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**Horsham Society,**  
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RH12 1TD.

11th January 2019.

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Horsham District Council,  
Planning Department,  
Parkside,  
Chart Way,  
Horsham,  
West Sussex,  
RH12 1RL.

For the attention of: Mr Jason Hawkes - Case Officer.

Dear Sirs,

Re:- Proposed Development at Novartis - Planning Application - DC/18/2687

Horsham Society welcomes the proposals of West Sussex County Council (WSSC) to develop the Novartis site and bring the area back to life. However, the site was originally proposed as a 'world beating and life sciences' campus. This was downgraded to the provision of new innovative and research space and the creation of high-end employment. The current application, includes some 25000 sq. metres of commercial space and possible employment for 1500 - 1780 people. Additionally the application includes the construction of up to 300 dwellings at the western end of the site. However, the submitted Planning Application DC/18/2687 is but a pale shadow of the original concept.

Horsham Society supports the reuse of the central building but has a number of concerns that require clarification before the Society are able to endorse the scheme:-

- 1) Retention of the central building is supported, however the vista of the main building, gatehouses and blue cedar tree lined avenue must be retained and enhanced. The trees must be reinstated and the gatehouses and gates retained, or specific design briefs provided for replacements.
- 2) The traffic management proposals raise significant concerns both locally and for the wider town context. The traffic assessments have been too restricted in scope.
- 3) Transport and connectivity are poor on this location and should include a crossing of the railway line as a condition, improved pedestrian and cycle access beyond the site, in order that Horsham, as a town benefits from the development.

- 4) Horsham District Council Planning Policy calls for the site to be used for higher education and then as a backstop solely for employment. The current proposals conflict with this policy.
- 5) Horsham Society appreciates that a reference to **Good by Design** has been included in the submission documents. However, this publication highlights aspects concerning phasing dates and

**Expansion on these various points follows:**

**1) Retention of existing building, gatehouses and blue cedar lined avenue.**

The central building is a classic example of Industrial design of the Art Deco period, dating from the 1930s and is rightly locally listed. Horsham Society consider that the main building, including the gatehouses, gates and tree lined avenue should be retained in their entirety, to preserve the heritage of the site and be incorporated sympathetically into the proposed development. To ensure that the scheme would be one of which all parties can be proud, the designs for the new elements of the scheme must be designed in detail at this stage of the project.

The Heritage Assessment confirms that the gatehouses are contemporary to the main building, and designed by the same architects. They have been constructed in the same brick, with a central brick chimney stack, echoing the clock / water tower of the main building. Furthermore the assessment states that between the gatehouses are two sets of brick gate piers, surmounted by Art Deco light fittings and with the original iron gates, all of which remain in situ. It has been suggested that the gatehouses are in a poor state of repair. Unless a structural engineer has deemed them to be unsafe structures, they should be repaired. If found to be structurally unsound and beyond repair, they should be demolished and replicated. The Heritage Statement states that - 5.2.8 - "The gate lodges contribute to the strongly symmetrical formal entrance to the site and make a modest, characterful contribution to the local context. The gates in particular are an attractive features of the site". Given the strength of these arguments, how can the Heritage Assessment possibly reach the conclusion that the loss of the gatehouses and with them the gateway and the symmetrical view be negligible? We strongly contest this inexplicable conclusion.

**2) Traffic Management.**

The 18.6 acre Novartis site is bounded to the South and East by mainline railways, and to the North by Parsonage Road and to the West by Wimblehurst Road. It is surrounded by residential areas, through which all approaches to the site will have to be made. In order to assess the viability of the site and before any major design works are progressed, traffic surveys should be carried out in accordance with the Design Manual for Bridges and Roads (DMBR), to assess the impact of the proposed scheme on local road networks and to ascertain any improvements that may be required to the road network to accommodate the new development. These surveys should be undertaken within either a 1 kilometre or 5 kilometre radius of the proposed scheme. The Horsham Enterprise Park traffic Assessment has been undertaken by Hampshire County Council (HCC), on behalf of WSCC. However, seemingly HCC have not taken into account the findings of the Transport Assessment carried out as a part of the North of Horsham Development, or taken into account the impact of future developments, such as Holbrook Club

or Lidl. The HCC report does highlight problems at peak times with both the Wimblehurst Road / North Parade / West Parade (junction B) and the Wimblehurst Road / North Heath Lane / Parsonage Road junction (junction C), but does not fully investigate other junctions in the area or provide solutions to the problems that will inevitably be caused by the increase in traffic. It is proposed to access the commercial element of the development via the entrance in Parsonage Road. However, despite the close proximity of the existing site entrance in Wimblehurst Road to Junction C, the proposal is to access the residential section of the development from this existing entrance, which we believe to be totally inappropriate, and consider the scheme should be accessed from a new entrance to be formed in Parsonage Road, in addition to the entrance proposed for the commercial development. We believe the report does not investigate the road network sufficiently.

### **3) Transport and Connectivity.**

The provision of adequate pedestrian and cycle links to Horsham town must be an important consideration. If these are not discharged to the benefit of the inhabitants of the development, the site would become an island. We believe that consideration should be given to constructing a pedestrian and cycle crossing of the railway on the West boundary of the site, terminating in the grounds of the WSCC Collyer's College and linked to Hurst Avenue. This would follow the desire line from the site to the town centre and provide a direct connection. The scale of the site development must benefit Horsham as a town, with improved links and routes which overcome, not reinforce, its boundaries landlocked by the railways lines. For users of public transport, the bridge would also provide a direct link to Horsham railway station, via Hurst Road.

### **4) Horsham District Council Planning Policy.**

The proposals put forward by West Sussex County Council are contrary to Horsham District Council Planning Policy. This states that the site should be used for higher education until 2021 and thereafter for combined training and education purposes. If not used for education, the longstop would be to use the site solely for employment. It would appear that this current application does not comply with the constraints of the HDC Planning Policy. How does HDC intend to overcome this matter?

### **5) Good by Design.**

Horsham Society have recently produced a design guide entitled 'Good by Design', which seeks to improve the standard of design of building projects in Horsham. Sections 1 to 4 cover major developments, such as Horsham Enterprise Park and we commend the design team for including this publication as a reference document. There are a number of key factors unresolved:

#### **Section 1 - Master Planning.**

Horsham Society ask for clear phasing and dates for the project - none are proposed, and the Design and Access Statement says that the "phasing programme has not yet been determined". We ask for links between the different uses of the site and surroundings, as no such links are shown. There is no commitment to transport connections and furthermore the bridge linking the site to Horsham has been dismissed. Identification of design styles should be indicated. There need to be design briefs for the

buildings in order that the architectural design can be of the highest quality and controlled by the planning authority with community input - not the developer.

Section 2 - Environmental, Social and Historical.

We ask that important views be maintained or restored, such as the view of the tree lined avenue from the gatehouses, and not dismissed as negligible.

Section 3 - Enhancing Biodiversity.

The proposals read well and include the protection of existing habitats and the creation of new ones. Such proposals need to be fully funded. We ask for a firm and funded commitment to biodiversity and these proposals, for which there would need to be a fully funded biodiversity management plan to protect and enhance habitats.

Section 4 - Appropriate Mix of Uses.

Developments need to meet local requirements, one of which is an access across Horsham to provide a scheme that benefits the whole of Horsham and not just the development.

Whilst Horsham Society applaud proposals to develop this site, and in particular the provision of new employment opportunities and high-end jobs, we must object to the scheme until our queries are satisfactorily addressed.

Yours faithfully,

David Griffiths. (on behalf of and secretary to Horsham Society Planning Sub Committee)

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