

SDNP/15/01303/FUL: Land At Southdowns Road Lewes East Sussex

The Friends of Lewes Society agrees that this site should be developed, principally for housing and supports the provision of one and two bedroom housing and the inclusion of affordable housing. However, it is disappointed at the low level of affordable housing planned and believes this is a missed opportunity to significantly contribute to meeting the demand for this type of housing in the town. Furthermore it does not support the proposal to locate the affordable housing in a separate block and considers it would be better integrated throughout the overall development.

The Society supports the massing of the residential blocks, which define a firm edge to the development and how it relates to the setting.

As the site is very visible from the river and from the hills on either side of the town it is particularly important that the design is good and worth of the town's inclusion in the National Park. For this reason the Society objects to the use of flat roofs throughout the development and considers they should be pitched on the long elevations and on the corner blocks. This would provide more interest to the design elevations for a residential development. The Society supports the proposed use of mansard bays but objects to the use of asymmetrical dormers which are not considered appropriate for the area; conventional dormers with pitched roof would be preferred.

The Society objects to the proposed removal of poplar trees in Blakes Walk and replacing them with 35 apple and pear trees. Felling will reduce the site's canopy cover, and the proposals are not compliant with BS 5837 concerning trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. The tree survey submitted with the application (doc 483506) put them in class B and recommends retention and protection during construction. There is currently a fad for planting fruit trees and the town already has a surfeit of apples come autumn, and at best the fruit from these will simply litter the ground. At worst they will be pulled from the trees, and the trees damaged.

With respect to the commercial development, the Society would prefer the whole of the site to be used for housing development. However, it realises that the extant District Local Plan provides for the site to be mixed development. It does not support the current proposal for the commercial block to look the same as the residential development and suggests a different design should be adopted to clearly distinguish it from the rest of the development.

Overall the Society objects to the design of the development on the grounds that it is not one that fits comfortably into the fabric of this part of Lewes by having regard to the surrounding area.

Friends of Lewes
April 2015