

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Including Planning Statement, Affordable Housing Statement,
Statement of Community Involvement and Sustainability Statement.

**LAND SOUTH OF HAMMERWOOD ROAD
ASHURSTWOOD
WEST SUSSEX
RH19 3RX**



DEVELOPMENT OF SITE SA26 – ALLOCATION FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
For
The Erection of Twelve Houses, Comprising 4x Two Bedroom Houses, 4x Three
Bedroom Houses & 4x Four Bedroom Houses, with Associated Access (Via
Yewhurst Close) and Parking

APPLICATION SITE
LAND SOUTH OF
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RH19 3RX

APPLICANT
VIRTUE LAND LTD
EXTENSION SUITE, ALMA HOUSE
REIGATE
SURREY
RH2 0AX

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(Note that drawings within the D&S are not to scale. Please refer to separate drawing sheets for measurement)

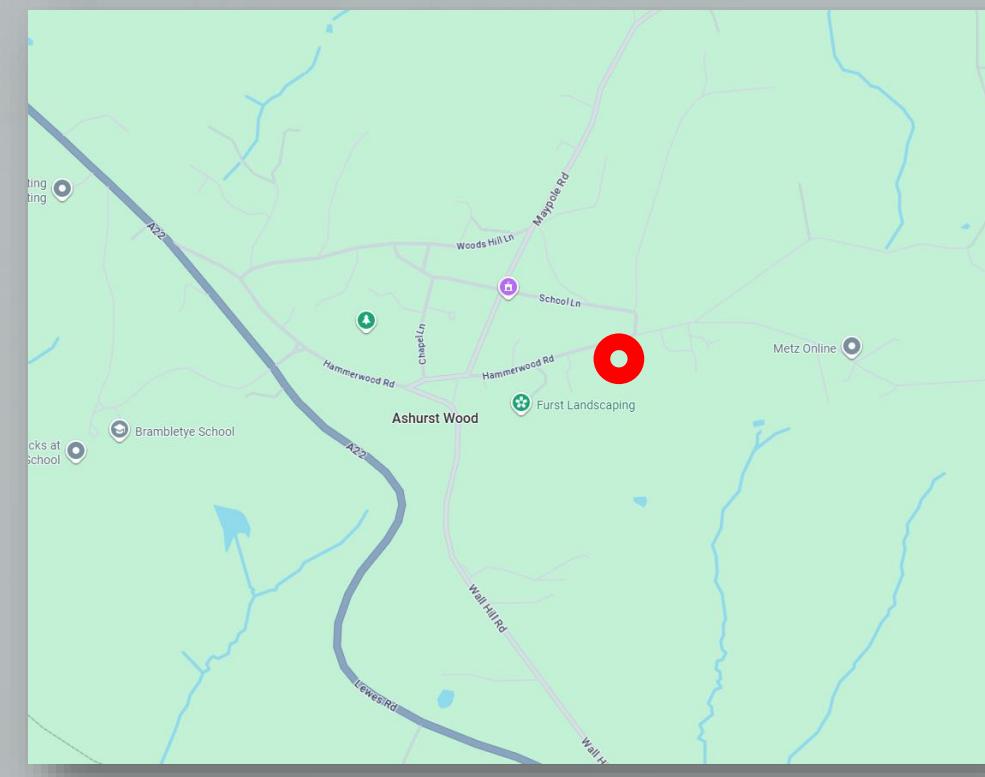
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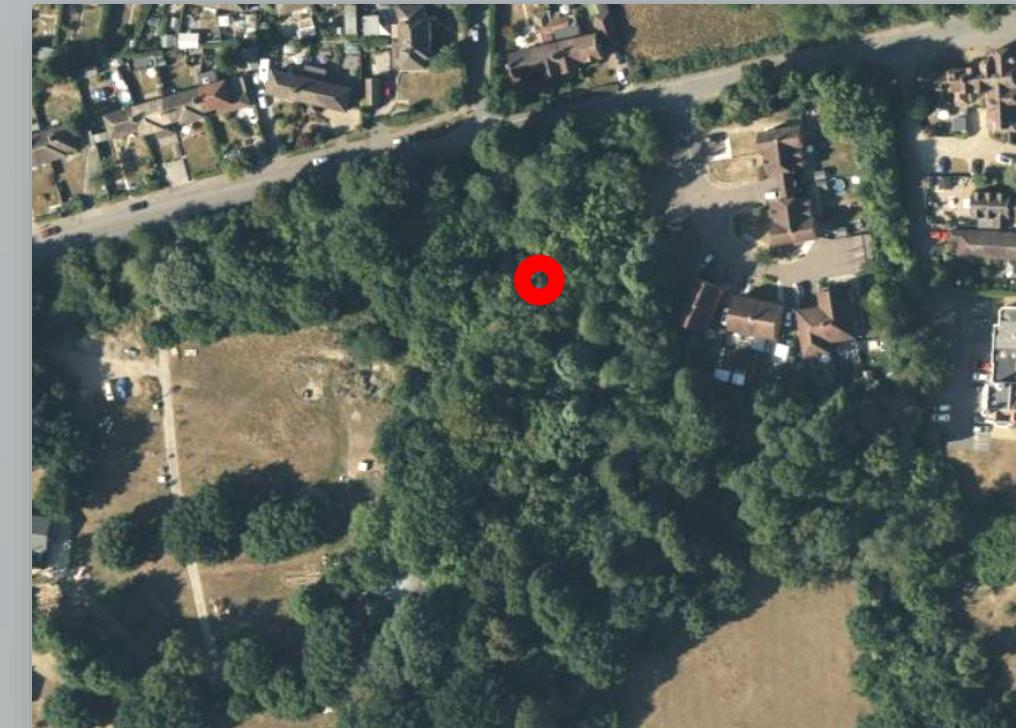
EXISTING SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA



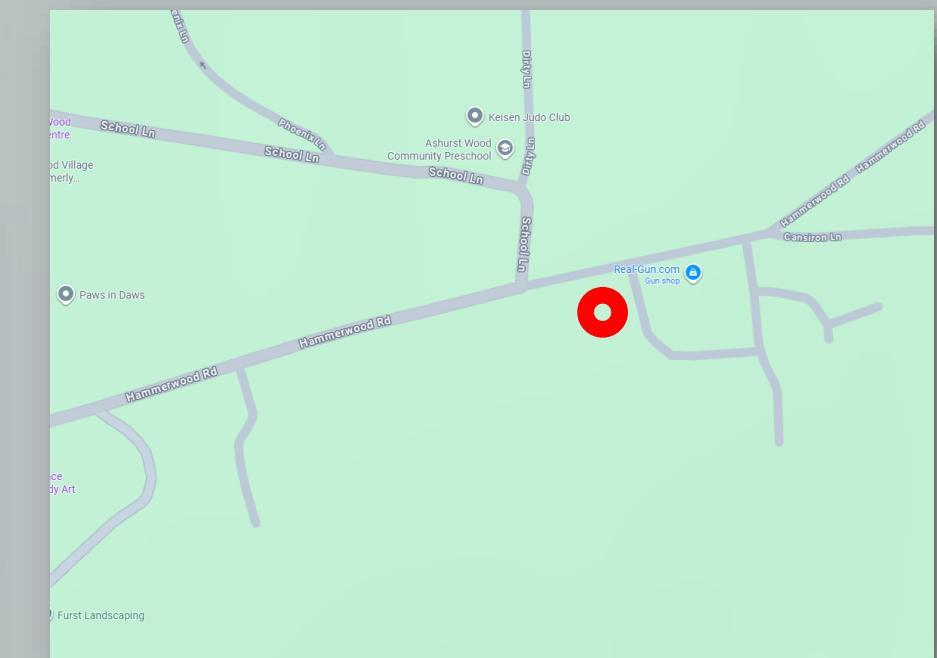
SITE LOCATION



Site Location – Wider Map



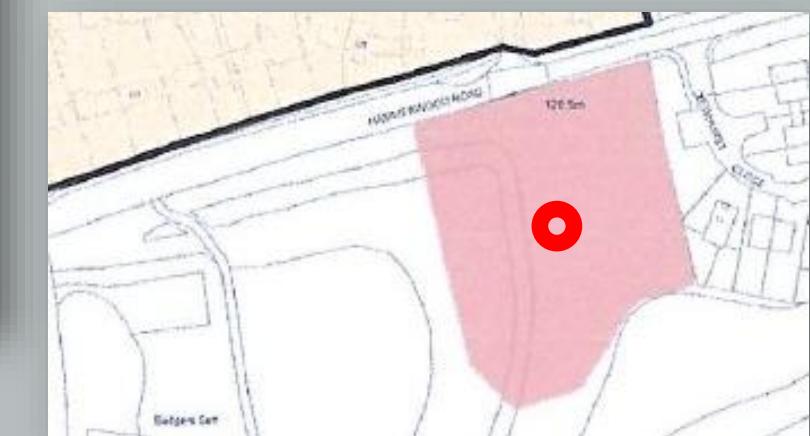
Site Location – Aerial View



Site Location – Immediate Context



Site Location Plan – Ordnance Survey



Allocation SA26 Extract – Map View

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PHOTOGRAPHS



Site Frontage looking East - Hammerwood Road



Site Frontage Looking West Along Hammerwood Road



Western Boundary of Site



Subject site from Western Adjacent Site

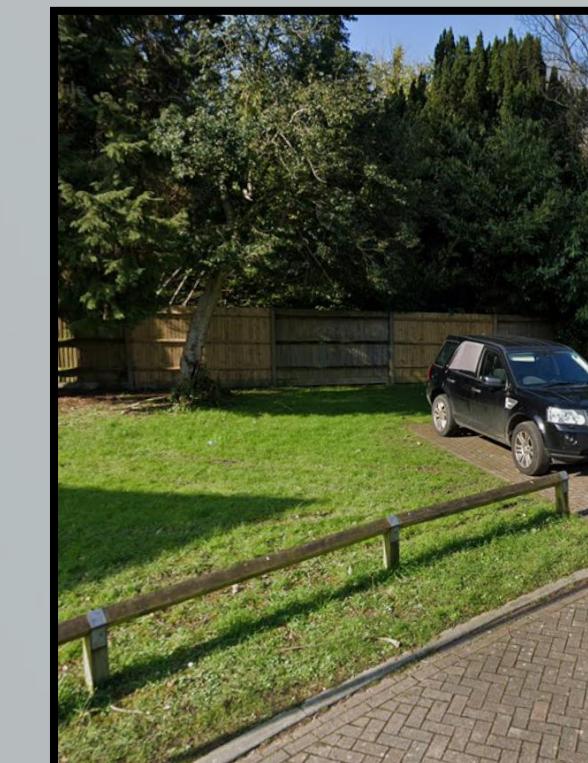


Photo of Access Point on Yewhurst Close

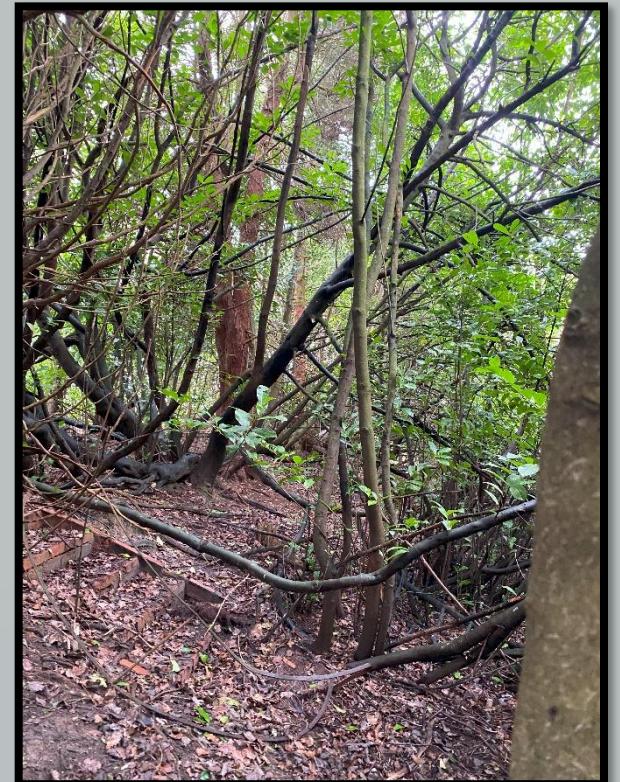
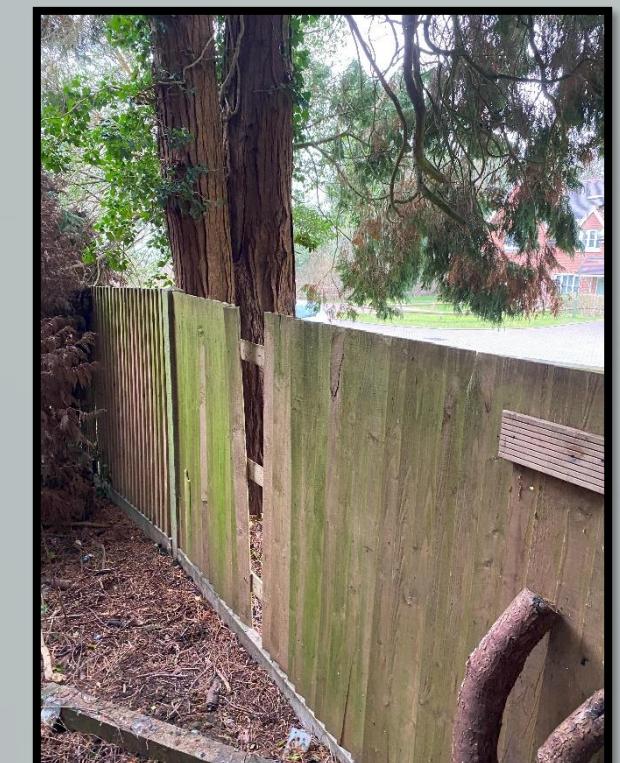


Photo Within Site Showing Extensive Laurel



Eastern boundary with Yewhurst Close

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EXISTING SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA



SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is 0.48 hectares (4779m²) in size and is located to the south of Hammerwood Road, Ashurstwood, within the Mid Sussex District Council area and the Ashurst Wood & East Grinstead South Ward.

The site fronts Hammerwood Road and is currently undeveloped. It is allocated for residential development in the Mid Sussex Local Plan for 12 dwellings and it is now being brought forwards for development in 2026.

The site itself is screened from the road with shrubs and trees. The site has been inundated with non-native plant species, mainly laurel and conifers. It is wildly overgrown and less rich in flora and fauna than expected for a woodland, as a result of a lack of management and a lack of light resulting from the overgrown foliage.

