



Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 1SS

Date: 28 July 2025
Our ref: 06997

For the attention of: Planning Department, planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk

Application ref: DM/25/1593

Location: Woodlands Close And Land To The North Of Burleigh Lane
Crawley Down Crawley West Sussex

Proposal/Description: The demolition of numbers 9-11 Woodlands Close together with the demolition of other existing buildings on site and erection of 48 dwellings (Use Class C3) with open space, landscaping, car parking and associated infrastructure including provision of internal access roads and access road onto Woodlands Close.

Thank you for consulting with Place Services on the above Full planning application. This letter sets out our consultation response on the landscape impact of the application and how the proposal relates and responds to the landscape setting and context of the site.

Site Context:

The site is located to the south-east corner of Crawley Down and comprises a singular assarted grassland field. Burleigh Road forms the southern boundary, and residential properties on Woodlands Close, Hornbeam Place and Sycamore Lane form the north and west boundaries.

A new Public Right of Way (PRoW) runs along the eastern and northern site boundaries. The Sussex Border Path PRoW (56W) follows the southern boundary.

Planning Policy Context:

Mid Sussex District Plan (MSDP) (Adopted March 2018)

Policies considered relevant include [inter alia]:

- Policy DP12 Protection and Enhancement of Countryside
- Policy DP37 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
- Policy DP38 Biodiversity

Site Allocations DPD (2022)

The site forms Site Allocation 22 'Land North of Burleigh Lane, Crawley Down'. Landscape considerations include:

- "Retain and enhance existing mature trees and hedgerows on the site and around the boundaries and incorporate these into the landscaping structure for the site to limit impacts on the countryside.
- Open space should be provided as an integral part of this landscape structure and should be prominent and accessible within the scheme.
- Protect the rural character of Burleigh Lane and views from the south by minimising loss of trees and hedgerows along the southern boundary and reinforcing any gaps with locally native planting.
- Protect the character and amenity of existing public footpaths and seek to integrate these into the Green Infrastructure proposals for the site."

Crawley Down Neighbourhood Plan (2016)

The proposals should have consideration for:

- Policy CDNP06: Sustainable Drainage Systems
- Policy CDNP08: Prevention of Coalescence
- Policy CDNP09: Protect and Enhance Biodiversity

Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study (2007/2014)

The site is located within 4 Crawley Down Southern Fringe. The Landscape Sensitivity of this area is assessed as moderate. The area is also assessed as having moderate value, owed to moderate scenic beauty with limited tranquillity, medieval assarts, the separation to Turners Hill and good boundary vegetation. This is assessed overall as having Medium Capacity for development.

Para 5.2.2 states that a "rating of Medium identifies a landscape character area with the capacity for limited development, in some parts of the character areas, having regard for the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas."

Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA)

The application has been accompanied by the submission of a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) undertaken by Landscape Perspective Limited, dated June 2025. The LVA does not include any methodology and does not follow the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3). The submitted photography does not follow the TGN 06/19 Visual Representation of development proposals.

Landscape Character

The site is located within:

- HW1 'High Weald' of the West Sussex Land Management Guidelines
- Area 6 'High Weald' of the Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment

Key characteristics across this LCA include; wooded, confined rural landscape of intimacy and complexity, Significant woodland cover, a substantial portion of it ancient, and a dense network of shaws, hedgerows and hedgerow trees, Pattern of small, irregular-shaped assart fields, some larger fields and small pockets of remnant heathland.

The assessment does not provide any judgements on the specific impacts to landscape character based on the landscape proposals. Paras 6.3 broadly describe how the scheme complies with recommended guidelines within LCAs, however does not address the degree of impacts that will be asserted as a result of the development. We consider this a key omission from the submitted LVA and judge that the assessment of effects on landscape character is insufficient and inconclusive.

Visual Amenity

The assessment does not provide any judgements on the specific visual impacts based on the landscape proposals. Paras 6.4 describes the visual envelope and potential views but provides no judgements on the degree of impacts that will arise from the development proposals on the site. Considering that the site is surrounded on all sides by public visual receptors (including Sussex Border Path), and some residential receptors, we would have considered a full assessment of visual effects to have been integral to the production of the LVA. We therefore consider the assessment of visual effects to be a key omission from the submitted LVA and judge that the assessment of visual impact to be insufficient and inconclusive.

