

WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Mid Sussex District Council FAO: Andrew Watt
FROM:	WSCC – Highways Authority
DATE:	6 March 2025
LOCATION:	Central Sussex College Queensmere House 49 Queens Road East Grinstead RH19 1BG
SUBJECT:	DM/25/0388 Conversion of a D1 Educational Building to 24no. Residential Apartments (32 Bedrooms) with infilling of existing undercroft areas, associated car parking, landscaping, cycle spaces, amenity areas, 1.1m high metal fence and new ramp.
DATE OF SITE VISIT:	n/a
RECOMMENDATION:	More Information

Background

WSCC in its role of Local Highway Authority (LHA) has been consulted on the above application for highway safety, capacity, and accessibility considerations. The change of use proposed will convert the educational building into 24 residential apartments.

Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA)

A Stage 1 RSA has been undertaken on the access strategy. The audit does not confirm if it has been undertaken in accordance with GG119 parameters. Notwithstanding this the Audit has raised some points with regard to the access strategy. The recommendations made by the Auditor have not been accompanied by a Designer's Response to each of the points with a plan showing how the recommendations from the Auditor have been applied to the design. A Designer's Response needs to be provided by the applicant on the points raised and demonstration that the RSA has been undertaken in line with GG119 parameters.

Access

Aside from the points above, the site will utilise an existing access onto Queens Road. A review of the access onto Queens Road indicates that, there have been no recorded collisions within the last 3 years and that there is no evidence to suggest that the access and local highway network are operating unsafely.

Capacity

No traffic flow information has been provided with the current application. However, from experience of other similar proposals, the LHA recognise that the former D1 usage would generate more vehicle movements compared with residential developments. As such, there is no expectation for this proposal to give rise to any increase or material change in the character of traffic in the vicinity of the site.

Accessibility

The site is well located to encourage travel by sustainable modes including the use of walking, cycling and public transport. These will provide opportunities for staff and visitors to travel to the site. There are continuous footways leading to London Road. London Road has a signalised crossings with tactile paving connecting to the existing footway network. In addition, there are a number of bus stops on both sides of London Road that connect to a number of locations outside East Grinstead.

The site is in close proximity to East Grinstead Railway Station, around 10-15 min walk from the site and a 3-minute cycle ride. The street lit carriageways and low speeds would make the journey a workable alternative to the private car. The station links to Brighton, Gatwick Airport and London Victoria. Further to the north the site links to East Grinstead town centre with continuous footways and signalised pedestrian crossing points. In the town centre there are a number retail and employment facilities that can be accessed via sustainable means.

The applicant should provide a Travel Plan Statement (TPS) within the supporting information to provide residents and visitors a workable means to access the site using more sustainable modes.

The TPS will be required to accord with the requirements of WSCC. The applicant should note that WSCC apply an auditing fee to all new travel plans. The travel plan and associated auditing fee would be secured via a s106 agreement. The Travel Plan auditing fees reflect the amount of local authority officer time required to evaluate the initial plan, assess the monitoring data and participate in on-going review and agreement to any amended plans in the future, including post planning once the development is built out and occupied. The costs have been benchmarked against fees charged by other Local Authorities and are considered to proportionate and reflective of the costs incurred.

Parking

The existing parking area for the offices is included within the red edging with the supporting information confirming that 15 car parking spaces can be included within the existing layout. In line with the LHA's September 2020 car parking requirements, 25% of these parking spaces should be 'Active' EV parking spaces.

Given the accessible location cycle parking should be provided in line with LHA parameters:

- Flats Up to 3 rooms (1 & 2 bed) 0.5 space (if communal storage otherwise same as 1 & 2 bed house)
- Flats 4+ rooms (3+ bed) 1 space

Conclusion

Whilst the principle of the development is acknowledged. The LHA will require that a Safety Audit Designer's Response is completed in accordance with GG119 parameters.

Jamie Brown
West Sussex County Council – Planning Services