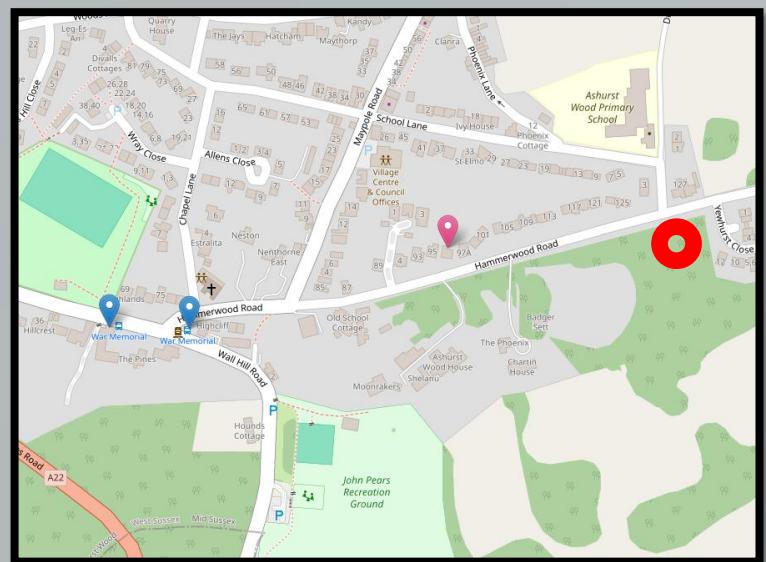
To the east of the site, access is proposed via Yewhurst Close, owned by English Rural Housing Association. This access point helps to reduce the impact of development on Hammerwood Road, providing a softer street scene and enables the protection and retention of mature trees. Yewhurst Close is a cul-de-sac providing relatively modern property, providing a mixture of apartments and houses and a variety of detached, link detached and semi-detached, 2 storey homes.

To the north of the site, on the opposite side of Hammerwood Road, plot sizes, house styles and types all vary considerably, but there is a general themes of 2 storey, semi-detached and terraced houses closest to the site. Property is generally 2 storey in height and set back from the roadside with intervening shrubs, hedges and grassed areas.

Hammerwood Road generally provides a semi-rural feel, blending traditional country house elements (timber, brick, older period detail) with modern comforts and extensions. And it is located in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

To the West of the site, there are open spaces of trees and grassland in private grounds, before less dense detached housing such as Badgers Sett, Chartin and The Phoenix.

To the south of the site, denser woodland bounds and masks the site from wider views into the countryside beyond and a gradual decline in levels.



SUSTAINABILITY, ROADS AND ACCESSIBILITY

The site benefits from relatively good local connections, but with some limitations common to semi-rural villages. The area is served by a few regular bus routes (such as 270, 291, 261) connecting to larger town centres such as East Grinstead, Forest Row, Crawley, Tunbridge Wells and beyond. The "Plusbus" scheme helps with integrating bus and train travel for people making journeys in and out of the area. East Grinstead is approximately 2.3 miles away, accessible by bus.

It is recognised that there is a dependence upon car travel in the Ashurst Wood area, yet the promotion of sustainable transport methods can be incorporated into schemes like this, helping to reduce car use for local trips.

NEARBY BUS STOPS		
The closest bus stop is War Memorial and it's only 0.16 miles away from Hammerwood Road.	Walking Time	3.2 MINUTES
War Memorial	0.16MILES	
Three Crowns	0.37MILES	7.4 MINUTES
Wall Hill Road	0.55MILES	11.1 MINUTES
Windmill Lane	0.62MILES	12.4 MINUTES
Truscott Manor	0.76MILES	15.2 MINUTES

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EXISTING SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA



CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Hammerwood Road, which runs east–west through the village of Ashurst Wood, displays a layered architectural character that reflects the village's gradual development over time. The northern side in particular is punctuated by substantial detached, semi-detached and terraced homes, many of which were built in the late Victorian and Edwardian periods or as interwar suburban expansions. These often feature red brickwork, tiled pitched roofs, gables, and casement or sash windows, with some houses incorporating timber framing or mock-Tudor elements to convey a rural, "Arts and Crafts" vernacular style.



Gabled Tile Hanging Design of Nearby property

more eclectic and adaptive character due to modern interventions. Older cottages and farm buildings, sometimes dating back to the 18th or early 19th century, coexist with converted Victorian institutional buildings, such as The Abbey, which has been turned into flats. Post-war housing developments, like cul-de-sacs branching from the main road (e.g., Yewhurst Close), bring a distinctly late-20th-century suburban typology: simple brick elevations, concrete roof tiles, smaller plots, and parking forecourts. These contrast with the period homes but add to the road's social mix and practical accessibility.

Overall, Hammerwood Road carries the hallmarks of a village that has grown organically: a blend of rural vernacular, Victorian solidity, and pragmatic modern housing, stitched together by the greenery and semi-wooded setting that gives Ashurst Wood its distinctive village identity. The area is extremely mixed in terms of design and style consisting, without any one dominant architectural style. However, the general character is one of typical Sussex vernacular, i.e., brick clay tiles and some boarded elevations. Good qualities features in local design styles also include dentil coursing, feature banding below tile hanging and two tone contrasting brickwork. Decorative "club" tiling is also used well in some property.

