

The Editor
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The Aquarena

The most undesirable feature of Roffey's latest proposals for the Aquarena site is their size. They squeeze 141 apartments onto a site of .69 of a hectare, giving a density of 204 units/hectare. They necessitate the bulky 15 storey tower and lower blocks that are six storeys tall. Roffey's other big development, at the corner of West Parade and Grand Avenue, looks modest by comparison; it represents a density of only 111 units/hectare.

The reason for the high density at the Aquarena is simple: the owner of the site, Worthing Borough Council, wants to maximise the price it gets. It has therefore inserted the provision in the contract for the sale of the site to Roffey that "The Buyer ...in its sole discretion but acting reasonably and professionally, will seek to maximise the number of Apartments within the Development".

One would hope that a local authority would adopt a more public-spirited approach to the development of its land, which would ensure that the buildings would fit in with their surroundings. Worthing's first thoughts about the development of the site were that it could provide 85 apartments; if it was developed at the same density as the West Parade site, it would have 76 apartments.

If the Aquarena site was developed at this smaller scale, there would be no need for any tower, and the buildings could average four to five storey tall. The architect would have more opportunities to design buildings that responded to, and did not dominate, their surroundings, and which were appropriate for Worthing.

The Borough Council and Roffey would get less money. But is not the appearance of Worthing worth something? Is not the preservation of the character and appearance of Worthing the prime objective of Worthing Borough Council? Surely it should not put short-term financial gain above this long-term objective.

David Sawers