

From: planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk
Sent: 03 June 2026 12:04
To: Caroline Grist
Subject: Mid Sussex DC - Online Register - Comments for Planning Application DM/26/1315

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 03/06/2026 12:04 PM.

Application Summary

Address:	Land West Of Gatesmead Wickham Way Haywards Heath West Sussex
Proposal:	Proposed 49 new homes together with open space and associated infrastructure.
Case Officer:	Caroline Grist

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Address:	The Fairway 62 Wickham Way Haywards Heath West Sussex
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Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour or general public
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	
Comments:	Dear Planning Officer, I object to this application. I live close to the entrance to Wickham Field and have direct daily experience of how the field and surrounding access routes are used. My objection is not to housing in principle, but to the development of this particular field, using this access arrangement, with the resulting loss of a heavily used local green space and harm to local character, public access, highway safety, heritage and ecology. 1. Loss of a valued and well-used local green space Wickham Field is not an unused or incidental piece of land in practice. It is used every day by local residents for walking, informal recreation, dog walking and access to nature. From my home near the entrance I regularly see large numbers of people using the field; on many days

this is up to around 100 people, particularly dog walkers. In summer, groups of children and teenagers also use the field for cycling and informal outdoor activity.

For many nearby households this is the only realistic local place to walk in a natural setting without needing to drive. The loss would therefore materially reduce access to informal open space, exercise, nature and day-to-day outdoor recreation for hundreds of nearby homes.

The proposed on-site open space would not be an equivalent replacement. It would not replace the current open field character, circular walking routes, dog-walking function, informal cycling space, sense of separation from built development, or access to a natural landscape. The applicant has not demonstrated that the existing recreational function is surplus, nor that equivalent or better provision would be available in a suitable location.

2. Public access and DMMO 3/22

West Sussex County Council records DMMO 3/22 for Wickham Way, applied for by Haywards Heath Town Council and Lindfield Rural Parish Council. The legal status, alignment and implications of this claimed public access should be fully resolved, or at least formally confirmed by West Sussex County Council, before this planning application is determined.

It would be premature to approve a layout, estate road, open space arrangement or boundary treatment that could prejudice an existing or claimed public right of way. The application should be refused or deferred unless the council is satisfied that public access and rights of way are protected and enhanced, not narrowed, urbanised or made less attractive.

3. Unsuitable access through Gatesmead and Birchen Lane

The proposal would turn a quiet residential cul-de-sac into the main vehicular access for 49 homes. Gatesmead and the surrounding residential roads, including Birchen Lane, are quiet, winding residential streets. They are not designed to operate as a through route for construction traffic, heavy plant, refuse vehicles, delivery vehicles and the daily traffic of a new estate.

Children regularly use these streets, and there is a local play area nearby. The character and safety of the street would be fundamentally changed. The concern is not only the number of traffic movements, but the nature of the roads: narrow, curving, residential, and used by children and pedestrians.

Mid Sussex's own previous assessment of this area identified access concerns, including privately maintained roads without footways, the narrowness of Old Wickham Lane, a substandard junction with Balcombe Road, and the need for extensive highway works if the wider site were developed. The current application must show how those constraints have been overcome. In my view, using Gatesmead as the main vehicular access does not overcome them; it transfers the impact onto an unsuitable residential cul-de-sac.

At minimum, the application should not be approved without independent highways scrutiny, swept-path analysis for construction vehicles, refuse and emergency vehicles, a full construction traffic management plan, pedestrian safety assessment, and a clear assessment of the cumulative impact on Gatesmead, Birchen Lane, Wickham Way, Old Wickham Lane and nearby junctions.

4. Construction impact on residential amenity and child safety

The construction phase would be especially harmful. Heavy lorries and plant would have to pass through residential streets that are currently quiet and used by children. Residents would experience noise, dust, vibration, obstruction, parking pressure and highway safety risks. Because I live at or near the access point, the impact would be direct and continuous.

A construction management condition would not remove the fundamental problem that the only practical construction access appears to be through an unsuitable residential cul-de-sac.

5. Harm to heritage assets and historic landscape

The site forms part of the rural-edge setting of important heritage assets, including Grade II* listed Sunte House and Wickham Farmhouse. Grade II* buildings are highly significant designated heritage assets, and any harm to their setting must be given great weight in the planning balance.

The council's earlier assessment also identified the medieval assart landscape, including Hollow Way, as a non-designated heritage asset requiring consideration. Building 49 homes on the field would erode the remaining rural character and historic landscape context around these assets. The applicant should not be allowed to rely on screening or buffers alone where the essential harm is the replacement of open rural land with a housing estate.

6. Trees, hedgerows, ecology and ancient woodland

The area contains mature trees, hedgerows and nearby ancient woodland. Mid Sussex's earlier assessment specifically noted substantial woodland to the north, much of it ancient woodland, and required an ancient woodland buffer, hedgerow retention/enhancement, and archaeological/historical assessment.

The site and its edges are used by wildlife. The council should require full, up-to-date ecological surveys covering protected and notable species, reptiles, bats, birds, hedgerows and woodland impacts before determination, not after permission. The proposal should also demonstrate a genuine biodiversity net gain without relying on token landscaping that does not replace the existing ecological and recreational value of the field.

7. Conflict with local plan policy and premature release of an unallocated constrained site

This site has not been shown to be suitable for this scale of housing through the local plan process. The council's own earlier assessment identified significant constraints and marked the land as not currently developable. The application should not be treated as a simple infill proposal. It would materially alter the edge of Haywards Heath, remove valued open land, create a new estate accessed through a cul-de-sac, and affect heritage, landscape, ecology and public access.

For these reasons, I ask Mid Sussex District Council to refuse the application. If the council is not minded to refuse at this stage, it should at least defer determination until the DMMO/public access position, highways evidence, heritage assessment, ecological surveys, ancient woodland buffer, construction traffic arrangements and open space/recreation assessment have been fully resolved and independently reviewed.

Yours faithfully,


62 Wickham Way
Haywards Heath
RH16 1UQ

Kind regards