We also note that there are a large number of viewpoint photographs from the immediate periphery of the site, and very few from the wider surrounding landscape. These included photographs would have been better included as site context photographs as opposed to viewpoint photography within the LVA.

Other Matters

Overall, we judge that the submitted LVA is an inadequate resource in assessing the impacts on landscape character and visual amenity. Whilst the site is allocated under SA22 and is located within the settlement boundary, we consider that the potential effects associated with this scheme need assessing to ascertain the degree of harm. This site has high visibility from sensitive receptors, which should have been assessed using appropriate methodology within the LVA. The site is also an assarted grassland field which holds landscape character value, as per the relevant LCAs.

For these reasons, we advise that the output of the LVA is addressed, and the assessed impacts of individual landscape character areas and visual receptors are included.

We do however note that the site location relates well to the edge of Crawley Down, and is well connected to the village through footpaths and road links.

At application stage we would expect to see comprehensive landscape proposals that provide soft, hard and boundary landscape treatments provided. The soft landscape plan should include a landscape specification and planting schedule, with details of quantity, species, size/type (bare root, container etc). It should also include details of implementation and materials (i.e. soils and mulch) and any protection measures that will be put in place (i.e rabbit guards). The hard landscape plan should include details of all hard surface materials and boundary treatments to be used within the development with a timetable for implementation, including all means of enclosure and boundary treatments, such as walls and fences.

Details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance of soft and hard landscape assets will also need to be provided in the form of a landscape management and maintenance plan. This should include a schedule of works and cover a minimum period of 5 years. The submission of the landscape management plan can be a condition of any consent.

Recommendations:

The site forms SA22 and included a number of allocation principles. Based on the principles and any other recommendations, we have the following comments:

- Planting should be proposed along the southern boundary adjacent to Sussex Border Path and adjacent to Grade II listed Burleigh Cottage to bolster the gaps and provide additional screening. This should include hedgerow and tree planting.
- A field boundary that has been in place since before the 1960's is being removed to facilitate the development. A large part of this boundary is formed of Category B trees. We question whether any of the trees could be retained to reduce the number of losses across the scheme.
- Two SuDS features are proposed at the north of the site. It is currently unknown whether these are wet or dry. We advise that any wet basins include a large amount of peripheral planting as a physical soft barrier and also a contribution to visual amenity and biodiversity. We advise that any dry basins are multi-functional, unfenced and allow public access with very low gradient edges, such as 1:4.
- It would be recommended that hedgerows are planted in double staggered rows, preferably 5 plants per linear metre. There should also not be equal numbers of each species. Instead, it is recommended that it is specified in percentages, as shown below:
 - 60% Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
 - 20% Field maple (*Acer campestre*)
 - 10% Hazel (*Corylus Avellana*)
 - 5% Trees (wild cherry, oak or hornbeam)
 - 5% made of holly, spindle, crab apple, dogwood, blackthorn and guelder rose (only a few % each IF they are present in the locality).
- The substation in the north-west corner should be screened with additional planting including hedgerow or climber planting, considering its prominent location at the entrance to the scheme.

- Hedgerow planting should also be proposed alongside the existing close-board fences to the properties at either side of the entrance from Woodlands Close. This can be used as defensive planting considering that these rear gardens are now exposed.
- Development should avoid the root protection areas (RPAs) of all trees within or surrounding the Site. Any hard landscaping proposed within the RPA of existing trees must use no-dig surface solutions.
- A predominance of one species or variety should be avoided in order to minimise the risk of widespread biotic threats to the urban forest and to increase species diversity. Preference should be given to native trees and shrubs, but in certain urban and residential situations, better results might be achieved by the use of naturalised trees and shrubs, which are not necessarily native but are the correct tree for site conditions and would add landscape and arboricultural value.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries in relation to this advice.

Place Services – Landscape Team

Email: landscape@essex.gov.uk



Place Services provide landscape advice on behalf of Mid Sussex District Council.

Please note: This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter.