



Design, Access and Planning Statement (Combined)

Project: Four staff houses at Hurstpierpoint College (Ruckford House site, BN6 9JS)

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1. Summary

This Statement combines the Design and Access Statement and the Planning Statement for the erection of four dwellings for College staff on land associated with Ruckford House, off Malthouse Lane. It explains the site context, the design evolution and access arrangements, and demonstrates compliance with national and local planning policy. It is supported by technical reports on trees, ecology, drainage and flood risk.

The proposal delivers four staff homes within the College estate. It improves on site movement and safety by widening the access (not on Highway), adding a formal passing place and providing a separate pedestrian route. It achieves drainage betterment by removing surface water from the foul network and using infiltration Sustainable Drainage Systems. It retains and protects key trees and hedgerows and provides new native planting to offset essential removals.

2. Site and Surrounding Context

Ruckford House lies to the north east of the main Hurstpierpoint College campus and is accessed from Malthouse Lane, which is a classified road. The immediate context comprises College managed residences, with Ruckford Three to the south and Ruckford House to the east. To the north there are playing fields with a pavilion and an informal track, and to the east there are tennis courts. Beyond the playing fields, around Ruckford Mill, are several dwellings including three Grade II listed buildings: Ruckford Mill Farmhouse, Ruckford Mill Farmhouse Cottage and Ruckford Mill. A public right of way identified as 56_2Hu runs in this area and affords intermittent views towards the site across the playing fields and boundary vegetation.

The College estate is within designated countryside and policy DP12 therefore applies. The application site forms part of the residential curtilage with areas of hardstanding and parking around Ruckford House. Levels fall gently from north to south from about 29.0 metres Above Ordnance Datum to about 28.4 metres across the developable area.

Mature trees and fencing define the site edges. Land to the north and along the road frontage is covered by Tree Preservation Order TP/14/0003. The layout and construction approach are informed by the full BS5837 suite comprising the Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan.

The site lies within a Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone (Red). The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal is complete and the Ecological Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain assessment have been prepared. The proposals include sensitive lighting and habitat creation. The site is in Flood Zone 1 with a very small strip at the north west

frontage identified as having a one in one thousand year surface water susceptibility. It is within a Geology Safeguarding Zone. A Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainable Drainage strategy accompany the application.

Please find below link to a walk through of the application area:

<https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=zXa352P5N5g>

3. The Proposal

The development comprises four dwellings arranged as two semi detached pairs within the Ruckford House landholding, with associated parking, private amenity space and landscape works. The dwelling mix is two two bedroom houses and two three bedroom houses. Attic trusses will be installed to the two bedroom houses to allow a future loft conversion without significant external change other than roof windows.

Access and movement will be improved by widening the entrance bellmouth within College land and by creating a signed passing place so that a minimum running width of three metres is maintained. A new permeable pedestrian path is proposed parallel to the access drive, using no dig construction where within root protection areas. Turning space for emergency and service vehicles is integrated within the forecourt. Resident and visitor parking will be provided in a permeable car court adjacent to the dwellings, with electric vehicle charging capability to each space to be confirmed by condition. No Section 278 agreement is proposed because all access improvements are within College ownership and do not alter the adopted highway. If any future works to the adopted highway are required, they would be secured under a separate agreement with West Sussex County Council. The proposed site plan includes a red line that shows the adopted highway boundary.

The drainage strategy manages roof and hard surfacing runoff through permeable paving with sub base attenuation and infiltration. Existing surface water connections to the foul network will be removed. Foul water will connect to the existing private pumped system serving the College. Service connections for water, electricity are available and data will be taken from existing private estate networks, with capacity and routes confirmed at the technical design stage.

4. Design Rationale

4.1 Use, Amount and Scale

The proposed use is residential (C3) for College staff only and will strengthen on site accommodation while reducing commuter trips. The amount is four dwellings in two semi detached buildings. The massing, footprint and separation respond to retained trees, root protection areas and neighbouring buildings and maintain a modest domestic scale appropriate to the setting.

4.2 Layout

The homes are arranged around a small shared court to provide clear fronts and backs, good natural surveillance and logical servicing and parking. Private amenity spaces are oriented to maximise daylight and privacy while respecting neighbouring properties and tree constraints. The layout is informed by arboricultural constraints, utilities and Sustainable Drainage requirements, minimising incursion into root protection areas and enabling no dig construction where required. The buildings sit on lower, more sheltered ground, read against existing mature boundaries and are aligned broadly with local contours so that they do not break the skyline or appear as isolated objects in the landscape.

