

Tel: 01403 264548.

Horsham Society,
82 Worthing Road,
Horsham,
West Sussex,
RH12 1TD.

12th October 2018.

West Sussex County Council,
Novartis Site (consultation),
Wimblehurst Road,
Horsham,
West Sussex.

For the attention of: Sean Grove.

Dear Sirs,

Re: Novartis site, Horsham, West Sussex - consultation.

On behalf of Horsham Society I am writing regarding the proposals for the Novartis site in Horsham. Many of our committee members took the opportunity to visit the 'drop in' at Holbrook Club and consider the proposals, which we have now reviewed. As a result the Society have a number of concerns. In preparing the master plan for this 18.6 acre brownfield site, we consider that West Sussex County Council and their planning consultants have dismissed the concerns of local residents, the limitations of the area in which the site is located and the importance of the heritage of this site.

The site is bounded by mainline railway lines on the South and East boundaries, which will prevent additional access and egress for the proposed development. Wimblehurst Road and Parsonage Road form boundaries to the North and West sides of the site, and these roads are linked with a mini roundabout at the North West corner. There is a considerable flow of traffic on these roads, including cyclists and additionally three bus routes. At peak times large queues form, and this traffic problem can only increase when the 'Liberty', the North of Horsham development commences. This problem can only rise to unacceptable levels with the proposed Novartis development.

It is essential that transport is a fundamental consideration of WSCC and their planning consultant for both the long and immediate terms of the site. This would relate to long and short journeys, for business, shopping, schools, medical services and leisure. They should look beyond the boundaries of the site and identify desired routes and short cuts for travel (rat runs!). Access for pedestrians, cycles and to public transport are critical for the long term health of the community. They must be encouraged to incorporate these into the design, but not as an afterthought.

The site was designed and constructed in the 1930s for CIBA, and is a classic example of Art Deco design of the period. The main building, gatehouses and the avenue, which is lined with blue cedar trees were originally carefully planned to form this classic design which should be preserved in its' entirety to form a part of the new development and our local heritage. However, both the West Sussex County Council and their planners appear to have disregarded the importance of the site. The intention is to demolish the gatehouses and replace with residential housing. Furthermore, there are several trees missing in the avenue and which should be replaced. However, the master plan indicates that these voids will be infilled with buildings. Such proposals are unacceptable as the site should be retained as originally conceived without the removal of certain elements, to preserve the heritage, and any new build sensitively introduced.

In developing the master plan, the planner should ensure that the scheme meets local requirements. Speculative development should be avoided and separate or unconnected communities, to encourage a sense of community. Sustainability should be encouraged by building in flexibility and adaptability to the buildings. The development should enhance local quality and ensure that it has no detrimental effect on either the community or environment.

Major developments, such as this have a significant impact on biodiversity, so careful self-critical design, protection, enhancement plans and management plans are essential. Whilst Novartis is a brownfield site, it is essential to protect habitats and avoid major hedgerow loss. The inclusion of new green infrastructure and a commitment to maintenance should be a priority. the master plan should include a firm commitments to biodiversity, the enhancement and provision of habitats and environmental mitigations.

We trust that the views of Horsham Society and those of local residents will be considered, when reviewing the master plan.

Yours faithfully,

David Griffiths. (secretary to Horsham Society Planning Sub Committee)