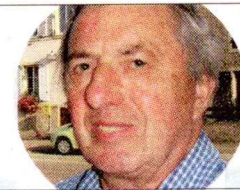


Horsham Society

David Griffiths



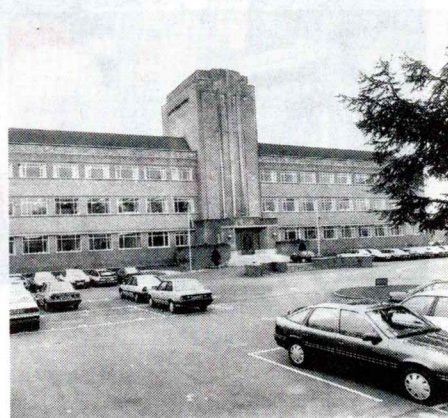
Do designers heed concerns of public?

The Novartis site in Horsham remains the subject of much conjecture for Horsham residents. To date West Sussex County Council has organised two 'consultation' periods, at which proposals were made available for the public to inspect, and representatives of WSCC and their consultants were on hand to answer any questions.

Whilst this approach appeared to be laudable, many questions still remain unanswered. Recently, councillor Louise Goldsmith of WSCC wrote a letter in the West Sussex County Times, in response to a recent Horsham Society article, which served to answer a few questions, but failed to put much meat on the bone!

It appears that WSCC is intent on forging ahead with the scheme, giving little thought on the connectivity of the development to the town, or addressing the inherent problems that will undoubtedly arise of increased traffic congestion on the surrounding road network. Seemingly the cart is being put before the horse.

To ensure their proposals for the site will be viable, WSCC should employ



The Novartis building - a good example of Art Deco design from the 1930s.

professionals to undertake surveys and assessments of the area in accordance with the (DMBR) Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

This should be completed before the commencement of any preliminary design works, to fully assess the impact of the proposed scheme on the existing road network and to ascertain any improvements that may be required - has

this been done and if so is the information available?

Any traffic surveys should also take into account increased traffic from the proposed North Horsham scheme, the Holbrook development, the newly proposed Lidl supermarket, or indeed any future developments in the area that Horsham District Council may approve, including the Novartis site.

With little or no connectivity of the site to the surrounding area or town, the development can only become a poorly serviced island. Thought needs to be given to this as a matter of urgency, which may well change the proposed site layout. Consideration should also be given to linking the scheme to the railway station.

We have previously expressed concerns at the proposed design for the Novartis site. Whilst the design of the existing buildings and avenue will not be appreciated by everyone, nevertheless it is a good example of Art Deco design from the 1930s, and as such we feel that it should be retained, including the gatehouses, which the present scheme indicates as being demolished. Furthermore the avenue, which is lined with blue cedar trees should

be retained in its entirety, including the replacement of any missing trees.

We believe the design should be developed to ensure the existing features of the site, namely the buildings and avenue of trees are enhanced and highlighted, not lost within a jumble of modern residential structures of random heights.

Horsham Society, of which their committees comprise a number of professionals with a design, development and construction background, represent the opinions of many local residents.

Consequently Horsham Society have contacted both WSCC and HDC, expressing the wish to be involved in the evolution of the Novartis development. Will either body heed our request, which will allow the development to be embraced by the local residents?

The Horsham Society is concerned about the past, present and future of the town. It seeks to promote good planning and design for the built environment and open spaces. Membership of the Horsham Society is open to anyone who shares these concerns. For more information, visit the website www.horshamsociety.org or phone 01403 259038.