4.3 Appearance and Materials

The architecture adopts a restrained rural vernacular with careful proportioning and depth to openings, simple eaves and robust detailing. There will be no uPVC windows or doors. Windows and doors are specified as aluminium clad timber to provide a high quality, durable finish while reflecting a traditional vertical emphasis appropriate to the context. A high solid to void relationship is maintained to avoid an overly glazed suburban character. Roofs are simple half hipped gables set within the thirty five to forty five degree range with modest eaves and verges that avoid large overhangs. No dormer windows are proposed. Ventilation will be integrated so that visible trickle vents are avoided. Masonry will be red and buff brick with a lime toned mortar, clay plain roof tiles are proposed, context appropriate tile hanging to be used to match the Ruckford House and the rainwater goods will have a dark finish. No new chimneys are proposed.

4.4 Landscape Strategy

New native tree and hedgerow planting will compensate for agreed removals, reinforce boundaries and provide biodiversity and visual benefits. Screening will be strengthened to Malthouse Lane and towards the public right of way. Hardstanding will be minimised and visually broken up with permeable paving and planting pockets. No dig construction will be used within root protection areas and frontage trees will be retained and bolstered. Boundary treatments and planting are informal and rural in character and avoid suburban forms such as high walls, ornate gates and rigid straight lines. Native species hedgerows and small groups of trees are proposed, with fast growing non native conifers avoided.

4.5 Sustainability

The approach is fabric first to reduce energy demand, with aluminium clad timber double glazing and efficient services. Parking will be electric vehicle ready and secure cycle storage will encourage low carbon travel. The drainage strategy uses water sensitive urban design with infiltration Sustainable Drainage Systems and reduced runoff, and Biodiversity Net Gain will be delivered through habitat enhancements and new planting as described in section 7.2. Passive design measures include orientation for daylight, cross ventilation and opportunities for selective external shading.

4.6 Rural Design Principles Applied

The proposal follows recognised rural design principles so that the new homes complement rather than dominate their setting. Buildings are simple in form with a clear hierarchy of elements and a narrow plan approach that promotes good daylighting and reduces bulk. Scale and height are proportionate to the site and to neighbouring buildings. Elevations retain a high proportion of wall to opening with a vertical emphasis to windows and restrained detailing. Roofs are simple half hipped with gables without complex junctions. Materials are few, robust and locally sympathetic and will weather well. The site layout reads as a small cluster tucked into existing boundaries and tree belts, avoids ribboning along Malthouse Lane and is arranged along natural contours. Landscaping works with existing features, retaining hedgerows and trees where possible and supplementing them with native planting. Entrances are modest and rural in character so that the edge remains verdant and unobtrusive.

5. Access and Inclusion

5.1 Vehicular Access

The access from Malthouse Lane will be upgraded with a widened bellmouth and a formal passing place within College land. Highways related design has progressed through tracking for fire appliance access. The bellmouth widening is anticipated to be about 1.5 metres and is designed to sit within the site boundary. No Section 278 agreement is proposed because the works are entirely within College ownership and do not involve alterations to the adopted highway; the proposed site plan includes a red line that delineates the extent of the adopted highway boundary for clarity. Where vegetation management is required for visibility, it will be achieved within the College boundary with like for like native hedgerow replanting as needed. If any future works are identified within the adopted highway, these would be brought forward under a separate agreement with West Sussex County Council.

5.2 Pedestrian and Cycle Access

A new permeable footway approximately one metre wide will separate pedestrians from vehicles along the drive and will tie into existing pedestrian routes. Secure, covered cycle storage will be provided for each dwelling, with the type and capacity to be agreed by condition.

5.3 Inclusive Design

Each dwelling will have step free access to the principal entrance with level thresholds and clear, legible wayfinding from the car court. External gradients will be designed for comfortable access. Dwellings will meet, as a minimum, Building Regulations M4(1) and opportunities to achieve M4(2) will be explored at the technical design stage subject to site levels and drainage.

5.4 Servicing and Waste

Refuse and recycling stores will be located within an easy drag distance of collection points and there will be turning and standing space to enable safe collection without long reversing movements.

5.5 Space Standards and Accessibility

The dwellings are designed to comply with the Nationally Described Space Standard and Building Regulations Part M. The current design targets are set not less than the relevant minima below; schedules on the submitted drawings will confirm compliance at validation.

Unit	Bedrooms	Persons	NDSS minimum (two storey)	Design target
House Plots 1&2	2	4	79 sqm	≥ 80 sqm
House Plots 3&4	3	5	93 sqm	≥ 105 sqm

All dwellings will meet Part M category M4(1) as a minimum. Opportunities to achieve M4(2) will be explored at the detailed design stage subject to site levels and drainage.

