

## **SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK DESIGN REVIEW PANEL**

Date of meeting:	18/1/2017
Site:	Plumpton College, Plumpton
Proposal:	Development of master plan for new, replacement buildings on college campus and college farm. Plus provision of improved access to main campus, revision to parking facilities and sports and recreation facilities.
Planning reference:	SDNP/16/04980/PRE
Panel members sitting:	Graham Morrison (Chair) Mark Penfold Andrew Smith Luke Engleback Lap Chan Stephen Johnson William Hardie
SDNPA officers in attendance:	Genevieve Hayes (Design Officer) Paul Slade (Support Services Officer) Vicki Colwell (Senior Planning Officer- Case Officer) Lillian Wakely (Planning Assistant) Mark Hayward (Ranger) Vicky Lawrence (Countryside and Policy Manager)
Authority Members in attendance:	Neville Harrison
Item presented by:	Mike Barber
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
<b>1.0 Discussion/Questions with applicants</b>	<p><b>1. The Panel noted that the last strategic document was a Landscape Strategy from 1996 and asked whether anything new had been produced since.</b> The Applicant said that no new documents have been published, but there have been new thoughts and developments being considered that are in line with the strategy. They went on to explain that they have hired the Landscape Architect Nick Harper, of Harper Landscape, to produce a new, updated master plan in light of this. <b>The Panel said that one of the concerns is the strategy for expansion. On the site, it was suggested that they were expecting a 750,000 increase in turnover, compared to an existing of 16,000,000, which equates to an increase of about 5%. Year on year, this would mean the college would grow to about 40% bigger than it already is; the Panel asked if that expansion is represented in the plans.</b> The Applicant said that their strategy does account for expansion.</p> <p><b>2. The Panel noted that the whole area to the east of the site is a heritage asset, then asked whether this is accounted for in the plan.</b> The Applicant said that they had appointed an archaeology team, Archaeology South East, to do a lot of work in this area. Their intent was to refresh the information they have on the heritage of the site and devise plans that are suitable to that. <b>The Panel questioned whether Moat Barn, as a listed building, would be included.</b></p> <p><b>3. The Panel asked if a tree survey had been done on the site.</b> The Applicant said that there had been a tree survey and that they're currently in the process of producing a new, up to date one.</p> <p><b>4. The Panel asked if there was a topographical survey.</b> The Applicant said that there was and that the plan has been based on this, but they're aware that the plans on display don't show this and acknowledged that they'll need to do sections in order to display it.</p> <p><b>5. The Panel asked if the LVIA is going to include...</b> The Applicant said that when they have applications at Plumpton, the people of Streat often express their concerns about the effect of development, so they try to build applications that will work for them.</p> <p><b>6. The Panel asked whether heritage maps would be</b></p>

	<p><b>attached to the plans.</b> The Applicants said that they would attach have the plans attached, this being one of Archaeology South East's goals. <b>The Panel then told the Applicant to display their understanding of the landscape context suggested they could acknowledge how those assets sit in the landscape.</b></p> <p><b>7. The Panel asked whether the Applicant has any plan for renewable energy.</b> The Applicant said that they have undertaken improvement work lately elsewhere to provide Photovoltaic panels and ground source and air source heat pumps. They also said that they currently use an oil boiler, but they want to phase it out in favour of a biomass one currently in place in the workshop building.</p> <p><b>8. The Panel asked where the materials for the development will be sourced.</b> The Applicant said that they hope to use the same materials as the original build, fresh field lanes oversized bricks, as much as possible. As an organisation they have a preference for using local providers and contractors wherever possible.</p> <p><b>9. The Panel asked about the plans for the changes to the car parks.</b> The Applicant said that they were asked to do a car parking audit. They have now done that and in turn their landscape architect is now looking in to ways to integrate the parking in to the site. They hope to be able to break up the parking in to clusters, change the orientation of parking to reduce glare from windscreen reflections on key viewpoints and similar options to lower impact.</p> <p><b>10. The Panel asked what the material of the flat roof is.</b> The Applicant said that it was a single plywood membrane. <b>The Panel asked whether this was an opportunity to create a living roof.</b> The Applicant said that the college isn't keen on creating a living roof, as they have already installed one and found that they are often difficult to maintain. Additionally, the roof will be very exposed, and getting the right planning for it would be a challenge. <b>The Panel asked if the roof would need to have any plants installed on it for sewage, drainage or other amenities.</b> The Applicant said that all of these would feed directly in to the mains system, which has been upgraded to accommodate, with the build not intended to be individually self-contained.</p> <p><b>The Panel asked whether there were any lessons to be learnt from the construction of the West Wing.</b> The Applicant said that the College is overall quite happy</p>
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	<p>with how the West Wing progressed, but acknowledged that there has now been further development of some of the renewable technology that was first used in the West Wing, so they want to try and integrate this technology in to the new build in even greater depth. They noted that this is an inherently different construction than the West Wing, as it's just 20 bedrooms, but they do intend to use the same materials and styles as the West Wing, with stock brick and Parham Red brick for detailing.</p>
<b>2.0 Panel Summary</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Panel was grateful for a well-organised and successful site visit. It was clear that the College was very well run, professional in its outlook and thoughtful about its care for the wellbeing of its students.</li> <li>2. The Panel acknowledged that the main application under consideration was for a simple, seemingly straightforward, student residential building. But it was also clear that the focus of the Panel's attention should necessarily include the master plan for the whole college. The context for the building is as important as the building itself and, notwithstanding this was a relatively small application in itself, it raised a number of more general issues for a site so visibly prominent both locally and from the South Downs Way.</li> <li>3. The Panel observed that the planning of the College to date had been relatively ad-hoc decision making process based on perfectly practical individual decisions but without a clear urban structure or ambition. The Panel believed the current application had reached a 'tipping point' and that the College as an institution now needs a well-considered master plan that will lay out their development in a way that captures and complements the character of the place. It must concern itself with the spaces between buildings, the relationship to the Grade I listed Church and positively embrace the nature and quality of the routes between both its buildings and its centres of gravity. The current application exposed the difficulties in looking at a plan only from the point of view of cumulative growth.</li> <li>4. The Landscape around the site is spectacular. The Plans for the future of the College, however, make little reference to the significance in relation to this landscape. The starting point for a master plan should be both an appreciation of the impact of the College seen from the escarpment and a clear idea about the quality of spaces formed by the collection of the buildings as a group. The College is the scale of a village or a monastery and has outgrown its relatively functional approach to its additions.</li> <li>5. The Panel considered there could also be some clues to establish a character that existed in the topography, the drainage, the roof forms and the orientation of the buildings. The Panel was emphatic that the roofscape of the College should be considered as part of the landscape. Its grain, its materials and its form all contribute to a sense of place. It shouldn't all be the same and it should express the scale of the larger buildings as well as the intimacy of the smaller</li> </ol>

