

# Planners vote to demolish pub

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**A COUNCIL called time on The Meridian in Lewes when it approved plans to demolish the pub and replace it with five homes.**

Lewes District Council gave the scheme the green light at its planning meeting by the slender margin of five votes to four.

The pub is located at a gateway to the town and the new South Downs National Park.

But investigations revealed that the existing structure of the pub in Western Road was in fact relatively modern.

The building was put up on the site of a Victorian struc-

ture, however the only part of the original building which survived was the flint wall in Western Road.

The council said the Victorian building had been compromised so much that there was little value in keeping it.

The building was originally called The Canteen and served the workers building Lewes Prison in the 1860s.

Later names included The Rifleman, The Hole In The Wall and The Pewter Pot.

However during the last decade alone there had been four changes of landlord with three of these leaving because the business was not viable.

Brewers Shepherd Neame, which owned the pub for 36 years, blamed its decline on

change in social attitudes, increase in beer tax and utility costs, as well as other licensing factors.

This meant The Meridian only shifted 125 barrels a year (79 pints a day,) with 150 barrels considered the minimum acceptable.

Officers said that out of the 17 letters of objection they received, not one expressed concerns about the loss of the pub.

The proposals to knock down the building and replace it with homes even attracted four letters of support, while a further two letters were received welcoming the improved design but raising concerns about materials.

The scheme met with mixed



The shape of things to come: An artist's impression of new homes on the pub site

reaction from councillors too.

Cllr Philip Howson (Con, East Saltdean and Telscombe Cliffs) said: "If this development were anywhere else I wouldn't have thought it would get planning for five dwellings."

"Why did they not look at four properties?"

"Parking is an absolute nightmare in this area.

It makes sense to me to take that middle house out and put a car park in, which would have alleviated all the problems."

But other councillors disagreed and said there would not be room to get parking into the space.

The design was also unpopular with some councillors.

Cllr Jim Daly (Lib Dem, Lewes Bridge) said: "The whole effect from it is awful.

The architecture is a disaster." But Cllr Sharon Davy (Con, Chailey and Wivelsfield) said: "I do think it's a very good use of a brown field site."

Permission was granted on the condition that Section 106 money could be secured for recycling, recreation space and highways schemes. The council also wants to secure a public right of way on the site and money for a car club scheme planned for Lewes.