6. Planning Policy Framework

Development Plan (adopted):

Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (March 2018) - DP12 (Protection and Enhancement of Countryside); DP14 (Sustainable Rural Development and Rural Economy); DP17 (Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation); DP21 (Transport); DP25 (Community Facilities and Local Services); DP26 (Character and Design); DP27 (Dwelling Space Standards); DP28 (Accessibility); DP29 (Noise, Air and

Light); DP34 (Listed Buildings and Heritage Assets); DP37 (Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows); DP38 (Biodiversity); DP39 (Sustainable Design and Construction); DP41 (Flood Risk and Drainage); DP42 (Water Infrastructure and the Water Environment).

Neighbourhood Plan (March 2015):

Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan - HurstC1 (Conserving and Enhancing Character); HurstC5 (Hurstpierpoint College); HurstH5 (Development Principles); DPS6 (Health and Wellbeing); DPN1 (Biodiversity and Nature Recovery); DPN2 (Biodiversity Net Gain); DPN4 (Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows); 1 (Countryside); DPC6 (Ashdown Forest and SAC); DPB1 (Character and Design); DPB2 (Listed Building and Heritage Assets); DPT1 (Placemaking and Connectivity); DPT3 (Active sustainable Travel); DPT4 (Parking and EV); DPE8 (Sustainable Development and Rural Economy); DPH11 (NDSS); DPH12 (Accessibility); DPI6 (Community and Cultural Facility and Local Services); DPI7 (Watend Wastewater Infrastructure).

National guidance and SPDs:

NPPF (Dec 2023); Technical Housing Standards - Nationally Described Space Standard (2015); West Sussex CC Guidance on Parking New Developments (Aug 2019); Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD (Nov 2020).

Principle of development: Within designated countryside the proposal must satisfy DP12 and the College-specific support in DP25 and NP policy HurstC5. Provision of staff accommodation that enhances the College's operation is supported in principle, subject to detailed design, heritage, landscape, ecology, drainage and highways compliance.

6A. Pre application Advice (MSDC Ref. DM/24/0769) and Applicant Response

Officer: Andy Watt MRTPI; **Site meeting:** 17 July; **Response:** summary below.

A. Principle (DP12, DP25; NP HurstC5)

Pre application advice confirms that staff housing serving the College is acceptable in principle provided policy tests are met. The application sets out the operational need and the public benefits, with units tied by condition or obligation to College staff so that the development directly supports the educational use. The site sits within the managed campus envelope and the layout limits spread, retains and enhances the verdant character and avoids sprawl into the wider countryside. The scale is four two storey dwellings with a restrained rural material palette; hardstanding is reduced and softened; native planting is added to protect views from Malthouse Lane and from the public right of way 56_2Hu. On site occupation by staff reduces commuting trips. Access is made safe by a passing place and a separated pedestrian route and the scheme provides secure cycle storage and electric vehicle ready spaces. The design is led by BS5837 guidance, with no dig surfacing near root protection areas and a measurable Biodiversity Net Gain secured through habitat creation and planting. Drainage is

Sustainable Drainage led with disconnection of surface water from the foul network and a Flood Risk Assessment is submitted. Trips affecting Ashdown Forest are de minimis and mitigated by the staff occupancy; a proportionate Habitats Regulations Assessment screening note is supplied. The dwellings will meet the Nationally Described Space Standards and Part M category M4(1), with an aspiration to achieve M4(2) subject to site levels, and a Sustainability and Energy Statement will accompany the application.

B. Design and Heritage (DP26, DP34; Design Guide SPD)

The conservation advice identifies risk of a small but noticeable loss of verdant character and a suburban tone if the design and hardstanding are not carefully handled, with a likely degree of less than substantial harm to the settings of the listed buildings at Ruckford Mill and the main College buildings. The application therefore proposes a restrained rural vernacular with no uPVC, concealed ventilation, clay plain tiles, brickwork in red and buff with a lime toned mortar, and limited tile hanging where appropriate. Hardstanding is reduced and visually broken up with permeable surfaces and planting pockets, native hedgerow and tree planting is increased to the north and along Malthouse Lane, frontage trees are retained and screening towards the public right of way is reinforced. A Heritage Statement prepared in accordance with Historic England Guidance Note 3 will assess the settings and viewpoints from Malthouse Lane and the public right of way 56_2Hu, articulate significance, harm and mitigation, and explain the public benefits in the context of National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 208.

