a number of separate parts, and third to manage the interventions to positively characterise a number of distinct places could produce a rewarding outcome. As an emerging strategy, it needs considerable further development. It has the potential to be an exemplary development and requires a greater coherence and confidence to fully realise the prospect of a very particular sense of place for this special site. 3. The Panel felt there was considerable promise in the diagram that strengthened the green perimeter fringe with two strong north-south swathes of landscape effectively dividing the site into three parts. With the loop road placed carefully on the plan, a series of individual sites and projects could emerge. These places or pulses could, by managing the different proposed typologies, produce a sequence of enjoyably distinct but related places that together form a unique community in an extraordinary setting. 4. The Panel suggested that the masterplan ought to look carefully at the compositional intention of the space between the buildings and the spaces formed by the landscape as these will determine the character of the development. Each of the places or pulses should be distinct in themselves but should also come together to form a coordinated whole. The clarity of this idea and the care with which it is executed is key to the success of the overall project. 5. The Panel had a number of specific concerns about each of the individual areas. As individual places, they were yet to achieve a strong sense of place or, indeed, make sufficient reference to the particular qualities of the landscape that might help define them. It was suggested that within the masterplan, each of them should have a more specific and better defined character that together found a more compelling narrative about their place in the group. 6. More specifically, the Panel suggested the area to the east of the centre – the first pulse – should have greater clarity. This was the entrance to the site that provides the

	<p>first impression. Moving on to the second pulse, the Panel was not convinced that the V shape with its garden wall facing the street providing enough presence. With the third, it suggested that the two sets of flats on the northern edge, surrounded by the green fingers, could be brought together to better manage the access and to make a single group by removing the second green finger in favour of expanding the third green finger. Further round into the fourth pulse, the Panel felt the way in which the corner is dealt with could be better defined. It commented that looking across the driveways of the stepped houses facing east was a less than adequate response to a key moment of the masterplan. With the fifth and potentially final pulse, to the south of the water, the Panel believed this missed the opportunity to make a singular place. It described the orientation of its buildings as arbitrary and suggested that a crescent form could be looked at to better align the houses with the space. The Panel suggested 'The Paragon' in Blackheath might offer a direction for how this space might be thought about.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Concerning the placing of the apartments within the masterplan, the Panel suggested that further justification was needed to explain the location of the flats on the northern perimeter. The Panel felt it might be more logical if the flats were brought in to the centre of the development, nearer the Pagoda. Though it acknowledged the point that the topography allowed a particular configuration of parking in under crofts, it wasn't convinced that this was sufficient reason to work against a more natural social intensification towards the centre of the site. 8. The Panel felt that the eastern end of the site within the loop road needed a stronger idea. The road pattern seemed expedient and unresolved. The Panel felt there was an opportunity here to create a special place with real identity and character. 9. Finally, the Panel considered that, though the site is seemingly enclosed and separate, it would be wrong to view the site in isolation. It will be important to demonstrate a stronger sense of connection to the broader context than a route to a local pub. It asked, for example, what people might see when they walk along the public right of way along the north of the site as the visual appearance of the flats will strongly influence the quality of that space. Similarly, it was concerned about the message given about the arrival into the site as this would be the defining first impression. The Panel believes this is a scheme that should be seen as properly integrated into the as yet undefined context. 10. Overall, the Panel was keen to see more detail and it looks forward to seeing how each of the built typologies can contribute to each of the space. More information is required on the flats and their contribution to the plan and the Panel asked for a series of strategic cross sections to help in judging the success of the design of each of the
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	<p>individual areas. It suggested that Sketch-up modelling of the individual pulses will also be helpful. The Panel would also like to see a more detailed vision for the new settlement as the proposal develops, indicating the sequence of spaces and their relationship with the heavily defined landscape structure. The applicant needs to develop and express the character of the scheme as a whole and show how this can be achieved incrementally and as one progresses through the site.</p> <p>11. Notwithstanding these comments, the Panel believes the masterplan is now heading in the right direction and that a strong and appropriate scheme can emerge. It believes there is a promise of a masterplan in which a development pattern can not only be unique to its place, but also carefully integrated into the dominant feature of the site, it's very particular landscape and topography. The Panel looks forward to seeing how the scheme develops and how it measures up to this promise.</p>
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