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### **Planning Application BH2006/03429 for the King Alfred / RNR Site**

I am a long-standing resident of Hove and wish to state my objection to the proposed development of the King Alfred site on Hove seafront. I have already made my views clear about the previous Planning Application BH2005/05594. Despite the outcome of this earlier Planning Application, the proposals have been re-submitted and although altered, remain largely the same.

Originally the people of Brighton & Hove were to enjoy a new sports centre with some housing development on the site. Now the proposals will impose many housing blocks that conflict with the character of Hove seafront and the surrounding area.

The original idea for a new or refurbished sports centre, with an “enabling development”, has turned into a large residential scheme.

My comments are based on the model and information presented last year as well as the recent planning documents available to me now.

#### Basis of Planning Application

I do not see any evidence of attempts in the Planning Application to seek Housing on alternative sites in Brighton & Hove even though the undertaking in this respect made at the Policy & Resources committee meeting of 5 October 2006<sup>1</sup> was well reported. Despite comments to the contrary, I do not believe that Planning consent can be granted for the proposals in their current form. The people of Brighton & Hove need to see proposals that reflect the alternative sites for Housing.

#### Site

According to the map provided in the Planning Documents, the boundary of the King Alfred site will encroach on the seafront and even adjacent streets. I am eager that a traditional amenity and public right of way such as the seafront are not interfered with and object strongly to any changes to the seafront caused by the proposed development.

I understand that during construction some of the surrounding area beyond that which is indicated

by the site boundary (red line) will be used for construction materials. This or any encroachment on surrounding areas and loss of amenity is something I very much object to.

### Impact on Wider Area<sup>2</sup>

I am someone who has been involved with the Ramblers' Association for over 40 years continuously along with other organisations with an interest in the countryside. Therefore I take a keen interest in the local countryside in general and the South Downs in particular. I object to any sight of towers that would interfere with the views enjoyed whilst one walks in the Downs.

### Public Realm

Much publicity surrounding the development proposals concerns what has been called the 'Public Realm'. I do not wish to address here the details of sculpture, shrubbery or surfacing etc. that will be situated in such an area. Uppermost in my mind is the question of who owns this 'Public Realm'. If it is to be truly *public* then it should belong to the citizens of Brighton & Hove and this should be made clear at the earliest stage. We must not follow the lamentable example of Jubilee Square, Brighton where it transpires that it is private property on which the public do not have full rights.

### Housing

Many public comments have been made about the contribution the proposed development will make to "Affordable Housing" in Brighton & Hove. The type of apartments offered as part of the proposals seem to be nothing more than "rabbit hutches" of which we have quite a number already in Brighton & Hove. The proposed development will do nothing to meet the great demand in the City for family homes.

### Transport

A development of this scale presents a major challenge to our already strained transport infrastructure and highlights many concerns.

I am concerned that at a Policy & Resources Committee meeting in September 2005, the City Council stated that £1 million would be provided for a sustainable seafront transport service. I note that this is now included among the Section 106 items by the developer and cited in their glossy brochure. To my mind this is a matter that is the prerogative of the Council and not the developer.

I am surprised to note that visitors will be made "aware of the various restrictions on car use and the advantage of using alternative modes of transport"<sup>3</sup> when large events are planned. As a frequent user of public transport myself, I am in favour of initiatives to encourage more use of it. However the proposals are for a Leisure Centre with sporting facilities. This by its nature attracts people with equipment which will require transportation. Perhaps the kind of procedure suggested would be more appropriate for a different kind of venue such as a concert hall. I do not believe that the facilities to deal with participants at sporting events proposed for the development are adequate. The section of text that I quote from makes clear the problems of developing a site that is not suitable for its proposed use.

The A259 is a busy road linking various communities along the South Coast. This is a road of strategic importance within our transport infrastructure. I am troubled by the idea that for dropping off and picking up passengers, coaches and taxis will only be served by a lay by that is on the A259 itself. I would have expected that for a development that claims to be of world standard better facilities away from the A259 would have been planned.

The following comments refer to sections of the document  
SPG 10 King Alfred/RNR Site: Planning Brief

Text referred to in this section is copied below as part of the footnotes.

Section 6.2<sup>4</sup> : It seems to me that the proposed development does not respect the character or height of the Victorian buildings on the north side of Kingsway, Hove. These proposals will, by reason of height, scale and location fail to respect the existing character of the area and will dominate and overwhelm the surrounding Conservation Areas.