C. Trees (DP37)

The scheme aims to retain the frontage trees and to provide mitigation planting to the north to help screen the additional land take from public views along Malthouse Lane. The layout is aligned with the BS5837 constraints and the Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan set out no dig methods near root protection areas together with a maintenance plan that will be secured by condition. Care has been taken with the positioning of the dwellings so that there is not future pressure for removal of retained trees. Existing trees between the site and Malthouse Lane are to be retained to screen the development for view.

D. Neighbour amenity (DP26, DP29)

The distance between the rear elevation of the proposed dwellings and the north elevation of Ruckford Three is around fourteen metres. Although both are within College control the design will ensure there is no harmful intervisibility or mutual loss of amenity. Window placement and obscuration have been adjusted to avoid direct overlooking, a native hedge and selective privacy planting are introduced to the boundary, and sections are included within the application.

E. Highways (DP21; WSCC Parking and Electric Vehicle Guidance)

No works are planned to the Highway. Parking provision, electric vehicle charging and cycle storage will comply with current guidance. The proposed works include widening the estate access within College land, forming a formal passing place and maintaining a minimum three metre running width. Spaces will be electric vehicle ready and secure covered cycle storage will be provided.

F. Drainage (DP41)

A Flood Risk Assessment is provided due to the small area with one in one thousand year surface water susceptibility. The drainage strategy is based on infiltration Sustainable Drainage Systems with disconnection of any surface water from the foul network and clear maintenance arrangements. Permeable surfaces with sub base infiltration will be used and the Sustainable Drainage Systems are sized for the one in one hundred year storm with forty five per cent climate change uplift.

G. Biodiversity and Great Crested Newt (DP38; Emerging DPN1/2)

An Ecological Impact Assessment is provided. The site lies within a Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal by Arbtech dated 28 March 2025 confirms the on site habitats are bramble scrub, modified grassland, ornamental and native hedgerows and small areas of decking and gravel. There are no on site designations, no invasive non native species, no watercourses and no badger setts. Trees have negligible bat roost features and any removals will be soft felled under an Ecological Clerk of Works. Nesting birds will be protected by seasonal timing or a pre start check. There are seven ponds within five hundred metres, the closest being about two hundred and fifty metres to the north east. The Natural England Great Crested Newt Rapid Risk Assessment is Green, meaning an offence is highly unlikely. A precautionary method will be applied including a two stage strim and fingertip search. The Biodiversity Net Gain assessment by Arbtech dated 29 May 2025 records a baseline linear hedgerow value of 0.19 units, post development linear of 0.00 units where on site hedgerows are lost, and a post development habitat area value of 0.36 units. To achieve at least ten per cent Biodiversity Net Gain, 2.25 habitat units plus 0.20 linear units are required through off site planting within the College estate or via financial contribution. Sixty one metres of new native hedgerow planting are proposed together with native habitat creation and lighting design that protects foraging and commuting routes.

H. Ashdown Forest (DP17 and DPC6)

The Local Planning Authority may require Habitats Regulations Assessment screening of traffic impacts. The application includes a short screening note. Four dwellings generate a de minimis number of net trips and on site staff occupancy reduces wider network trips.

I. Other matters (DP27, DP28, DP39)

The dwellings will comply with the government's Nationally Described Space Standards and the council's accessibility standards. A Sustainability and Energy Statement will accompany the application. The dwellings meet the Nationally Described Space Standards for three bedroom units, will be designed to Part M category M4(1) with an aspiration for M4(2) subject to levels, and the Energy and Sustainability Statement is included.

6B. Heritage Statement (Historic England Guidance Note 3)

Scope and method. This statement follows Historic England Guidance Note 3 on the setting of heritage assets. It identifies the heritage assets and their significance, reviews how their settings contribute to that significance, evaluates the likely effects of the proposal, and explains how the design has been refined to avoid, minimise and mitigate any harm, before setting out the overall balance in line with National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 208.

Heritage assets and significance. The principal designated assets in the vicinity are the Grade II listed buildings at Ruckford Mill, including Ruckford Mill Farmhouse, Ruckford Mill Farmhouse Cottage and Ruckford Mill. Within the wider campus, the Grade II listed main quadrangle and Star House are also of relevance. The mill group is significant for its architectural interest, historic illustrative value as a nineteenth century water powered corn mill with associated dwellings and outbuildings, and for communal value as a former local focus of rural activity. The college buildings have architectural and aesthetic value as a coherent ensemble of purpose built educational buildings within a planned landscape. Both groups draw part of their significance from a verdant, rural character and a degree of separation from surrounding settlements.

Contribution of setting and key views. The setting of the mill group includes the mill stream, boundary vegetation and the wider rural landscape to the north and east, and it extends south across the open playing fields towards the college. The open, green character of these fields and the presence of trees and hedgerows reflect the agricultural origins of the mill and contribute positively to how the assets are experienced. The site is viewed obliquely and intermittently from Malthouse Lane and from the public right of way identified as 56_2Hu that runs to the north of the playing fields. Glimpsed views are filtered by vegetation and the existing college buildings to the east and south already provide a developed backdrop in some viewpoints. The setting of the main college buildings is characterised by their architectural grouping within a mature, landscaped campus that includes open sports pitches and tree belts.

Assessment of effects. The proposal introduces four dwellings on a managed parcel of land that is currently vegetated and sits within the established campus envelope. The change involves a localised loss of greenery and the introduction of domestic built form

and associated hardstanding. Without mitigation this could erode a modest part of the verdant character that contributes to the appreciation of the listed buildings. The effect is limited by the small scale and height of the development, by its position within the campus, and by the screening and separation that already exist. On this basis, the degree of harm to the settings of the nearby listed buildings is assessed as less than substantial at the lower end of the spectrum.

Design response and mitigation. The design has been refined to respond to the rural context and to reduce visual impact. Elevations adopt a restrained vernacular with red and buff brickwork, clay plain tiles and a traditional vertical emphasis to openings. There will be no uPVC fenestration; windows and doors are aluminium clad timber with concealed ventilation to avoid visible trickle vents. Hardstanding has been reduced and visually broken up with permeable surfacing and planting pockets. Frontage trees are retained where feasible, native hedgerows and trees are reinforced along Malthouse Lane and to the north, and screening towards the public right of way is strengthened. External lighting will be carefully designed to avoid spill into the wider landscape and to protect foraging and commuting routes for bats. These measures ensure the development reads as a modest, recessive addition within the established campus pattern rather than as encroachment into the wider countryside.

Heritage balance and conclusion. Any identified less than substantial harm at the lower end is outweighed by public benefits that include the provision of staff housing that supports the continued operation of an established educational institution and reduces commuting, improvements to on site safety and movement, surface water betterment through Sustainable Drainage Systems, and measurable biodiversity enhancements secured through planting and habitat creation. The proposal therefore accords with policy DP34 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, with policy DP26 on character and design, with neighbourhood plan policy HurstC5, and with the National Planning Policy Framework, when read as a whole.

6C. Policy Compliance Summary

Mid Sussex District Plan (March 2018). The site lies in the countryside for the purposes of policy DP12. The proposal is acceptable in principle because it is directly supported by policy DP25 on community facilities and by neighbourhood plan policy HurstC5, which together allow development within the environs of Hurstpierpoint College where it enhances the role of the College as a school and local employer and respects landscape character. The land is inside the established campus envelope and the scale is modest. The layout and planting preserve the verdant quality of the edge and avoid sprawl into the wider countryside, so the scheme maintains the intrinsic rural character required by DP12 while delivering the staff housing that DP25 seeks.

The design meets policy DP26. The homes are arranged to provide natural surveillance and clear fronts and backs, the scale is domestic and responsive to neighbouring

buildings and trees, the architectural language is restrained and locally sympathetic, and parking is integrated so it does not dominate the street environment. Amenity is protected through careful window placement, separation, and boundary planting. Policy DP34 is addressed through the Heritage Statement at section 6B. Any less than substantial harm at the lower end to the settings of listed buildings is mitigated by design, planting and lighting control and is outweighed by public benefits in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 208.

Policy DP37 is met because the layout has been designed around the tree constraints identified in the BS5837 assessments, with no dig construction where within root protection areas, Construction Exclusion Zones and supervision, and new native planting to offset agreed removals and reinforce screening. Policy DP38 is met because the scheme protects existing biodiversity, provides sensitive lighting and bird and bat boxes, and secures measurable Biodiversity Net Gain through on site habitat creation and planting alongside an identified route for any residual off site provision. Policy DP39 is met by a fabric first approach, water efficiency and provision for low carbon travel including cycle storage and electric vehicle readiness.

Flood risk and drainage accord with policies DP41 and DP42. The site is in Flood Zone 1, the small area of surface water susceptibility at the frontage is managed through the Sustainable Drainage strategy, all new external areas are permeable, surface water is disconnected from the foul network, and a maintenance plan is provided. Foul water will connect to the existing private pumped system serving the College.

The transport measures meet policy DP21. The scheme is within the campus and therefore well related to the activity it serves. Safe and suitable access is provided through bellmouth widening, a formal passing place and a new pedestrian route, and there is secure cycle storage and electric vehicle provision. No Section 278 works are proposed because all access improvements are within College ownership and do not alter the adopted highway; if future changes to the highway are required, they would be secured under a separate agreement with West Sussex County Council. Policy DP29 is addressed by controlling construction impacts and by a sensitive external lighting design that avoids unnecessary spill.

