

Cllr. Jackie O'Quinn

BH2018/02926 - 113-119 Davigdor Road

08/11/2018:

I am writing to object to this proposal as it is yet another tall block of flats in an area where it is out of sympathy with local residential properties. I note that the building is stepped at the front, apparently to be in keeping with the Davigdor Road, but also because of aerial covenants that the developers can't transgress. The building is 5 storeys on the frontage with Davigdor Road but rises to 9 storeys further back – it appears that the P & H building (offices) has been used as a precedent for this height and it is inappropriate for this area.

There are supporting letters for this application but mainly from an office/business point of view. I quite agree that we need to support local businesses and I am aware that this Event business is keen to move from their premises at the Agora in Ellen Street. However, there have been many applications for Permitted development where landlords are saying they can't rent the office space out and therefore it needs to be converted to residential accommodation – the DuBarry Perfume factory is a good example of this – right next to Hove train station but couldn't rent out their offices!. Thus, I am surprised that there is a shortage of office space in the area as we are told there is little demand for it (P & H offices are mainly empty) except in the centre of the city.

I attended the exhibition for this application and it was, as is stated, very poorly attended. Many residents had not registered this planning application at all and the invitation to the event. I myself nearly went home because it was so unclear where the event was actually being held at the Hyde building. I stated my objections to the organisers of the event, particularly regarding the height and massing of the building and the unsustainable nature of such a building in the area – parking, surgeries, schools etc. I asked about affordable provision and was told that due to the high cost of purchasing the land that the percentage of affordable housing would be nowhere near 40%. This response was deeply concerning. However, the flats are likely to be very expensive and even at 80% of cost they would not be affordable to the majority of people who live in the city. This application, if granted, would most likely suffer the same fate as Artisan, where a tiny number of flats have been sold due to their high cost - £350,000 for a one-bedroomed flat and £450,000 for a two-bedroomed flat. Local residents do not object to a sustainable development of this site – 4-5 storeys which make it in keeping with the local area, as they know there is a need for local housing, what they don't want is this type tower block housing. Local residents also don't believe the majority of the city's residents could afford to buy one of these flats.

COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATION

The parking available is also way below what is required. 10 for people who will work in the offices – 70-80 people expected to work there! The 15 spaces for residents which include blue badge holders are totally insufficient. This is an area where there is serious demand for parking and residents are becoming increasingly frustrated and are already deeply concerned about the Lyon's Close Development and the impact that will have on parking in the area.

I ask the committee to refuse this application as it is highly unsuitable to the area where it is located, essentially unsustainable and will do little to solve the housing problems of the city. I reserve my right to speak.