Section 6.3<sup>5</sup> : All structures seem to have been squeezed onto the site and that any routes or vistas through the site are small or very narrow indeed.

Section 6.4<sup>6</sup> : I must dispute the claim that the proposals represent an “attractive piece of townscape”. It seems to me that the effect of the proposed development due to its scale will be to fracture and disrupt the existing town centre rather than enhance it. It is inconceivable that the proposed development serves to “link” the King Alfred site with the current centre of Hove more than 400 metres away.

### Financial Implications

Early in 2006 there was a report by the District Valuer which highlighted issues about the financial viability of the King Alfred proposals. I remain concerned that these issues and other general issues about financing of the King Alfred development have not been properly addressed. Local politicians have been prominent in their statements to residents that the proposed Leisure facilities would be provided at no cost to Council Taxpayers. I doubt this and remain concerned about the potential for a serious burden that will be left for Council Taxpayers to bear.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, I contend that the proposals are not worthy of Hove and when I consider the proposed structures I feel that throughout the campaign to impose this development on Hove the name of a prominent American architect has been relied on excessively. At one time the name and photo of a popular Hollywood actor were even adduced in an attempt to add *credibility* to the proposed development (It later emerged that that this endorsement was greatly exaggerated). Linking the proposals to well known names indicates to me the lack of confidence the developers have in any inherent merits of the scheme.

With all the flaws included in the proposed development, I am surprised that we have reached the stage where yet another Planning Application has been submitted and that this is due to be considered by the Planning Committee. Not only does this place a burden on the staff and other resources of the council but it does also place a burden on the shoulders of citizens who have

to devote time and energy into ploughing through yet again the massive number of documents.

I do hope that Hove gets a quality sports centre not a development that celebrates celebrity more than delivering real benefits to Brighton & Hove people.

Finally, I would like to state that I may add to these comments at a later point in time.

Yours sincerely

Colin B Bennett

This letter was prepared and sent electronically.

# 1 POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING

4:00 PM – 05 October 2006 Decision List

110.

(3) That the Council be committed to work with the Developer for them to provide a meaningful proportion of the housing provision of the scheme in another location, in order to enable it, whilst reducing the overall impact.

## 2 Planning Statement

### 4.2.3

“When walking or cycling on the downs, the individual is constantly reminded of the large conurbation within the coastal plain; it is therefore considered extremely unlikely that the King Alfred Site redevelopment is likely to alter (or exacerbate) that situation. The experience of enjoying the natural beauty and other special qualities of the AONB is not affected by the proposal to any significant degree. It must be conceded that from a few locations, it would be possible to see the new towers where there is currently no such view.

## 3 Page 114 Transport Assessment Report

12.5 The leisure centre may be required to provide the council with advance notice of large events that may be held at the centre that could encourage increase car use by visitors. As a result there may be a need to for the leisure centre in liaison the development to provide an event management plan to ensure that visitors are aware of the various restrictions on car use and the advantage of using alternative modes of transport. It may also be necessary for the leisure centre to provide additional event services to aid in maintaining the developments low car use aspirations.

## 4 Section 6.2 SPG 10 King Alfred/RNR Site: Planning Brief

On the northern façade the buildings should substantially respect the character and height of the Victorian buildings on the north side of Kingsway, in particular the listed terrace (Nos 2-6 even, St Aubyns).

## 5 Section 6.3 SPG 10 King Alfred/RNR Site: Planning Brief

The buildings should be laid out in such a way as to allow the site to be permeable with routes through and vistas into and through the site. Glimpses and views of the sea will be particularly important both through, and within, the site to ensure visual connection between Kingsway and the seafront.

## 6 Section 6.4 SPG 10 King Alfred/RNR Site: Planning Brief

The opportunity should be taken to provide an attractive piece of townscape which can also act as a “signpost” to the new development when viewed from the town centre. It should be noted that adjacent to St Andrew’s Church is the Hove Gasworks site which has planning consent for a mixed use development, including a supermarket. When completed, this will move the centre of gravity of the town centre towards the west, i.e. nearer to the King Alfred. Careful design of the latter could help to link it more closely to the town centre. The view down Vallance Gardens should also be taken into consideration.