The dwellings will meet policy DP27 on the Nationally Described Space Standard and policy DP28 on accessibility through compliance with Part M category M4(1) and an aspiration for M4(2) where levels allow. Policy DP17 on Ashdown Forest is met because the development generates a de minimis number of net trips and the intended staff occupancy reduces wider network movements. A proportionate Habitats Regulations Assessment screening note will be provided.

Neighbourhood Plan (March 2015). The proposal complies with policy HurstC1 by conserving and enhancing local character through a modest scale, a rural material palette and strengthened native planting. It complies with policy HurstC5 because it sits

within the environs of the College, does not detract from the special architectural character of the existing collection of buildings or the wider landscape, conserves the settings of listed buildings, and clearly enhances the role of the College as a school and local employer through the delivery of tied staff housing. It complies with policy HurstH5 because the layout is legible, inclusive and safe, access and parking are appropriately designed, refuse and cycle storage are provided, Sustainable Drainage Systems are integrated, and neighbouring amenity is protected.

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023). The scheme accords with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, makes effective use of land within an existing campus, achieves good design, supports sustainable transport by placing staff accommodation at the point of need, and manages flood risk and drainage through Sustainable Drainage Systems while delivering Biodiversity Net Gain. In heritage terms the design minimises harm and delivers public benefits that outweigh any identified less than substantial harm, consistent with paragraph 208.

Emerging District Plan (Regulation 19, January 2024, minimal weight). Although limited weight can be given, the proposal aligns with the direction of travel: climate change and sustainable construction (DPS1 and DPS2), flood risk and Sustainable Drainage (DPS4), health and wellbeing (DPS6), biodiversity and nature recovery including Biodiversity Net Gain (DPN1 and DPN2), trees and hedgerows (DPN4), protection of the countryside (DPC1), design quality and heritage (DPB1 and DPB2), placemaking and connectivity and active travel (DPT1 and DPT3), parking and electric vehicle charging (DPT4), sustainable rural development (DPE8), dwelling space standards and accessibility (DPH11 and DPH12), and water and wastewater infrastructure (DPI7).

6D. Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD Response

The Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document is a material consideration that expands District Plan policy DP26 on character and design. The SPD sets clear sustainability objectives and design principles that apply to schemes of all scales and types in Mid Sussex. This application has been prepared and refined with direct reference to the SPD and responds as follows.

Sustainability objectives. The SPD states that all new development should be designed to high environmental standards with sustainable construction, energy and water efficiency, green transport, green infrastructure that supports biodiversity net gain, and resilience to future weather events. The scheme adopts a fabric first approach, water efficient fittings, electric vehicle ready parking, secure cycle storage, Sustainable Drainage with infiltration, and native planting and habitat creation to deliver measurable Biodiversity Net Gain. Orientation supports daylight and natural ventilation and aluminium clad timber windows avoid uPVC while delivering durability and long service life.

Site layout, streets and spaces. The SPD seeks a clear structure, a pedestrian friendly environment, well integrated parking, and careful integration of refuse and utilities. The layout reads as a small cluster with fronts and backs clearly defined, a new pedestrian route alongside the access drive, and traffic calming through a narrowed running width and a formal passing place wholly within the College boundary. Parking is contained within a permeable, planted court so that vehicles do not dominate the street scene. Refuse collection has been planned so that drag distances are short and turning is safe, and utilities are routed to avoid conflict with tree planting and root protection areas.

Development edge and landscape. The SPD expects a positive and sensitive edge where development meets the countryside, with additional soft landscape and native planting. The proposal retains and bolsters frontage trees, reinforces the northern boundary towards the playing fields, and strengthens screening to Malthouse Lane and towards the public right of way. New native hedgerow and tree planting are proposed with long term maintenance secured, and hardstanding is broken up by planting pockets and permeable materials to soften views.

High quality and sustainable building design. The SPD supports buildings that minimise environmental impact, display architectural integrity and are appropriately scaled. The houses are simple half hipped gabled forms with a high wall to window ratio, good depth to openings, and restrained detailing. Materials are robust and locally sympathetic, including brickwork with a lime toned mortar and clay plain tiles. Windows and doors are aluminium clad timber with concealed ventilation so that visible trickle vents are avoided. These choices ensure a contemporary interpretation of local vernacular that is recessive in the landscape and avoids a suburban tone.

Residential amenity and inclusive design. The SPD requires protection of privacy, daylight and external amenity and expects inclusive design. Separation to neighbouring buildings has been reviewed and window placement and boundary planting have been arranged to avoid direct overlooking. Each dwelling has a level, step free approach and will meet the Nationally Described Space Standard and Building Regulations Part M category M4(1) with opportunities for M4(2) explored at the next stage.

