

## **BH2018/00340 Former Amex House Edward Street Brighton BN88 1AH**

### **Comments from the Regency Society**

1. The Regency Society objects to this planning application. Our reasons are outlined below. Some of our comments echo the objections we made to the original planning brief for the area. The application illustrates well the failings of that document.
2. The section of Edward Street between Rock Gardens and Grand Parade is unattractive and pedestrian unfriendly. The north side presents a depressing series of unattractive, buildings, constructed right up to the pavement edge. Amex House, which previously stood on the site in question, offered the one “breath of fresh air” in this unrelenting gloom. Its position, set back from the pavement, provided an attractive, sunlit public space. The building itself provided Brighton with one of its best examples of late 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture: the design was distinctive and the materials were sympathetic to its coastal location.
3. The scheme now being proposed places tall buildings right up to the pavement, closing up the one remaining gap in the street-scene. The open spaces proposed further back in the development are unlikely to be as successful as the one that existed previously in front of Amex House. They will be surrounded by buildings which will block out the sun for much of the time and, as a result are likely to be unloved and unused.
4. Some of these building offer catering outlets at ground floor level. The plans show open-air tables and chairs, creating the impression of vibrant communal spaces. We do not believe that such businesses will flourish in these spaces which will be starved of sunlight and may well suffer from wind tunnel effects. Facilities of this kind would have a much better chance of commercial success located in a larger, sunnier “piazza”, open to Edward Street. They could also enliven that street’s dreary north side.
5. We are not opposed to a tall, dense development on this city centre site. If the south elevation of block F were to be moved 15-20m. back from the pavement edge to create a piazza on Edward Street, the floor space lost could be re-located further back in the site, by increasing the height of the rear-centre block. This would have the extra advantage of adding variety and articulation to the profile of the development.
6. The buildings proposed are boring and bland. They show no sympathy for their location in one of England’s most significant seaside towns. No attempt has been made to use the roofs to create additional green space.
7. There is an opportunity on this site to create a striking architectural statement to match that of the former Amex House. That opportunity will be lost if this application is approved.

Roger Hinton  
Chair of the Regency Society  
20/3/18