Manor Place developments: Questions and Answers

Plans for new council homes at Robert Lodge – information for local residents

Why does the council want to build new homes at Robert Lodge?
There is growing housing need in Brighton and Hove with nearly 19,000 households now on the housing waiting list and over 20,000 new homes estimated to be needed by 2030. With little developable land in the city, we need to make best use of what opportunities we have to build much needed new homes on council housing land and help meet the city’s housing needs.

The prefab council Housing Office at the southern end of the grounds of our Robert Lodge scheme has been closed for two years and is no longer needed. There is room to build 11 new flats on that site and 6 new flats at the northern end of the grounds. Our aim is to improve the area for existing residents as well as providing much needed new homes.

What type of homes would be built?
The new flats we are proposing to build are 1 bedroom flats, plus two 2 bedroom flats in the northern block. So the new development would fit with the existing Robert Lodge scheme but with a larger proportion of one bedroom flats. At least one flat would be specially designed for wheelchair users.

How is the council consulting local residents about these plans?
Before we finalise the proposed design and apply for planning permission we have been consulting with all Robert Lodge residents and leaseholders and other residents neighbouring Robert Lodge. We informed residents at this early stage in the plans so that everyone knows what is happening and has plenty of time to ask questions and give us their views.

We have kept the Robert Lodge Resident Association informed and updated from the start of the project and attended their committee meetings. We wrote to all Robert Lodge tenants and leaseholders in March informing them of the plans. We invited residents in around 350 neighbouring homes to come to a ‘drop in’ consultation event at Robert Lodge on 29 April to see the plans, speak to the architect and council staff and let us know their views. The plans were also made available on the council’s website. Some residents also completed a questionnaire or made notes at the consultation event; others have also let us know their views at the contact details on page 5.

We are taking note of residents’ comments and considering how we can minimise the impact of the development and answer concerns where possible.

When will the design and development be agreed?
We need Planning to agree the development and look of the buildings, and we expect to submit a planning application in late June.

Residents will also be able to comment on the planning application.
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What design is proposed?
The planned development is in the grounds of Robert Lodge and designed to
fit with the two existing Robert Lodge blocks, which were built in the 1970s.

The proposed southern block would step up from three floors next to the
existing three storey Robert Lodge block facing Whitehawk Road, to four
storeys close to the existing four storey Robert Lodge block facing Manor
Place. It would take up less space than the current footprint of the housing
office and be set further back from the boundary with the top of Rugby Place,
with a planted area along that boundary.

At the northern end of the site, a block of four one bedroom and two 2
bedroom flats is proposed along Manor Way. This three storey block would fit
with the roof heights of the current Robert Lodge blocks at that end of the site.

The flats would be built in brick, with the shade agreed by Planning. We
expect to use lighter colour bricks than shown in the computer generated
consultation drawings.

We have obtained and responded to planning guidance for the proposed
development, using the council’s pre-application advice service, in order to
make sure we comply with the council’s planning policies.

Will the buildings block residents’ views and light?
The proposed scheme has been designed to minimise the impact on
neighbouring properties’ views and sunlight and daylight. The southern block
would be north of Rugby Place and set back further from it than the current
housing office, so there would be very little impact on residents’ light. We
have looked to reduce the width of the northern block in the detailed design
and to minimise the impact on existing residents at the northern end of Robert
Lodge blocks. We will get the proposed scheme re-tested for any impact on
sunlight and daylight on residents’ homes before applying for planning
permission.

Why do the flats have balconies?
A south facing balcony or terrace is proposed for each flat, in line with
planning policy to provide private outside amenity space and the guidelines
for the Code for Sustainable Homes. We aim to minimise the risk of
overlooking into other residents’ properties from the balconies. Residents of
the new flats would not be permitted to attach satellite dishes.

Will the entrance to the southern block be in Rugby Place?
No. The proposed entrance to the southern block is not in Rugby Place; it
would be on council housing land, separated from Rugby Place and screened
by planting. Vehicle access to the southern block would be via Manor Place.
Pedestrian access would be from Manor Place or from Whitehawk Road as
currently.

How would the public footpath be diverted?
We propose the public footpath from Whitehawk Road would enter the Robert
Lodge grounds in the same place as it does now. It would then be diverted
within the Robert Lodge grounds to provide access to the new southern block
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and less roundabout access to Manor Place, rather than crossing Robert Lodge communal gardens.

Will there be changes to the footpath between Whitehawk Road and Rugby Place?
We do not propose to make any changes to the footpath between Whitehawk Road and Rugby Place, which is not on council housing land.