Summary. The proposal aligns with the SPD by prioritising sustainability, delivering a clear and legible layout with a pedestrian focus, integrating and softening parking and refuse, presenting a sensitive rural edge with strengthened native planting, and designing simple, well proportioned buildings with a restrained material palette that respect setting and scale.

7. Technical Matters

7.1 Arboriculture

The BS5837 Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan have informed the layout and the construction method. The assessments identify the removal of sixteen individual trees, five groups and a partial removal of one group, with replacement native planting to secure a net gain in structure and screening. Measured root protection area incursions associated with access and services include, for example, T06 at approximately 4.4 per cent and T15 at approximately 5.8 per cent. Incursions are minimised and, where unavoidable, will be delivered using no dig cellular confinement surfacing with supervised installation of service runs. Protective fencing will be installed to form Construction Exclusion Zones and the works will follow an agreed sequence that includes a pre start arboricultural briefing, installation of the no dig surfacing and any underground services within root protection areas under supervision, the main construction works, soft landscape installation and, finally, removal of protection with post completion sign off.

7.2 Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal identifies managed habitats on the site comprising bramble scrub, modified grassland, ornamental and native hedgerows and small areas of decking and gravel. There are no on site designations, no invasive non native species, no watercourses and no badger setts. Trees have negligible bat roost features and any necessary removals will be soft felled under an Ecological Clerk of Works. Nesting birds will be protected by seasonal clearance or a pre start check. The site offers some terrestrial habitat for reptiles and amphibians. Seven ponds lie within five hundred metres, the closest being about two hundred and fifty metres to the north east. The Natural England Great Crested Newt Rapid Risk Assessment is Green, indicating that an offence is highly unlikely. A proportionate, precautionary method will therefore be used including a two stage strim and a fingertip search, together with sensitive lighting and the installation of bird and bat boxes.

The Biodiversity Net Gain assessment records a baseline linear hedgerow value of 0.19 units, comprising 0.16 native and 0.03 ornamental, and a post development linear value of 0.00 units where on site hedgerows are lost. The post development habitat area value is 0.36 units. To achieve at least ten per cent Biodiversity Net Gain, 2.25 habitat units plus 0.20 linear units are required. Delivery is intended through native planting north of the proposed houses extending towards the groundskeeper's track to the playing fields, together with off site planting within the College estate or, if required, a financial contribution. Sixty one metres of new native hedgerow planting are proposed alongside native habitat creation and lighting design that protects foraging and commuting routes.

7.3 Flood Risk and Drainage

The site lies in Flood Zone 1. A very small strip at the north west frontage is identified as having a one in one thousand year surface water susceptibility. Exceedance routing will

direct any residual overland flow away from buildings towards less vulnerable areas. All new external hard surfaces will be permeable, with no dig construction where within root protection areas. The car court permeable paving with a deepened sub base (approximately 475 millimetres, not less than 30 per cent voids) will provide attenuation and infiltration for both the car court and roof runoff. Infiltration testing indicates a representative permeability of about 3.968×10^{-6} metres per second with a factor of safety of 5. Roof water will discharge to the permeable sub base via gutters and manholes. There will be no surface water discharge to the foul network and an existing surface water misconnection (around 101 square metres of hard area) will be removed to provide foul betterment, reducing event inflow by approximately 1.2 litres per second. The Sustainable Drainage Systems are sized for the one in one hundred year storm with a forty five per cent climate change allowance and a maintenance schedule is provided. Foul water from the new dwellings will connect to the existing private pumped system serving the estate.

7.4 Highways and Parking

Estate road improvements including the passing place, width maintenance and gate and bellmouth works will enhance safety and enable emergency access. Trip generation is modest for four dwellings and will be accommodated within the existing estate network. An indicative TRICS based check for small residential schemes suggests around one to two two way vehicle movements in each peak hour, which is a very low impact in highway capacity terms. Parking is provided on plot in line with local guidance and each space will be electric vehicle ready.

7.5 Utilities

Available networks for water, electricity and data are available locally. Any diversions and new connections will be confirmed at the detailed stage. No abnormal utility constraints have been identified at this stage.

