



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

**A design workshop was held on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January 2021 for three sites in Easebourne; allocated for residential use within the South Downs Local Plan**

1. Easebourne Primary School, Easebourne Street, Easebourne  
Construction of 20 new homes, including the conversion of a former school building - SDNP/20/04747/PRE
2. Cowdray Works Yard, Easebourne Lane, Easebourne  
Construction of 20 new homes and the construction of 1500sqm of commercial buildings; including the retention of one (existing) building - SDNP/20/04751/PRE
3. Land at Egmont Road Easebourne  
Construction of 20 new homes - SDNP/20/04754/PRE

**Design Review Panel:** Kay Brown (Chair)  
Chris Blandford  
William Hardie  
Maria Hawton-Mead

**SDNPA officers in attendance:** Ben Terry (Design Officer)  
Vicki Colwell (Case Officer)  
Tania Hunt (Support Services Officer)

**SDNPA officers observing:** Mark Waller-Gutierrez (Specialist Lead)  
Jodie Blake (Conservation Officer)

**Item presented by** Dominic Chapman – JTP  
Chara Iacovidou – JTP  
Stavros Skordis - JTP  
Nicola De Quincey – Nicola De Quincey Architecture and Conservation  
Lionel Fanshawe – Terra Firma Consultancy Ltd  
Alice Cooper - Terra Firma Consultancy Ltd  
Emily Bird - Terra Firma Consultancy Ltd  
Jacob Goodenough - Nova Planning Ltd

**Declarations of interest:** None

The South Downs National Park Design Review Panel is an independent assessment of development proposals by a panel of multidisciplinary design professionals and built-environment experts, who aim to inform and improve design quality in new development. It is not intended to replace advice from the planning authority or statutory consultees and advisory bodies, nor is it a substitute for local authority design, landscape advice and community engagement.

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.

## Summary

On behalf of the South Downs National Park, I would like to thank you for bringing your proposal to the Design Review Panel. We are incredibly grateful to review a proposal so early in the design process. We would like to thank you and your design team for their presentation and the supporting information you provided to us; it created numerous points for discussion and generated some interesting ideas during the session.

Overall, we support your initial approach: the spirit of place was well demonstrated throughout the workshop session. The Panel feel that you should now challenge and capture that within the supporting documentation, refining your vision and developing the concept plans with confidence in your analysis.

There is a true spirit of place and the potential to be brave, with fantastic opportunities for creativity and for building interesting communities on all three sites; the potential for each site to be enhanced by their own community space for sitting, playing, growing + storage should not be missed.

**Vision** – The vision for each site should be reviewed and fine-tuned, particularly in identifying what special qualities make the sites unique and what response, in design terms, can be made to protect and enhance those special qualities.

There is a great opportunity for creativity, despite the constraints on each of the sites.

**Sustainable construction and addressing climate change** should be an integral part of the design rationale. The siting, orientation + fabric of buildings, and if, for example, a community energy source is viable, would affect building typologies and the layout. We would also like you to explore the idea of car sharing, especially where implementing local parking requirements would undermine the rural or intimate character and appearance of the final designs.

**Hierarchy of built form** – We also felt a hierarchy of built form could be used to create visual interest on each site. You have started to identify elements in your form-finding process, and you should continue to review local examples: the arrangement of buildings in elevation, vertical elements, gables, chimneys, scale, and the junctions between buildings can add finesse to the final design. The plans (at the moment) are largely orthogonal and yet the development pattern is not (except for the post war development).

**Community** – Building communities was a strong theme coming out for all three sites – this can be articulated in several ways, primarily through both building design and by enhancing the community space offer for each site.

## Notes

### Key points from the discussion on **Former School Site**

- How the site sits in its wider context and what give it its sense of place?
- The location of the site and its relationship with Easebourne's historical core
- The setting of the Grade 2 listed school building and headmaster's house
- Important views from a public right of way (1117) and the extent to which the new development can be melded into the existing landscape
- Hydrology, topography and protecting existing green infrastructure, especially along Easebourne Street
- The Conservation Area, including the school buildings (listed). Consider how the new development will positively contribute to the extent it might become part of it in the future.
  
- The panel felt there were two distinct parts of the site, separated by the strategic gap. The retention of the gap is supported; we would like to see more on green infrastructure, and a clear statement on design, function + benefits for this space.
- The siting and orientation of buildings should maximise passive solar gain and limit overshadowing from trees.
- The precedent study should be on contemporary 'rustic modernism'.
- You should also consider how soundscape (historic school use, water) could be used to influence the character areas and design choices.

### Key points from the discussion on **Cowdray Works Yard**

- The site occupies a central location and has had many uses
- The outward views to the downs are very important
- There are two distinct faces of development: Easebourne Lane and Cowdray Yard
  
- There are more prevalent human influences - an industrial heritage - embrace this and use it to inform the character of the new development.
- You have a good understanding of hydrology, particularly, the drainage channel within the site – We would like you to continue the story beyond the site boundaries.
- Movement (vehicular) between commercial + residential area may well need to be addressed in future iterations.
- Views from the site are incredibly important. What can you see from the site? You should identify and retain important views from the site.
- Could more of the existing structures be retained, i.e. the small unit on the eastern boundary?
- Embrace the rural industrial character. Use existing building geometry and forms to influence the design of new buildings.
- Building orientation is generally good on this site.
- Multipurpose communal spaces – plant room (energy and horticultural), bike storage, car share spaces etc – to reinforce the community feel generated around the site.

### Key points from the discussion on **Egmont Road**

- The relationship with the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings on Easebourne Lane on one side and the post-war housing on the other side.
- Forecourt at the front of the site that is being leased as a car park to the school opposite.
- There is a sense of calm within the site.
  
- Orientation of buildings should safeguard future development of the car park
- There is great potential for passive house design on this site
- Opportunities to adopt a communal housing model, where dwellings, entrances + balconies face each-other.
- Terraced homes would represent a more efficient use of land and this arrangement would improve the thermal value.
- It might be worth considering one vehicle entrance to free up green space.