The property to the east, known as Yewhurst Close, is a development of 2 storey houses developed by English Rural Housing Association and is well maintained and fits into the local vernacular, yet lacks some of the finer Sussex features found within the area. It is hoped to develop the designs in these proposals to incorporate more of these architectural features into the scheme.



Attractive Sussex Style Property on Hammerwood Road (directly opposite)



Terraced houses, School Lane (opposite)



Terrace houses on Hammerwood Road



Street scene & Property Styles in Yewhurst Close



Semi-Det Houses on Hammerwood Road



Decorative Club Tiling

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PLANNING



LOCAL & NATIONAL POLICY

The site is situated within the countryside of Ashurst Wood, and it is allocated for development within the Council's Site Allocations Development Plan Document (SADPD), which provides for some key criteria for its development. In addition, the site lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (HWAONB) and within the 7km zone of the Ashdown Forest.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that when determining a planning application, regard is to be had to the development plan, and the determination shall be made in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The key planning documents and policies (amongst others) relating to these proposals is considered to be the following:

NATIONAL - The National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

NATIONAL – Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

LOCAL - The Mid Sussex District Plan

Relevant Policies include:

DP12
DP16
DP17
DP20
DP21
DP26
DP27
DP28
DP30
DP31
DP37
DP38
DP39
DP41
DP42

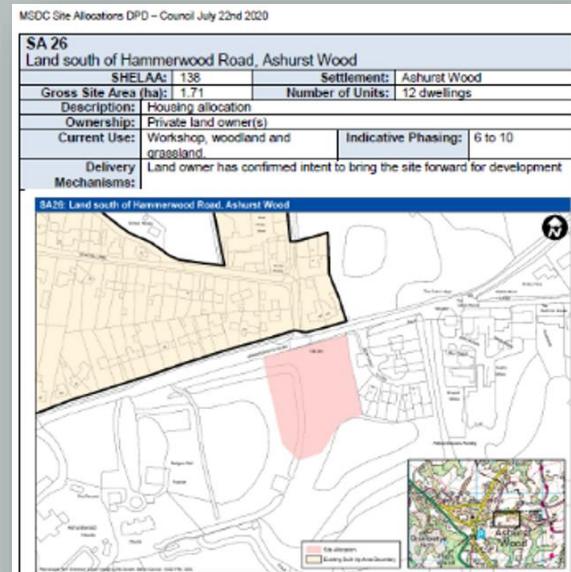
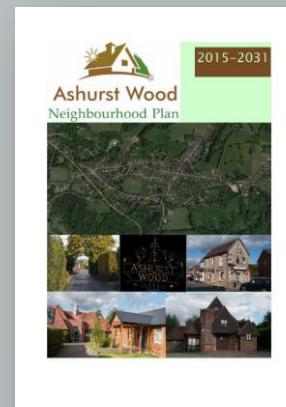


Site Allocations DPD

SA GEN
SA26

The Ashurst Wood Neighbourhood Plan (Adopted June 2016 – no updates planned)

ASW1
ASW14
ASW15
ASW20
ASW21
ASW23



National Planning Policy Framework

December 2024



CURRENT HOUSING SUPPLY

Whilst the Council currently demonstrates a 5 year housing supply (appeal decision - 10th March 2023, clarified in April 2023), windfall sites and building completions have reduced considerably in the intervening period and without full analysis, there is not enough information provided by the Council to determine whether their 5.04 year supply has diminished. In April 2025, in consideration of the Mid Sussex District Plan (2012-2039), the inspector said that Mid Sussex had failed to show that it had engaged "constructively, in an active and ongoing way" to help neighbouring councils meet "significant" unmet housing needs.

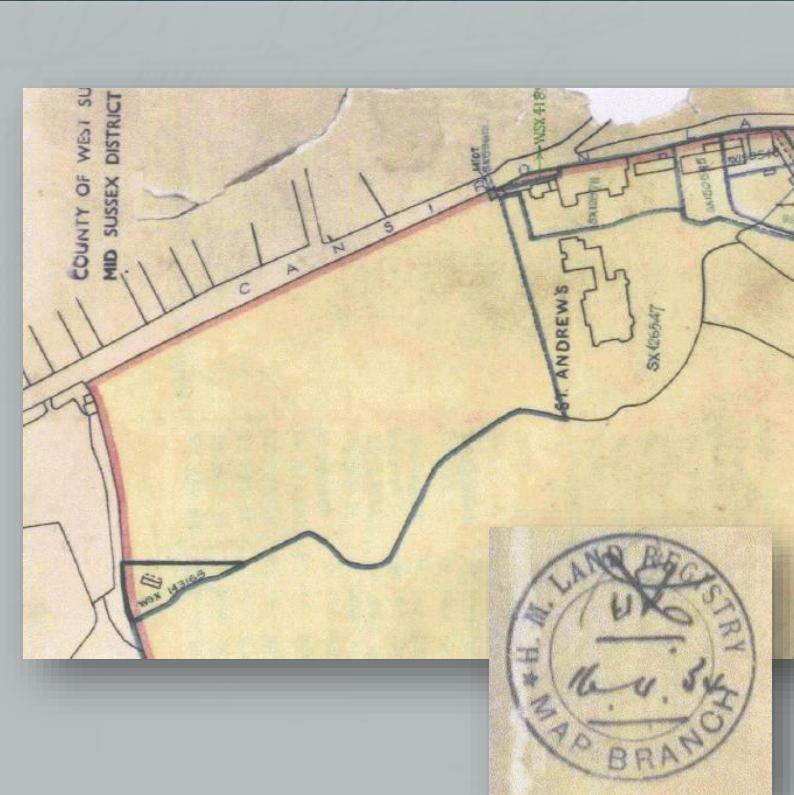
We look forward to a newly published housing supply statement, but in the meantime, it is clear that the Council is dependant on housing completions and also the development of allocated sites like this one within their Site Allocations Document.

