

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Date of meeting:	18/10/17
Site:	Old Malling Farm, Lewes
Proposal:	A residential development comprising 220-240 dwellings
Planning reference:	N/A
Panel members sitting:	Graham Morrison (Chair) Lap Chan Andrew Smith Nicolas Pople David Hares William Hardie
SDNPA officers in attendance:	Genevieve Hayes (Design Officer) Mark Waller-Gutierrez (Design Officer) Ruth Childs (Landscape Officer) Vicki Colwell (Major Planning Projects Officer) Paul Slade (Support Services Officer) Johnathan Dean (Education Officer)
SDNPA Planning Committee in attendance:	None
Item presented by:	
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A Panel member said that they had done a quick drawing of the proposed road pattern and noted that they usually see a clear hierarchy, but they didn't see one here. How does the road pattern contribute to the site identity? The Applicant explained that highways wanted the main route to loop around to provide for easy emergency vehicle access, after which smaller roads branch off, then in to shared parking. The Panel asked if there was only one access point. The Applicant said that there was only one vehicular access point with the exception of the emergency route, which is only going to be available for the emergency services if required. The Panel asked the Applicant how they were going to make it clear that drivers are expected to turn left after entering the site. The Applicant said that it would probably be by way of a change in materials, saying that they don't feel the division will need to be explicit. The Panel noted that there appeared to be some separation of typologies. Will the larger houses be at the south end of the site? The Applicant said yes. The Panel asked for clarification with regard to the houses in the middle of the site. The Applicant explained that they were terraced houses. The Panel noted that this means they've got houses in a ring road. The Applicant agreed with this and said that market research has suggested that houses in a position like this can sell better. The Panel noted that the road seems to face mostly on to gardens, rather than garages, and the houses are being pulled away from the road edge with paths. The Applicant explained that they're trying to work out a balance of moving cars to the back of the houses without leaving the street empty. They feel that if all cars are moved off the street, it can feel dead, so they're working on a combination. The Panel observed that there would be a lot of hard surfacing; how would the Applicant deal with runoff? The Applicant explained that they were going to have a sustainable drainage system designed for the site. However, they noted that the road would not be adopted, so the road and drainage system would have to be looked after by a management company set up for the site.

	<p>The Panel asked where the swales would go. The Applicant said that the main location would be the green arm running in to the site.</p> <p>The Panel observed that this arrangement could impede parking.</p> <p>8. The Panel asked whether the Applicant wanted to retain the existing treeline field boundary. The Applicant said that this was their intent.</p> <p>9. The Panel asked the Applicant about adoptability of the roads. The Applicants said that they were probably going to go with non-adopted roads, re-iterating that they were planning on them being dealt with by a management company.</p> <p>10. The Panel asked where the Applicant was going with their assessments of local styles. The Applicant said that they were using these mostly for inspiration on materials at the moment. They had not nailed down the style they planned to go to and would like to see the Panel again for their input on this once the plan is better developed.</p> <p>11. The Panel asked what consideration the Applicants have given to sustainability on the site. The Applicants said that they were looking at installing footpaths to provide non-vehicular access to the town and the houses would likely use air-source heat pumps.</p> <p>12. The Panel asked how the houses were oriented. The Applicant said that they were oriented to avoid north-facing gardens where possible.</p> <p>13. The Panel noted that it was striking how low density this site appeared. They then asked if the Applicant had considered creating a higher density build in order to free up more room for green space. The Applicant noted that they had a lot of constraints, including flood risk, a nearby badger sett and the nearby church to the south. They feel that the current density is suitable and are concerned that increasing the density could damage the setting.</p> <p>14. The Panel noted that the masterplan was 2D and asked if they'd tested it against the topography of the site. The Applicant said that they had tested it in their head but not undergone any formal testing. However, formal testing of the topography against the masterplan is one of their priorities going forward.</p> <p>15. The Panel said that they hoped that one of the most important things about this scheme would be the green spine(North/South). However, they feel that the importance of the green spine lapses. They asked what the strategy behind this decision was.</p> <p>16. The Panel noted that the plan was going to be very dependent on levels falling away. The Applicants agreed that it was, but said they were</p>
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	confident that this would be the case.
2.0 Panel Summary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Panel opened by saying that they are aware this is the early concepts of the scheme and that it's going to see future iterations. 2. However, the Panel was disappointed by the lack of conviction displayed when the Applicants spoke about the site. When they visited it earlier in the day they felt like it was a wonderful site, but during the presentation they felt like the Applicant focused only on its constraints, not its opportunities. The Panel then explained that it's much easier to back a scheme when the applicants behind it seem to believe in it and if the Applicant can display more passion and identify some of the things that make the site special, it could go a long way in selling this scheme. 3. The Panel identified that one of the unusual traits of this site is that it's hermetic, with only a single access point. They recommended the Applicant think about what they could do with this. The Applicant had previously spoken about ecologically enhancing the site, something that the Panel felt wasn't reflected in the plan, but this could be an opportunity for that. Consider enhancing the edges of the site or working on a circular pedestrian route around the site that could showcase ecological improvements. 4. The Panel noted that the green Spine, running South to North, could get a clear view of Hamsey church, but at present that's not possible. They suggested that the plans should be designed to draw in views of the church, not block them out. Additionally, they warned that the green north/south spine seems to get dissected heavily by roads; avoiding this dissection if possible would improve the quality of this feature. 5. The Panel recommended that more consideration be given to the point of arrival, as it currently provides no clear sense of arrival, nor a clear indication from the road pattern that the main route goes to the left, rather than straight on. As this site has only one access point, that access point is a key feature in its characterisation and will have a disproportionate impact on people's opinions of the rest of the site. 6. The Panel observed that, if you were to look down on the site, you'd see a lot of roofs, with the view back from the church being raised as a particular point of concern. Will this roofscape reflect Lewes? This will be a key point to develop over the course of this application. 7. The Panel felt that the road hierarchy needs further consideration; changing the surface isn't enough on its own. They should be a clear change in the sense of character as you transition to the smaller roads. 8. The Panel noted that the Applicant was clearly interested in using a variety of styles. Whilst this is a good decision, the Panel warned against sprinkling different styles throughout the development; focusing the individual styles in specific areas presents an opportunity to create character for the site as well as variety. The differing typologies of buildings will need to help inform the

	<p>understanding and hierarchy of the development.</p> <p>9. The Panel noted that designing large housing schemes like this is difficult, with so many different things to get right. They advised the Applicants not to let the detail overwhelm them and detract from the importance of place making in design. They suggested that one of the key steps forward in this will be to get more information on the topography in order to improve the scheme.</p> <p>10. The Panel encouraged the Applicant to make their workings out clear; seeing the reasoning behind their decisions helps them to understand how they reached those decisions and makes it easier to provide helpful advice.</p> <p>11. The Panel finished by saying that they would welcome the opportunity to provide further guidance in future.</p>
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