



For the attention of Nicola Martin, Case Officer, South Downs National Park

26th July 2024

Dear Nicola

Subject: RE: SDNP/23/02973 Redevelopment of Lewes Bus Station.

We are writing in response to Mark Waller-Gutierrez's letter dated the 04th July (a copy of which is attached for convenience).

We recognise that a variety of architectural styles over a long period of time have contributed to the particular character of Lewes, especially within the Conservation Area.

It is therefore considered essential that any redevelopment of this important site within the Lewes Conservation Area needs to satisfy the following two criteria: -

1. That any proposal needs to take account of both the constraints and opportunities of its particular historical context with the objective of preserving or enhancing this part of the Conservation Area, as required by section 72 (1) of the 1990 Act.
2. That any proposal needs to be an "Exemplar" of modern architecture that not only complements the existing historic setting but also makes a significant improvement to the quality of the 'Public Realm'.

In our opinion, and indeed those of respected organisations and the public at large, are of the view that the current revised planning application for this site does not satisfy either of the above criteria, and should therefore be refused on the same grounds as reason 3 of the previous planning application SDNP/22/02197.

In addition, there still remains no better deliverable bus interchange than the current bus station (reason 1) and there is no provision of affordable housing contrary to reason 2 of the decision notice. As you are aware the Friends of Lewes have objected to both the original planning application and to this current revised application.

In this respect, the Society considers that the 'problem' began when the Generator Group submitted a proposal that was clearly an over-development of this sensitive site. What effectively has followed is a repeated re-interpretation of this original approach incorporating relatively minor changes, resulting in the submission of the current scheme.

By contrast, the Society considers it necessary to abandon this scheme and for the SDNPA to consider a completely new scheme starting from a 'clean slate', retaining the vital bus interchange, which has not been shown to be satisfactorily replaced with a safe, attractive, convenient and deliverable alternative.

In this respect, the Society would strongly recommend that the SDNPA's own Conservation Criteria for this area (as advocated in the "SDNPA Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan" for Lewes, approved on the 12th October 2023) should be fully addressed in any proposed redevelopment of this important site, rather than being completely ignored.

We again request an explanation of the relationship between your two responses to the planning consultation dated the 2nd and 17th of January 2024. Additionally, we would ask for clarity on the introduction of non-traditional materials and extensive window openings, steel and glass balconies, standing seam metal roofs, within the historic core of the conservation area and how that will aid future adherence to the established conservation principles.

The SDNPA required a subservient building and whilst you refer to the extra setting space and adjacent, existing taller buildings, this is plainly incorrect as the proposed block of flats encroaches up to the edge of the highway beyond the footprint of the existing building forming openings in the listed flint and brick wall. In terms of height the new building is over 6 storeys, substantially taller than all the other buildings in the street which are one, two and three storeys. Even the Eastgate Baptist church tower reaches just 21.490m compared to the 24.025m of the new building. This confirms the unacceptable scale of the proposal which can only reinforce the CAAMP consultants' recommendation to remove ugly and unsympathetic developments from the boundaries of the conservation area.

We look forward to your reconsideration of this damaging development and the detailed response to the points of clarification

Yours sincerely,

Roger

Roger Maskew
Vice Chair Friends of Lewes

Peter

Peter Earl
Trustee and Member of the Executive
Committee

cc **Mike Hughes, SDNPA**
 Mark Waller-Gutierrez, SDNPA
 David Boyson SDNPA
 Alex Moojen Lewes District Council
 Ruth O'Keeffe, Chair of Friends of Lewes