This scheme brings forwards twelve residential dwellings for immediate delivery, including a total of four homes for affordable housing.

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PLANNING



PLANNING HISTORY & HISTORIC USES

Whilst there is no planning history of merit or consequential to this application, the site was granted a lawful development certificate in 2003 for use associated with off-road activities and this correlates with some old tracks seen in the ground.

Historic aerial views of the site are provided here, together with a circa 1970 title plan demonstrating that there were no uses on site that would cause us to suspect any contamination.



VALIDATION

This application is duly provided with due consideration to the Mid Sussex Validation Requirements and a Validation Checklist is provided with this application. Please note that an Air Quality Assessment is not provided following confirmation from Nick Bennett that it is not required.

S106 CONTRIBUTIONS/CIL/AFFORDABLE HOUSING STATEMENT

CIL – The application seeks permission for a scheme in excess of 100sqm and a duly completed copy of the CIL Additional Information Form 1 is provided with this application. Form 10 is also provided in recognition of the affordable housing provided on the site.

Section 106 Contributions – In addition to Affordable Housing, there may be S106 contributions sought by the Council in relation to this application. These were discussed at pre-application stage, but not ratified. In addition, the site lies within 7km of the Ashdown Forest and so will require contributions in this regard. We will await further information from the Council. In the meantime, a copy of the Planning Obligation Instruction form is duly provided.

Affordable Housing Statement – In line with District Plan Policy DP31, the proposed scheme requires the provision of 30% affordable housing to be provided on-site. Four dwellings, Plots 5-8 (inclusive) are provided as affordable housing and it is intended (in line with Policy and pre-application advice) that 75% (3x dwellings) are provided for social or affordable rented homes and 25% (1x dwelling) is provided for intermediate homes. We confirm that the units provided comply with occupancy and minimum floor area requirements (being 2b4p and in excess of 79m² over 2 storeys).

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PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE



PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

A Pre-application enquiry was submitted to the Council in December 2023 by Turnbull Land Ltd for a development of 12x new houses, following the site's allocation. The scheme was starkly different in layout and design to the scheme submitted today. The site plan and key elevations provided on this page are those submitted. A meeting was held with Officers to discuss these plans and considerable advice was provided in line with the Site Allocation DPD. The written pre-application response, provided on 6th February 2024 gave rise to various considerations that have all been considered and incorporated into these new proposals. Key points raised were as follows:

- The applicant should refer to the Site Allocation DPD, which should be complied with.
- To concentrate development towards the northern part of the site, creating a soft transition with the countryside to the south.
- Orientate the development to have a positive edge to Hammerwood Road and to the wider countryside to the south, and to avoid the use of hard boundary treatments.
- Investigate the most suitable vehicular access arrangements from either Yewhurst Close or Hammerwood Road, taking account of landscape impacts and make necessary safety improvements.
- Retain the parkland setting (reference to retention of mature trees to the western boundary and to incorporate them into the layout. Also to create more of a "landscape buffer" to the south edge of the site).
- To reconsider the designs of the units (in particular plots 2-7), as the high hipped roofs with winged elements were considered to be "too busy".
- To also reconsider parking areas to bring them away from unit frontages and to break up parking areas.
- Concerns relating to the future pressure on the Oaks on the Western boundary shading the back gardens of properties.
- The scheme must restore and manage the areas of designated Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat, introducing new parkland style mixed native planting and enhancing green corridors to the surrounding landscape and conserve and enhance habitats for native species. It must also conserve and enhance areas of wildlife value and ensure there is a net gain to biodiversity overall. Avoid any loss of biodiversity through ecological protection and enhancement, and good design. Where this is not possible, mitigate and as a last resort, compensate for any loss.'



