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Conifers
9 Ferndale Road
Burgess Hill
West Sussex RH16 1HQ

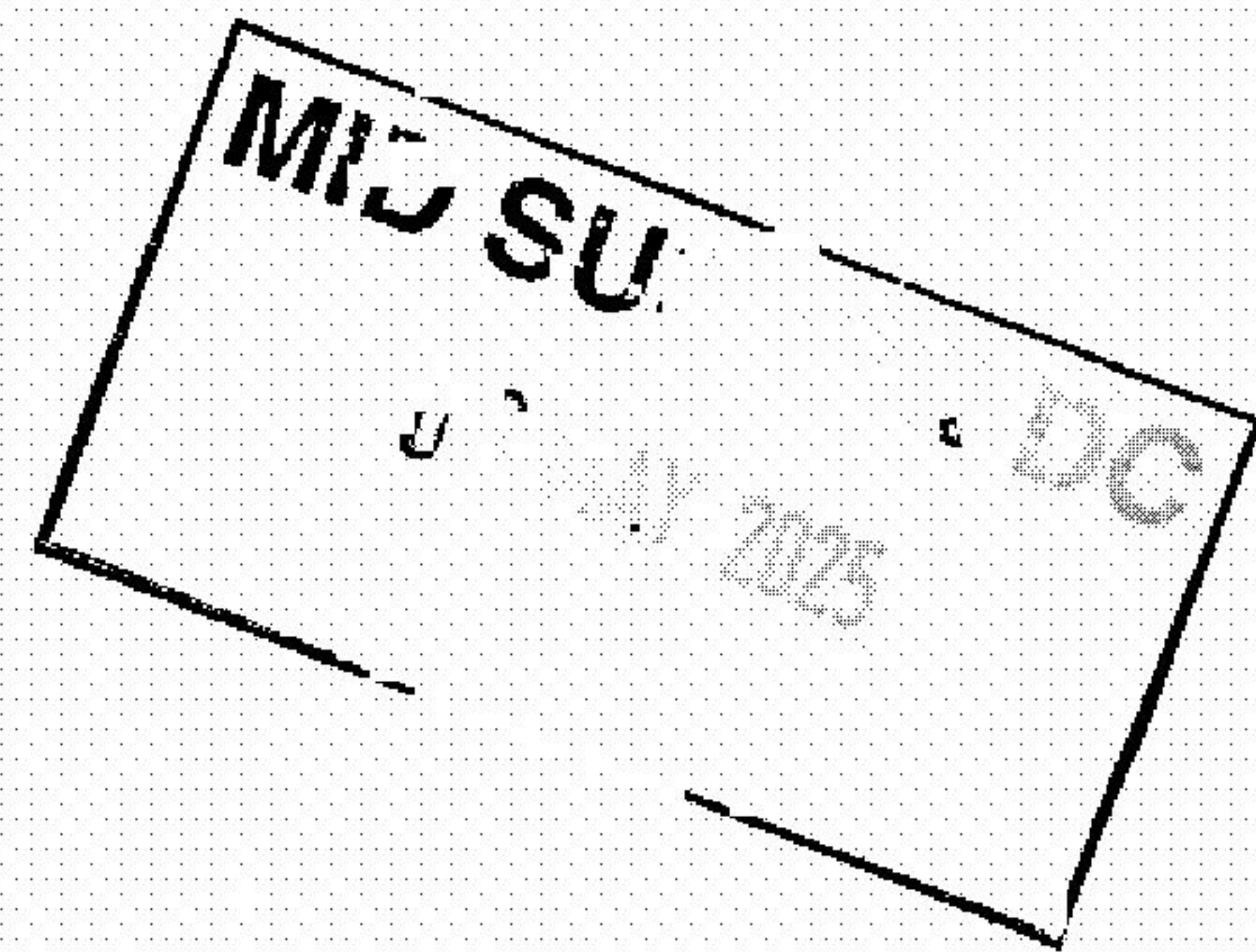
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6 May, 2025

Katherine Williams
Mid Sussex District Council
Planning and Sustainable Economy Department
Oaklands
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex RH16 1SS

Dear Katherine Williams,

Application DM/25/1057
Revision of floodlighting fittings and hours of operation
Burgess Hill School For Girls, Keymer Road, Burgess Hill West Sussex



We object to the proposal to replace the lights and increase the hours of use by 2 hrs on weekdays because of the location of the courts close to residential properties, where bedrooms and living areas overlook the courts and the impact that this proposal will have on a relatively dark space within the Conservation Area. The attached photo taken from a bedroom illustrates the proximity of the courts.

