

A Response to the revised Kingston Wharf planning Application AWDM/0204/20 from the Shoreham Society

Given the constraints of the site there will always have to be a compromise between meeting the assessed need for housing and enhancing the built environment in Shoreham.

At present although the developers have made some improvement to the original design we feel that the local community are not getting enough in return both in visual design and in public space.

As a “gateway” project the proposals are an abject failure; the first visual on arriving from the East near the lighthouse presents a high brick wall from road to river saying “keep out”. It is possible that an iconic new design at the Howard Kent site would redress this implied statement but the Planning Committee and Planning Officers must make every effort to ensure that good design is one of the main issues at the forefront of their decision making.

As for all of these projects, an individual’s perception of the acceptability of the design is subjective, but based on the previous, lengthy consultation exercises with the independent Coastal Design Review Panel and its support before these current enhancements it is as good as the Free Wharf development.

Our more detailed comments are listed below.

1. The revised design is an improvement from the original design however:

The breaking up of the buildings into three distinct blocks is an improvement but from a distance will appear to be a ‘ribbon of blocks’.

The blocking ‘ribbon’ design of the development provided by the need of the necessary units to make the scheme viable does not allow permeability from the Brighton Road and distant views for Shoreham Beach Residents. Taller buildings would be a better approach opening up more public realm and riverside amenity for all and creating a more varied silhouette. A stepped scheme, even if it meant that the central section of one or two of the blocks going up to nine storeys, and some of the massing reduced on the northern section would reduce the immediate impact the neighbouring properties opposite and create more positive distant views from the beach and the downs.

2. The new proposed articulations of the elevations take away some of the ‘blockiness’ of the buildings, but the design could also benefit from some sinuous curves, not just softening the corners, perhaps on the roof upstand.

Some of the proposed brick detail is welcome and the design of the enterprise building should be improved, perhaps linked by similar brickwork to the housing.

3. There is a vital need for ‘sustainable’, mature, marine tree planting on the north side alongside the Brighton Road to break up the impact of the ribbon buildings and mitigate air pollution.

4. The residential external raised gardens have been greatly improved, and from the southern end, the development feels very open and inviting. However, the local community will not benefit from the amenity spaces proposed, as they are for residents use only.
5. The current scheme currently offers an improved and widened pavement (for pedestrians and cyclists) & a lovely river walk path, which is great, but takes you to the back of Easistore. We appreciate that eventually the aim is for the proposed river walk to join with other future developments, but how long is this going to take? What if it never happens?
6. A cafe was once proposed on this site has now. Could one of the 'link' raised garden areas be accessible by the public and not just residents? Or the west end of the river walk end with a play area, therefore eliminating the dead-end that is currently being proposed? A cafe should be included in the development perhaps incorporated into the business / enterprise centre if the development cannot free up any space from residents. Play areas for children are also important.
7. We support the amount of affordable/social housing to be provided above the policy compliant 30% of affordable homes to be secured through s106 legal agreement and by access to affordable housing grant funding in a strategic partnership with Homes England to deliver an additional 70% affordable housing (a total of 92 social rented, 163 intermediate – all much needed).
8. Developments on the Western Harbour arm must include the riverside walk as far as the yacht club and a new sea wall. Creating future access to the river frontage behind the wharves will be a definite positive.
9. Even the slight innovations towards the development becoming carbon neutral should be seen as a positive step.
10. The agreement on an acceptable sum for health facilities required by CCG will be important, as will contributions regarding off-site highway provisions and other detailed conditions being met.

Yours sincerely

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Vice-Chair
On behalf of the Shoreham Society