Pre-App Site Plan



the Tree Officer at pre-app stage about coming in directly from Hammerwood Road were echoed by our own tree consultant and it would be impossible to provide an access from Hammerwood Road without damaging mature tree roots, thereby requiring their removal (in turn, impacting the landscape qualities of those trees as viewed from Hammerwood Road). In addition, Highways Consultants raised concerns about having a new junction directly opposite School Lane, which is a busy junction, particularly during drop off and pick up times of Ashurst Wood Community Primary and Pre-School. Then, in creating a safe and suitable access, sight lines would be severely impeded by multiple tree trunks, looking both ways. In addition, there would be no possibility of providing a continuous dedicated pedestrian pavement without compromising tree roots. Conversely, Yewhurst Close is a pre-existing 5.75m wide access (with 1.75m pavement) to an estate Road and provides safe and convenient access to the site, without the need to compromise trees and the qualities they bring to the Street Scene in Hammerwood Road. The Landscape Visual Impact assessor also confirmed Yewhurst Close as being undoubtedly the best place to provide access.

Prior to the creation of the new application scheme, the applicant has considered and balanced all of the comments raised during the pre-application enquiry. The first consideration was to complete the ecological and arboricultural surveys and to balance this with existing and enhanced landscape value within the AONB. It must not be forgotten that this site is allocated for housing, yet it is currently a woodland (albeit mostly poor quality). Trees along the western boundary of the site were identified to be retained and a 3m landscaped buffer is created around the western and southern boundaries, with an enhanced wooded area retained along the southern boundary.

The second important aspect of this site is to consider and balance the best way to access the site, whether this be via Hammerwood Road, or via Yewhurst Close. Concerns from

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SITE ALLOCATION



PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE (continued)

Providing access via Yewhurst Close also provides the ability to provide a consistent street scene and to concentrate development to the north of the site. At pre-app stage, three units fronted Hammerwood Road, with a fourth being perpendicular to it. The new scheme provides for a more continuous street scene, with eight units facing it (albeit partially masked by tree coverage). Then, a parking court is provided in the middle of the site, and less dense development (four units) provided in the rear part of the site. This creates the most sympathetic development, but does not fully remove trees on the western boundary of the site out of private gardens. Nevertheless, units have been brought away from this boundary, so that increased landscaping can be provided, and this compromise does not detract from the visual amenities of the scheme. Furthermore, the re-orientation of units has removed any actual or perceived concerns relating to any future pressure to remove trees.

Designs of the proposed units have also been changed completely. Whilst they retain all of the Sussex elements that make up our character analysis of the area, we have removed the larger high hipped roofs and winged elements, providing simple, less bulky (and arguably more cohesive) designs with the local area. Parking areas are now focussed around the Yewhurst Close access, but broken up with the use of hedging and landscaping.

Since the inception of these development proposals, Biodiversity net gain has become mandatory. The scheme is designed to conserve and enhance ecology and landscaping, but this must be balanced with the need for housing and the delivery of this allocation. The applicant does not control more than the confines of this site, so enhancing the surrounding deciduous woodland is not possible. However, ecologically high areas of the scheme (mostly around the edges of the site) are retained, protected species are protected, and landscaping to the western and southern boundaries are bolstered. New tree planting is incorporated into the scheme and heavy landscaping provides as much biodiversity as possible. It would simply not be possible to create a biodiversity net gain on-site, without a substantial loss in the number of units proposed, however, in line with planning policy, BNG is dealt with using the metric and mitigated appropriately.

SITE ALLOCATION DETAILS

The site is situated within the countryside of Ashurst Wood, and it is allocated for development within the Council's Site Allocations Development Plan Document (SADPD – site SA26), which provides for some key criteria for its development. The objective is to deliver a sensitive extension to Ashurst Wood which reflects local distinctiveness and sits well within the landscape of the High Weald AONB, retaining the sylvan, parkland landscape character and semi-rural character of this section of Hammerwood Road. Key principles from the document are:

- To retain and protect the rural character of Hammerwood Road by retaining the existing hedgerow and trees along the northern boundary and complement and integrate the positive characteristics of Ashurst Wood in the design and layout. To orientate development to have a positive edge to Hammerwood Road.
- Concentrate development towards the northern end of the site, creating a softer transition to the Countryside. To avoid the use of hard boundary treatments along the southern boundary.
- To undertake a landscape and visual impact assessment to inform the site layout, capacity and mitigation requirements in order to conserve and enhance the landscape and natural beauty of the high weald AONB.
- To incorporate existing trees of significance and landscaping into the layout of the development and provide new specimen tree planting, mixed native and evergreen planting into the landscape structure to conserve the sense of place.
- To consider the impact on neighbouring habitats and landscapes, and to avoid any loss of biodiversity through ecological protection and enhancement.
- To investigate the most suitable vehicular arrangement, taking account of landscape impacts and safety.
- To consider drainage and SuDs carefully, including the potential to integrate them into green infrastructure.

