

# There was an alternative plan

Sir, - The statement in last week's *Farnham Herald* by Matthew Evans that no Plan B exists for the Brightwell Development is incorrect.

At the time the seven selected competitors were preparing their submissions to Waverley Borough Council I too was drafting a proposal and completed this in July 2002 in accordance with the official timescale.

The main difference was that the seven 'official' entries were based on the brief Waverley had commissioned from Messrs Clutton's, London property agents, whereas my scheme was based on the conclusions of considerable public consultation emphatically endorsing the need for public amenity facilities and residential accommodation with retail being confirmed to East Street peripheral locations.

I recall the public expressed horror and dismay when they were invited to view the seven competition results. The general consensus was of plans difficult to understand and with much diversity making comparison very challenging. I took an opportunity to show my scheme to the editor of the *Farnham Herald* and he decided to print the drawings in one of the September 2002 editions of the paper. The Bush Hotel allowed me to exhibit the drawings showing my scheme.

The display of my drawings in the newspaper and in the exhibition resulted in hundreds of messages giving me great encouragement knowing my labour over the summer months was worthwhile. These comments are still expressed by some today. Shortly after the exhibition closed, the Waverley East Street portfolio holder made contact and we met in Waverley's offices and, at his request, I left copies of my drawings, Plan B, for the use of the council officers.

In essence, I believe the very important Brightwell House, listed Grade II in 1969, was, and still remains, the key to the site, the white stucco walls, slated roof providing the perfect setting. Its central position with residential accommodation enclosing the existing lawns and green with a similar crescent on the north side provided space for a town square retaining the fine Marlborough Head building would make for a simple classic solution.

There are few towns in Europe where this simple layout has not been successful and no better examples exist than in these isles, Bath, Cheltenham, Leamington Spa, Buxton and of course our great capital city with its dozens of globally renowned squares, crescents, *et al.* I heard positive comments indicating that the public were responding to the timeless Georgian qualities of our finest domestic architectural style and achievement including straight forward geometry which is easy to comprehend. Farnham is a Georgian town *de force* and we should be unafraid to follow that rich seam.

I find it really sad that so much money has been spent and time has elapsed with nothing significant achieved. It would be arrogant of me to say this was the whole answer but it was and is a vision so maybe Mr Matthew Evans should ponder this rather than making comments such as that he 'hopes' the judicial review fails.

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