



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

Date: 23 December 2025
Our ref: 12624

For the attention of: Stuart Malcolm

Application ref:

DM/25/3067

Location:

Land West Of Kings Business Centre Reeds Lane Sayers
Common West Sussex

Proposal/Description:

Erection of 80 new residential dwellings (Use Class C3),
including affordable housing units, vehicular, pedestrian and
cycle access (including new footpath links to the east and west
of the site along Reeds Lane), landscaping and open space,
parking, sustainable drainage and other related works.

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 west of Sayers Common, on the northern edge of Reeds Lane. Kings Business Centre is located to the east, and a large commercial area is located to the west. Public Right of Way (PRoW) runs diagonally through the site, with another PRoW running close to the west of the site. The Site itself comprises a singular grassland field. Priority Habitat (deciduous woodland) is located to the north of the site.

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

The Site is identified as SHELA Site Ref 830 for 100 dwellings (June 2018).

Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan (Made 2015)

The following policies are considered relevant to this application:

- POLICY Countryside Hurst C1: Conserving and enhancing character
- POLICY Housing Hurst H1: Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common new housing development

- POLICY Housing Hurst H5: Development principles
- POLICY Housing Hurst H6: Housing sites infrastructure and environmental impact assessment

Review of the Landscape and Visual Study:

A Landscape and Visual Study (LVS) has been submitted by FINC Architects Limited to accompany the planning application.

The study provides a limited assessment of the landscape and visual impacts associated with the development proposals. Para 1.4 of the LVS states “*This study does not include an assessment of effects as part of a full Landscape and Visual Appraisal / Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. However, the principles employed in appraising the Site are in accordance with the guidance set out in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition.*”

GLVIA3 guidance emphasises that the level of assessment should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposals. The proposed development is for 80 dwellings and within the countryside and is considered a major development. We would therefore have expected a full Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) as a minimum to be submitted.

The submitted LVS also states that the LVA approach has not been used, however, no justification has been provided for not including an assessment of effects. Considering the scale and location of the development, justification should be submitted within the LVS outlining the reasons why an LVA is not required.

Considering the scale of development and location of the application site, we request an LVA is submitted as a minimum to assess the impacts of the development on the landscape character and visual amenity, and request that the identified receptors are accompanied by an assessment of effects in line with GLVIA3.

No methodology has been submitted to accompany the LVS. Methodology should be submitted to accompany the application to demonstrate how judgements are reached.

In the absence of any methodology, we have used our own Place Services methodology to review the receptors and their effects resulting from the proposed development.

Landscape Character

Para 4.13 states that “*the Site is not considered to be representative of the key characteristics of its containing LCA 4 Hickstead Low Weald. It is not perceived as wild or remote and its condition and perceptual qualities are influenced by existing adjacent development and ongoing construction activity*”.

The Site comprises a number of features of the LCA 4 key characteristics, including the pastoral rural landscape, a mosaic of smaller and larger fields, scattered woodlands (to the north boundary), hedgerows with hedgerow trees on the boundaries and a narrow rural lane to the south. We therefore judge that to consider the site as “*not representative*” is an

overstatement And we consider the site is partly representative of the LCA, contrary to Para 4.13.

Visual Amenity

8no. viewpoint receptors have been selected for review. We largely agree with the viewpoint locations selected, however would have also included additional viewpoints further south along PRoW ALB-3-1AL looking north. We do however note that a linear tree belt located along the eastern edge of the PRoW would limit views north-east and are unlikely to exceed minor adverse effects.

Similarly to the landscape character, the effects on different visual receptors have not been judged. The site is open to a number of visual receptors, including Reed Lane and PRoWs within and surrounding the site.

Users of PRoW ALB-1-1AL (Viewpoint 8) look towards the development site from the south-east. Unlike visual receptors within and to the west of the site, views from this PRoW are towards the open countryside on the western edge of Sayers Common, with built development limited to the right edge of the view. The perception of being on the village edge may be substantially altered as a result of the development, owed to the new dwellings extending across the view to the west and changing the village edge character. We judge the effects on this receptor could be moderate adverse (using our own methodology).

Effects to users of PRoWs within and to the west of the site (Viewpoints 1-3) are likely to experience major adverse effects, owed to the countryside surroundings being completely altered, however it is noted that the parcel is sandwiched between Kings Business Centre and the commercial area to the west, reducing the sense of the rural character that may be perceived otherwise.

Review of Proposals:

Based on the submitted proposals we advise the following comments are considered.

The proposed SuDS basins are proposed to be permanently wet and surrounding by vegetation which is welcomed. We advise that the basins are not fenced off from the public, to encourage public interaction with this feature.

Within the Tree Protection Plan (TPP) (Dwg no. SJA JA TPP 25556-041), H3 and T9 are required for removal to facilitate the new access into the scheme, therefore opening up views into the site. Street Scene FF demonstrates the street view from the access point from Reeds Lane to the south. Between Plots 9 and 6, there is a large length of close-board fencing, which will be one of the more visible parts of the development from the south. Alternative boundary treatments could be proposed in place of the close-board fencing, and additional planting could be proposed to soften the extent of fencing.

Although the TPP is dated November 2025, it does not reflect the latest layout plans. We request undated and relevant plan to be submitted.

Where rear gardens meet the public realm, such as to the rear of Plots 9 and 10, or 69 to 72, close-board fencing should be replaced with a brick wall or be separated from the roadway by defensible planting in line with Secure by Design Principles.

The corner of the rear garden associated with Plot 18 is impractical and would not be able to be mowed.

A Landscape Management Plan (LMP) has been submitted for review; however, no detailed hard and soft landscape plan have been submitted. Until the detailed hard and soft landscape information has been submitted, the specific elements to be integrated into the LMP cannot be confirmed. Prior to reviewing the LMP, the detailed hard and soft landscape information needs to be submitted.

Notwithstanding this, hard and soft landscape information can be secured via a condition. We request however that an updated LVS or LVA is submitted prior to ascertain the effects associated with the submitted development, to ensure adequate mitigation is proposed within the following soft landscape plans.

Summary:

Overall, we judge that there is capacity for development within this location; however, the landscape and visual effects have not been adequately assessed considering the countryside location and the scale of the development. Therefore, additional information is required on the assessed effects of the identified receptors within the Landscape and Visual Study. The effects identified within the LVS/LVA will therefore be useful in determining the success of the proposed mitigation.

Recommendations have been included within the review of proposals and should be considered within the proposed design of the scheme.

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.