

Cllrs Rufus, Kitcat, Deane & West  
% Kings House  
Grand Avenue  
Hove BN3 2LS

Planning Committee  
Brighton & Hove City Council  
Hove Town Hall  
Norton Road  
Hove BN3 3BQ

21st February 2011

Dear Members,

**Re: Planning Applications for the site of the former  
Royal Alexandra Childrens' Hospital**

We are writing to express our views on the four applications by Taylor Wimpey for the site from where the Royal Alexandra Hospital used to operate.

**Demolition of all buildings — Applications BH2010/03324 & BH2010/03325**

We strongly object to the applications which would demolish all the buildings on the site. The neighbouring communities overwhelmingly want to retain at least the main buildings at the front of the site. These applications ignore that view, and also the planning brief for the site which calls for retention of some of the buildings.

The quality of the proposed design for the new build, especially where it replaces the major existing buildings, is of insufficient quality and distinction to justify demolition.

There have also been concerns expressed by the community about the introduction of a new pharmacy to the area through these proposals, which could risk the viability of existing, well-liked local pharmacies.

In summary, our objections to the demolition applications are based on:

- No justification for demolition (HE10)
- Exploration of viable alternative uses has not been exhausted (HE8)
- Inappropriate scale and design of building (QD1 and QD2)
- Adverse impact on conservation area (HE6)

We urge you to refuse these applications.

**Conversion of the main building — Applications BH2010/03379 & BH2010/03380**

The proposed conversion option is by no means perfect. But we do acknowledge that Taylor Wimpey have, finally, been responsive to the views expressed by the communities we represent. Since the pre-planning consultation there has been significant work to tackle a variety of issues.

The application before you addresses, but doesn't completely satisfy, the concerns of neighbouring residents on Dyke Road, Homelees House and Clifton Hill. Some of the improvements offered, especially in relation to Clifton Hill, are only in the conversion scheme not the full demolition scheme.

We recognise that Clifton Hill residents, in particular, still have concerns regarding the bulk, overlook and shading from the proposed new build blocks. We would welcome further moves by Taylor Wimpey to address these, but note they have made some improvements already.

Ideally we would hope that all concerns could be addressed, and that the quality of design offered was higher. However, in these matters a compromise has to be found so that the site does not degrade further and lie derelict any longer.

One issue which remains to be addressed is that of the GP surgery. Cllrs Kitcat and Rufus have long worked with community associations, the GPs and NHS to seek a way forward. Since the issue arose, and the first applications for the site were considered some years ago, there has been considerable change to the provision for GPs in the area. The small Queens Road surgery has become a larger operation within Boots. A completely new provision is the GP walk-in clinic at the top of Queens Road, by Brighton Station.

So, as the surgery have acknowledged, the size of premises they require is smaller than first mooted. We are grateful that Taylor Wimpey have done the work on viability and layout to consider how a surgery might fit into a conversion scheme. Their view is that they could accommodate either a GP surgery or affordable homes. From the information we have been given about the costs involved, we reluctantly accept Taylor Wimpey's position.

As the NHS have stated that they are examining other potential locations for the surgery, and the owners of the surgery's current site are in no hurry to sell, we believe the surgery's future is secure and not dependent on space in the Royal Alex re-development.

Furthermore taking into account that the Royal Alex site presents the only way to add affordable homes to the area for the foreseeable future, plus the importance affordable housing is given in our local planning policy, we believe that the affordable units must take precedence over a surgery on this site.

Finally, if permission is granted for the conversion scheme, we would ask that a condition is applied so that work must commence on both the new build and conversion simultaneously. This would be to ensure that the retained Lainson building was not left vacant for even longer whilst the new build were done and sold.

With the above provisos, we ask you to agree these planning applications.

Sincerely,

**Cllrs Jason Kitcat, Sven Rufus, Pete West, Lizzie Deane**  
Representing Regency Ward and St Peter's & North Laine Ward