



# Sussex Gardens Trust

Encouraging the protection,  
conservation and evolution of  
the local garden heritage

115 Waldegrave Road.  
Brighton  
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22-10-2017

For the attention of:

Sujeet Sharma, Hastings Borough Council, Forward Planning.

Dear Sir ,

**Re: the White Rock Masterplan.**

Thank you for forwarding this planning document to the Sussex Gardens Trust (SGT) for its comment. The SGT appreciates that this is a background document that may be used to inform the forthcoming Hastings Town Centre and White Rock Area Action Plan (AAP). After internal consultation, the SGT has asked that I reply as follows:

The masterplan has been read and digested with considerable interest; and the Trust would like to commend the architectural practice for the depth of analysis, imaginative forward looking thinking, cogent arguments and the conclusions in this evidence base document..

The Trust is of course particularly pleased to see the frequent references to and acceptance of the need to preserve and enhance the heritage assets within the area, including we understand the locally listed Bohemia Estate parkland. The Trust will expect the AAP to make appropriate reference to all designated (nationally and locally) heritage assets and their significance, and show understanding and appreciation within any projects brought forward.

First impressions were of a considerable loss of public open space, including perhaps to the Oval at the north end of the White Rock Pleasure Garden, but the Trust does accept that on balance the recommendations, if followed through, can lead to a delivery of high quality streets, gardens and parks and the safeguarding of key heritage assets.

The Trust believes the recommended heritage quarter will be advantageous to the future care and development of the Summerfield Woods, walled garden and other heritage assets in this woodland area, as places to be valued and enjoyed.

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The Trust agrees that radical change will be necessary to the White Rock Pleasure Gardens, and it accepts that its adaptation with a contemporary design solution may be appropriate if this locally listed pleasure garden is to thrive over the coming decades. The Trust also agrees that the White Rock Theatre, Falaise Hall and Hastings Pier are destinations deserving the very best in active civic spaces. The Trust also accepts that a mix of enabling commercial development and public subsidy will be required if the 'tired' pleasure gardens are to be restored, improved and provided with a sustainable future.

The Trust welcomes the proposed strong lines of connectivity through the area, including the significant link into the centre of the White Rock area from St Leonards. The Trust accepts the loss of the sports fields to the north of the former convent to development, subject of course to the delivery, at much the same time, of the restoration work to both the Convent and its formal gardens to the south.

**In conclusion** the Sussex Gardens Trust welcomes the 'masterplan'. It now looks forward to (i) the publication of the draft Area Action Plan; (ii) the continued engagement with local community groups, including the SGT, throughout the period of the plan; and (iii) the rigorous examination of all forthcoming proposals having regard to the Action Plan and their impact on the designated heritage assets.

The Trust will expect to see significant community benefits from every major development proposed, and proactive actions that lead to the continued, protection, management and enhancement of the designated parks and gardens within this area.

We hope you will consult the Trust again once the draft Action Area Plan is published.

Yours sincerely

Roger Dowty

Co-chair, Conservation Committee, SGT

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