Unfortunately, the school's timing of the application does not allow for a fair assessment of this impact in Winter with the lights on as the foliage is now out and the lights are not needed before 19:00 hrs, the current cut off time.

In your delegated report dated 21st April 2015 your Environmental Protection Officer states in respect of their request for a cut of time of 21:00 hrs 'the additional noise disturbance throughout the Winter evenings as well as the existing Summer noise would be an unreasonable additional burden affecting the amenity of residents'. A cut off time of 19:00 hrs was then permitted **and since then nothing has changed, except the loss of a large broad evergreen conifer and a large trunked deciduous tree, which has made the situation worse.**

It is unclear from the documents on your website what actual fittings are being proposed. We are currently afforded some protection by the presence of back plates on the lamp fittings on the east side, but are subjected to the glare of the dazzling lights on the western side, which have the appearance of 'main beam' of car headlights aimed directly at us.

When the current floodlights were installed, in your delegated report dated 21st April 2015 your Environmental Protection Officer stated 'that there may be some reflected glare from surfaces during wet periods'. The light assessment does not relate to this glare. The court surface, painted light green, when lit has the appearance of a brightly illuminated ice rink in all weathers.

The Mid Sussex Local Plan states :

DPN7: Noise Impacts

People's health and quality of life and the natural environment, including wildlife will be protected from unacceptable levels of noise.

DPN8: Light Impacts and Dark Skies

New Development needs to be managed to protect people's health and quality of life and the natural environment from unacceptable levels of light pollution.

Artificial light can also have impacts on wildlife and ecosystems. For example, the artificial lighting of bat roosts, access points and foraging pathways can cause disturbance to bats. It is important to consider the colour of lighting and the materials used so that light does not reflect off surfaces, especially near water surfaces.

... poorly designed lighting can result in light pollution which can lead to negative effects on health and wellbeing and ecosystems.

It is necessary to consider where, when and how much light shines. For example, measures should be taken to turn off or dim light when it is not being used....

Under the current restrictions lights are often left on after school matches have finished, which is usually between 17:00 hrs and 18:00hrs, with empty courts being unnecessarily lit until 19:00. Recent examples of this, when the lights were also on in breach of the current planning conditions, were on 14th November 2024 (until 20:00), 12th December 2024 (until 19:53), 6th January 2025 (until 19:30) and 4th February (until 19:30). We had to remind the school that their temporary permission on the Astro Turf surfaced courts had expired and that they should revert to 19:00 hrs cut off time. Almost every year, when the clocks go back in October, the school forgets to reset their cut off timer and the lights have initially stayed on until 20:00 hrs GMT. Allowing a cut off time of 21:00 without protections for the inconsiderate use of the floodlights when the courts are not in use would compound the problem of light trespass and, on past performance, could result in the lights to be left on until 22:00 hrs.

The Burgess Hill Town Plan Policy H1 Protecting and Enhancing Heritage Assets and Conservation Areas states that 'Proposals within the Burgess Hill Conservation Areas will be required to preserve and enhance their special character or appearance'. **Increasing the use of floodlights does neither.**

The current Environmental Health Officer has made his recommendations without being aware of and being able to take these issues into account. We have sent him a copy of this letter for his consideration.

We accept that the school may need to use its facilities. But after taking into account the noise generated from daily school activities, after school activities and the disturbance created at weekends with netball clubs often starting at 11:00 hrs and finishing around 16:00 hrs on Saturdays and Sundays on these courts, we should not be exposed to more noise and light pollution that will affect our enjoyment of our property and our health and wellbeing and quality of life

Therefore, to summarise, the following needs addressing:

- Rejection of the extension of use to 21:00 hrs
- Back plates to be fitted on new eastern light fittings, whatever time restrictions are imposed
- Front plates to be fitted on new western light fittings, whatever time restrictions are imposed
- A true assessment of the level and impact of glare from the court surface and appropriate action to be taken
- Proposals to ensure that light are only switched on when the courts are in use

We would be happy for you to visit our property should you wish to assess the site from the residents' perspective.

Yours sincerely,