8. Sustainability Statement

The proposed staff residences are designed to align with current sustainability standards and Building Regulations. The strategy is fabric first, with high performance insulation, whole house airtightness and energy efficient services. Windows will be aluminium clad timber double glazing and the roof will be finished with durable clay tiles, with materials specified to favour locally sourced, renewable and recycled content where practicable. Water consumption is reduced through efficient sanitaryware and the external works adopt Sustainable Drainage Systems to manage surface water runoff, support infiltration and mitigate flood risk. Biodiversity is enhanced through native planting, integrated bird and bat boxes and habitat creation, with the scheme targeting at least

ten per cent measurable Biodiversity Net Gain as described in section 7.2. Construction will follow a resource efficient approach with a site waste management plan that prioritises segregation, reuse and recycling to minimise waste to landfill. Provision for low carbon travel is made through secure cycle storage and electric vehicle ready parking, and opportunities for on plot renewables, for example roof mounted photovoltaic panels, will be assessed at the detailed design stage.

Building Regulations compliance. The homes will comply with the current Building Regulations including Part L (energy and carbon) through design stage and as built SAP assessments, primary energy and carbon targets, and airtightness testing; Part O (overheating) by adopting orientation, opening areas for cross ventilation, selective external shading and appropriate glazing performance under the simplified method, or dynamic modelling where required; Part F (ventilation) through a whole house mechanical ventilation strategy that avoids visible window trickle vents (for example mechanical ventilation with heat recovery sized to provide the required background and extract rates), or discreet wall background ventilators where mechanical supply air is not adopted; Part S by providing an electric vehicle charge point or compliant cabling provision to each dwelling; and Part G by designing to a potable water consumption target of one hundred and ten litres per person per day.

Planning policy and long term management. The development will deliver at least ten per cent Biodiversity Net Gain and a Biodiversity Gain Plan will be submitted for approval prior to commencement. Habitat creation and planting will be maintained for a minimum period of thirty years, secured by condition or obligation, with monitoring and reporting as required. The Sustainable Drainage Systems align with the national standards and West Sussex Lead Local Flood Authority guidance, following the hierarchy with infiltration as the preferred approach, providing water quality treatment through permeable paving and including a clear long term maintenance schedule. Responsibilities for management of both the Sustainable Drainage Systems and the Biodiversity Net Gain habitats will be recorded in the application documents and secured by condition.

9. Conclusion

The scheme makes efficient use of previously managed land within the College estate to deliver much needed staff housing. Following pre application advice, the design has been refined to protect the verdant character and the settings of nearby heritage assets through a rural material palette with no uPVC and no visible trickle vents, reduced and softened hardstanding, strengthened native planting and a robust Sustainable Drainage System and tree protection strategy.

Public Benefits (for National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 208 balance)

The development provides four dwellings for College staff that support key worker retention and the operational resilience of a major local employer and educator. On site occupation reduces off site commuting and associated vehicle trips. The drainage strategy disconnects existing surface water from the foul network and provides a fully permeable car court with infiltration designed for the one in one hundred year storm with a forty five per cent climate change allowance. The scheme secures measurable Biodiversity Net Gain through habitat creation and native planting and it delivers movement and safety improvements within the estate including the passing place, the pedestrian route and emergency turning.

The applicant respectfully invites the Local Planning Authority to approve the application subject to standard conditions that secure materials, landscaping including mitigation planting, Sustainable Drainage maintenance, and arboricultural supervision, together with a Heritage Statement prepared under Historic England Guidance Note 3 and any specific requirements of West Sussex County Council Highways and the Lead Local Flood Authority.

Appendices (to be submitted with the application)

A. Drawings and Plans

1. **719 AL99** – Location & Block Plans
2. **719 AL100** – Site Plan – Existing
3. **719 AL200** – Site Plan – Proposed
4. **719 AL201** – Plans Plots 3 and 4 – Proposed
5. **719 AL202** – Elevations Plots 3 and 4 – Proposed
6. **719 AL203** – Sections 3 and 4 – Proposed
7. **719 AL204** – Plans Plots 1 and 2 – Proposed
8. **719 AL205** – Elevations Plots 1 and 2 – Proposed
9. **719 AL206** – Sections 1 and 2 – Proposed
10. **719 AL207** – Contextual Elevations – Proposed

B. Design and Access / Planning Statements

11. 719 Planning and DAS Statement.docx

(Combined Planning, Design & Access Statement including policy, layout, appearance, landscaping, sustainability, programme and justification)

C. Ecology and Biodiversity

12. **Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Arbtech, 28 March 2025)**
13. **Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (Arbtech, 29 May 2025)**
14. **Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool (Excel) – 12 October 2025**

D. Arboriculture

15. **Arboricultural Survey to BS5837:2012 (Arbtech, 02 May 2025)**
16. **Arboricultural Method Statement (Arbtech, 23 May 2025)**

E. Flood and Drainage

17. **Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (HOP Consulting, July 2025)**