	<p>ones.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. The Panel was concerned that the listed Church at the heart of the college is not confidently embraced. Instead of the Church providing a focal point it seems that it has been 'ring-fenced' and treated as a hindrance to be avoided. A 'cordon-sanitaire' of landscape obscures it from view and there is an assumption that development outside of the red circle on the plan is far enough away to avoid harm. Instead of making a successful context for this unique building, it is more or less ignored. The Panel understood that the College would want to avoid causing harm but it felt the current approach was an unfortunate misuse of an extremely valuable asset. If the Church could be effectively embraced and integrated in to the institution, it could become a beautiful focal point for the college.</li> <li>7. The Panel was equally concerned that the need for extensive car parks required a more convincing strategy. Again, this seemed to be coped with in a similarly ad-hoc manner to the planning of the rest of the College. To be effective here and remove the impact of parking on neighbouring views of the site, the parking needs to be more dispersed and more integrated, possibly deeper with the site itself. The Panel acknowledged that planting trees would help to screen the problem, but it felt this was simply a disguise rather than a solution to the problem. The Panel felt a radical rethink of the strategy was required to prevent parking areas from dominating views of the site.</li> <li>8. The Panel was also concerned about the access to the site. It appeared that what is proposed was another expedient decision. It noted that there are two entrances to the college, so exploring the alternative entrance to the college could potentially provide some interesting solutions to existing access problems. The sense of arrival, the first impression and the nature and detail of the roadway are all matters that impact on the quality of the place. The Panel would like to see a stronger strategy employed here and suggested that it could be interesting to look at historical maps of access to the site.</li> <li>9. Turning to the detail of the application, the Panel commented on the architectural problem of simply copying the details of the existing adjacent buildings. On the face of it, this might be seen as a low risk 'in-keeping' approach but the composition as a whole is not as straightforward as that. The effect of yet another addition to an unmodulated terrace presents a risk of diluting the impact of what is already there and making less significant the architectural moves that the College's original architect had made. Simply stretching it out loses clarity and definition. Furthermore, this building is crucial to the composition of the site as a whole. This is the first building visitors see and it therefore has additional responsibilities to the composition. Here a balance needs to be struck between emphasis with introduction and courtesy with continuation.</li> <li>10. In conclusion, the Panel suggested the time was right for a fresh look at the planning of the college. It would like to hear</li> </ol>
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	<p>back on how the College could contribute to its setting, how it might be more visually coherent in itself and how it could generate a real sense of place. The Panel suggested one way of thinking about this might be considering the College more as a village as the site shares some similarities of scale and structure of a village typology. The Panel encouraged the Applicant to take a look at landscape sensitivity, to consider that buildings have substantial effects on the landscape character and to look at ways to embed functional aspects in to the landscape. The Panel felt that such positive consideration would only positively impact on the way the College represented itself and was perceived.</p> <p><b>II.</b> The Panel asked the Applicant to return to them again in future if possible. It believed this was a site that was very full of potential and it was not too late to get the right approach that would benefit both the College and the National Park. The Panel has considerable respect for the work of the College and would like to see the site developed to the fullest potential. It believes that landscape is the starting point and when the proposal returns for further consideration, it would be helpful if a landscape architect could not only have been appointed but that time had been made for them to have a real impact on the thinking.</p>
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