As adopted highway, in order for the Rugby Place footpath to be stopped up and then closed under the Highways Act 1980 it would have to be demonstrated that this footpath accessing Whitehawk road and the shops on the Broadway is no longer needed. In order for a gating order to be taken forward, evidence of crime/antisocial behaviour, supported by local police and councillors, would be required; a large number of residents who can demonstrate a need would have to retain access; and the council does not now have resources to purchase, install or maintain gates, so recent gating projects have involved the community in the immediate area raising funds between them.

Will people still be able to get to Robert Lodge meeting rooms and community facilities?
Yes. Users of Robert Lodge community rooms and facilities will still be able to get to them on footpaths.

What will happen to Robert Lodge communal gardens?
The communal gardens would be kept and residents would be able to enjoy them with more privacy once the public footpath is diverted so that fewer members of the general public would cross through them. We are asking residents how we could improve the grounds as part of the consultation. Any trees that need to be removed would be replaced.

How will we control noise and dust during construction?
The constructors will work to minimise noise and disruption to residents during construction and will:
- carry out a letter drop prior to works commencing
- make contact with resident association members and hold regular meetings
- plan work to minimise nuisance and take steps to control noise, dust and pollution arising from site operations
- keep roads off site clean and tidy
- minimise the effect of contractors parking on area
- register the project with the Considerate Constructors Scheme and comply with its requirements.

Who will get the new homes?
New homes for rent will be let through the Homemove social housing register as usual for council homes. They will be mainly one bedroom flats, not larger family homes. None of the proposed new homes have been allocated yet.
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A Local Lettings Plan is usually put in place for new build developments in order to make best use of new homes and overall housing resources. For example, offering new homes to existing tenants who are currently under-occupying their home or who would otherwise require expensive housing adaptations to stay in their current home.

**How can I see and comment on the planning application?**
When we submit our planning application (not before late June) Planning will publicise our application with site notices, a notice in The Leader and notices to adjoining owners and occupiers. There is also a weekly list of all applications received and a planning register with details of all applications and how they are progressing on the council’s website.

People can see the plans for the planning application on the planning register on the council’s website or the council’s Customer Service Centres, where staff can help people view the plans and print off copies. The formal period for consultation and making comments is 21 days.

The kinds of planning issue that Planning will consider include open space provision, nature conservation, sustainable development and traffic generation. They will also consider where appropriate:
- Overlooking/loss of privacy
- Overshadowing
- Loss of amenity e.g. noise and disturbance
- Design of the new buildings
- Whether a proposed use is suitable for the area
- Whether the appearance and size of a new building has satisfactory access for disabled people.

But Planning cannot take account of issues such as effect on the value of a property, inconvenience from construction works or loss of views from within properties.

**When will the office be demolished and the building start?**
We expect to demolish the office shortly to protect residents as intruders have recently started breaking into it.

We expect to start work on the southern block in the autumn after we have obtained planning permission. We expect to develop the northern block in a separate phase once the southern block is finished.

**Will there be mobility scooter and cycle parking?**
There would be parking provided for both bicycles and mobility scooters. The mobility scooter storage would include an electric charging point and residents would be able to rent these covered spaces from the council.

**What about building on the Whitehawk Library site?**
Proposals for developing new homes on the old Whitehawk Library site are currently being agreed. With so many new homes needed, we are looking to develop at sites all around the city.
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Will there be additional parking spaces?
We propose to keep the current car park next to the housing office on Housing land that is currently reserved for council staff and make the spaces available to residents, in order to ease any additional demand for parking generated by the development and give priority to blue badge holders.

How will construction traffic get to the site?
We expect to use Manor Place for access for construction traffic. During the construction period we will ask Highways and/or the police to deal with cars parked on pavements in Manor Place to ensure that construction traffic can get through.

The constructor will minimise the effect of contractors parking on the area and register the project with the Considerate Constructors Scheme and comply with its requirements.

Will the sewers be able to cope with the new flats?
We have checked the capacity of the sewers with Southern Water, who have confirmed there is currently adequate capacity in the local sewerage network.

Where can I see the plans?
On our New Homes for Neighbourhoods page on the council’s website at: www.brighon-hove.gov.uk/nhfn

Who can I contact for more information or to comment?
You can contact the Estate Regeneration Team at:

Post:
Estate Regeneration team
Brighton & Hove City Council
Room 506 Kings House
Grand Avenue
Hove
BN3 2SR

Email: estate.regeneration@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Phone: 01273 290356

Website: www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/nhfn