

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

Date of meeting:	16 December 2021
Site:	<b>The Malthouse, Daveys Lane, Lewes</b> SDNP/21/05639/PRE
Panel members (DRP):	William Hardie (Chair) Maria Hawton-Mead Steven Bee James Fox
SDNPA officers in attendance:	Rafa Grosso-Macpherson (Design Officer) Tania Hunt (SDNPA Support Services Officer)
Case officer in attendance:	Steven Lewis (Development Manager Lead)
Applicant and Project Team:	Paul Burgess (Lewes & Co Planning Consultants) Robyn Butcher (Terra Firma Landscape Architects) Martin Gray (ECE Architects) Mark Sanderson (The Heritage Advisory)
Declarations of interest:	None

**The South Downs National Park Design Review Panel is an independent assessment of development proposals by a panel of multidisciplinary professionals and 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, or be a substitute for local authority design and landscape skills or community engagement**

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## **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 and look forward to participating in further DRP sessions in the future.

We would like to thank you and the applicant 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.

The panel's main concern is the scale of the buildings, in particular its height. It is advised that the project team look at various viewpoints from in, and around Lewis, and see how those views inform the shape, scale and positioning of the buildings within the scheme. Allowing for a true response to the landscape, in terms of views. It is felt that if the analysis of views were done at this stage, it would be found that some views are blocked by the excessive height of the buildings.

The panel are not entirely convinced by the loss of the historic building, as it allows for a historic reference to anchor the site. Thus, the retention of the building and its adaptation should be further considered. To create a replica historic building is very challenging. However, to reference the historic building to inform in terms of the poetic reference and sculptural nature of the building, could respond well to the context. For example, the bowed windows that run along both sides of the building, which feature in historic photos and are shared on several other buildings nearby.

The panel had deep concerns regarding the podium, although there is understandable logic with regards to parking. However, this is not a good response to the landscape and the precedent it will set for future developments. It is felt that there is a fundamental balance that is altered once the public realm from ground level is jumped up and made private realm above. A ground floor public realm solution would be preferred.

The panel felt that the current scheme was too condensed. Contributing to this the scale of the 2<sup>nd</sup> malthouse, which appears to be too big. Reducing the parking spaces to create more amenity space, and abandoning the podium could help with this. The site is in a very sustainable location and parking should be minimal/absent.

The joining block has been pushed forward causing all the amenity space to be north facing and in shadow. This might reduce the mass of building, but there is more opportunity in abandoning the podium, allowing for public/shared public/private realm to the south, and more light into the site.

The panel concluded that this area of Lewes is rapidly changing from industrial to mixed residential/employment. The panel are encouraged that the scheme is looking at frontages, the future and what it will be potentially fronting onto. The creation of public space, and improving the public realm has already started with the brewery and the coffee roasters contributing to the spirit of place, more of this is encouraged moving forward. The panel also ask that the project team consider how the site will fit into the surroundings and set a positive precedent, while contributing and responding to the future landscape.

## **Landscape**

- Views – further analysis of key views needs to be undertaken from in, and around Lewis to see how the scheme impacts on these views (in and out). Include views from quite far away. Consider the views within the industrial estate within this analysis.
- Podium – consider abandoning the podium to create more amenity space.
- Parking – consider the number of spaces needed vs the contribution amenity space would have to the landscape. Reduce number of parking spaces.
- Linking in and out of the site – there is a hard edge in the design with the raised area cutting off the ground floor area and stopping links in and out of the site.

- Public realm and spirit of place – this is encouraged within the site. Reducing car parking and increasing amenity space will help with this.

### **Sustainability**

- Zero carbon targets – Passive House planning package modelling is recommended to ensure the units meet the energy targets. Passive House standards for fabric are recommended to ensure the homes are affordable to run and keep the quantity of renewable technologies to a minimum, making it more affordable to build.
- Is there suitable space for solar panels on roofs to reach energy targets? This needs to be considered in the design phase in order to reach the zero carbon energy targets.
- Passive solar gain – consider how this will be introduced as the current design shows few south facing openings.
- Solar shading – Consider introducing solar shading to prevent overheating.
- Dual aspect – look at ensuring all flats are dual aspect as set out in the design approach. Some in the current scheme are single aspect.
- Future climate – ensure the site is designed to be resilient to the next 100 years of climate change. Consider incorporating overhanging eaves, resilient materials, enlarged gutters.
- Design strategy for flooding – consider whether the site will be resilient to flooding and what kind of property protection will be incorporated.
- Heating – consider a communal heating system and where the plant room will be located.

### **Design**

- Height and size of build – it was felt that the buildings are too high. Examination of the historic building and views in and around Lewes needs to be reviewed and how it fits into the landscape. The height of the original malthouse should inform the maximum height of the scheme.
- Referencing the pyramidal roof form on that part of the site that accommodated the malthouse injects some historic resonance. Using this motif elsewhere on the site is unjustified pastiche and should be avoided.
- Density – the scheme is felt too dense in its current design.
- Windows – retain the spirit of the historic reference of the original windows.
- Podium – it was felt that this should be abandoned allowing for more amenity space to the south.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> malthouse appears too large and inappropriate from a historical context.