



47 Denmans Lane  
Lindfield  
Haywards Heath  
West Sussex  
RH16 2JN

To: Brighton and Hove City Council  
***Submitted via online planning system***

2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2018

Dear Sir,

**Re: Development on the former Amex site, Edward Street, Brighton**  
**Planning application: BH2018 / 00340**

Thank you for consulting the Sussex Gardens Trust (SGT). The Trust has also been notified by The Gardens Trust; the statutory consultee on matters affecting registered historic parks and garden landscapes.

The Sussex Gardens Trust itself seeks to promote the protection, enhancement and appropriate management of designated designed historic park and gardens in Sussex, including therefore the grade II registered Royal Pavilion Gardens.

The SGT has read the submitted plans and supporting documents with care, having followed the emerging American Express developments with interest these past few years. The Trust has also taken the opportunity to walk the site and its surroundings, with a view to understanding fully the impact of the proposed development on the setting of the Royal Pavilion Gardens.

### **Significance**

You will be aware of the significance of the pavilion gardens, which were restored in the late 20thC, and the importance previously given to the assessment of development impact on views across the Royal Pavilion gardens. These now serve to provide a public park in a regency period garden landscape style as befits the Royal Pavilion, grade I listed.

Despite the pressures upon this garden from heavy usage, it continues to offer a place for quiet enjoyment and appreciation of the nationally important architecture of the Royal Pavilion and the Dome complex by residents and visitors alike. The gardens are inward looking with views within and across the garden, and garden spaces framed by mature trees. The effect is of garden 'rooms' from where the Pavilion and its features, including its silhouette can be experienced and appreciated, without intrusion or distraction.

Regrettably, when walking through the gardens from the southwest to the north east, distant major developments on the higher land to the east and north east are now visible above and

through the tree canopies, and there is now a heavy dependence upon the remaining Elms, to screen from view or at least minimise the impact of these modern developments on this contained historic landscape.

## **Impacts**

Regrettably the Sussex Gardens Trust must oppose this development, because of its excessive height, which in such near proximity to the Royal Pavilion and its gardens is considered harmful to the Royal Pavilion Estate's skyline.

The Trust had expected a greater stepping down in height of this development, toward Edward Street, following the relocation of the American Express building further north, and the demolition of the former Amex building. In terms of impact on the setting of the Royal Pavilion Estate, the Trust sees little in the way of improvement on what was there before the demolition of the old Amex building.

Much is made of the positive screening effect of existing trees within the Royal Pavilion grounds; but in the absence of evidence of a forward thinking management plan for the Royal Pavilion Garden, and no assurances that any such plan is to be implemented, little weight should be given to the screening currently available during the summer months.

Taking both developments together, ie that now proposed together with the recently constructed new Amex building to the north, the resultant infilling of the backdrop to the pavilion gardens, between the Dome and the Pavilion, will be a very noticeable intrusion on the skyline, and create an apparent continuous ring of medium high rise dense urban development above the trees between the Dome and the Royal Pavilion, such that these treasured landmarks will no longer be seen as 'stand alone' historic monuments in a garden setting.

## **Conclusion.**

The harm caused to the setting of the Royal Pavilion Estate may be less than substantial, but nonetheless there needs to be both greater justification for the size of development proposed and greater thought given to mitigation measures. In the absence of appropriate mitigation, the Sussex Gardens Trust opposes any development that breaches the skyline illustrated below, and therefore objects to planning application BH2018/00340.

Yours faithfully

Jim Stockwell  
On behalf of the Sussex Gardens Trust.  
CC: The Gardens Trust



Existing view looking north eastward from the most popular of the pavilion lawns.