MSDC Site Allocations DPD – Council July 22nd 2020				
SA 26				
Land south of Hammerwood Road, Ashurst Wood				
SHELAA:	138	Settlement:		
Gross Site Area (ha):	1.71	Number of Units:		
Description:	Housing allocation			
Ownership:	Private land owner(s)			
Current Use:	Workshop, woodland and grassland.	Indicative Phasing:		
Delivery Mechanisms:	Land owner has confirmed intent to bring the site forward for development			
				
Objectives				
- To deliver a sensitive extension to Ashurst Wood which reflects local distinctiveness and sits well within the landscape of the High Weald AONB, retaining the sylvan, Parkland landscape character and semi-rural character of this section of Hammerwood Road.				
Urban Design Principles				
- Retain and protect the rural character of Hammerwood Road by retaining the existing hedgerow and trees along the northern boundary and complement and integrate the positive characteristics of Ashurst Wood in the design and layout.				
- Concentrate development towards the northern part of the site, creating a soft transition with the countryside to the south.				
- Orientate development to have a positive edge to Hammerwood Road and to the wider countryside to the south to avoid the use of hard boundary treatment along these boundaries.				
AONB				
- Undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to inform the site layout, capacity and mitigation requirements, in order to conserve and enhance the landscape and natural beauty of the High Weald AONB.				
- Incorporate existing trees of significance and landscaping into the layout of development and provide new specimen tree planting, mixed native and evergreen planting into the landscape structure in order to retain the parkland setting and conserve the sense of place.				

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THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS



STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The scheme being submitted has been the subject of extensive analysis at the time of allocation, where criteria have been set out to ensure the successful and sensitive delivery of this residential site. The first iteration of designs was the subject of pre-application discussions and a written response from the Council, which has been duly taken into account. To date, there has been no community involvement and this application is subject to the usual consultation with local stakeholders.

Accommodation Schedule

Plot	Size (sqm)	Size (sqft)	Bedrooms /Persons	Hab Rooms
Plot 1	110.6sqm	1,190sqft	3b5p	4
Plot 2	112.3sqm	1,208sqft	3b5p	4
Plot 3	110.6sqm	1,190sqft	3b5p	4
Plot 4	112.3sqm	1,208sqft	3b5p	4
	445.8sqm	4,798sqft		
Plot 5	81.9sqm	881sqft	2b4p	3
Plot 6	83.3sqm	896sqft	2b4p	3
Plot 7	81.9sqm	881sqft	2b4p	3
Plot 8	83.3sqm	896sqft	2b4p	3
	330.4sqm	3,556sqft		
Plot 9	136.8sqm	1,472sqft	4b6p	6
Plot 10	136.8sqm	1,472sqft	4b6p	6
Plot 11	136.8sqm	1,472sqft	4b6p	6
	410.4sqm	4,417sqft		
Plot 12	158.8sqm	1,709sqft	4b8p	6
	158.8sqm	1,709sqft		
TOTAL	1,345.4sqm	14,482sqft	62 Persons	52 Hab Rooms

Note: Areas are approximate and measured to 1.5m skeelings where appropriate. Final areas may change subject to construction restraints and specification.

DEVELOPMENT OF CONCEPT

The site is currently undeveloped, but it currently comprises a poor quality woodland (predominantly overgrown Laurel), which has meant that ecological and tree considerations were paramount. Once these were understood, the canvas of the proposed scheme could take shape and the route of access was then considered. This, together with the comments made at pre-application stage brought together the conclusion that access via Yewhurst Close was the only sensible and logical way to access the site, in particular, making sure that protection of arboriculture and highway safety could be suitably dealt with.

With advice provided at pre-application stage, layout was considered in conjunction with unit types, commensurate with the need in Mid Sussex for smaller family houses, together with design and styling of the proposed units.



USE & AMOUNT

The site is previously undeveloped land, located outside of the settlement boundaries. It is next to a residential development in Yewhurst Close and accessed from the same road. The proposed uses are residential (C3) and our scheme provides a total of 12 new family sized homes. These dwellings are all 2 storey, with no additional accommodation provided within roof spaces. They are well proportioned, in a convenient and workable layout, all well designed to suit modern day living and adhere to building regulations and the NDSS. The schedule of accommodation is shown here, also providing details of bedrooms and habitable rooms. In comparison to the pre-application scheme, units have been made smaller and less bulky (removing the high roof pitches and winged elements of the scheme).

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THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

LAYOUT

The layout of the scheme has been designed to respond to its local context, arboricultural and ecological constraints, the Planning Officer's comments at pre-application stage and the remit contained within the original site allocation document. It also abides to the principles of the Mid Sussex Design Guide (SPD).

We have already detailed why the access to the site is provided via Yewhurst Close. This provides the ability to retain all of the mature trees along the Hammerwood Road frontage and to enhance this greenery with low hedging and planting of native species. A naturally designed access path complements this setting and is provided to the front of the roadside units, linking directly with the existing pavement to the north eastern corner of the site and providing level access to the proposed units. Within Yewhurst Close, two off-street parking spaces are relocated to provide the new access, which continues the pedestrian pavement into the site and provides for a 4.5m wide road.

The front line of properties proposed fronting Hammerwood Road are 2x pairs of 2 bedroom semi detached units and 2x pairs of 3 bedroom semi detached units, all providing a cohesive street scene that complements its neighbours. The units provide regularity and consistency across the frontage of the site, but with large gaps to the east and west. To the east, this enables a green gap between units on-site and the entrance to Yewhurst Close. To the west, this provides a buffer to the wider countryside. Both boundaries are bolstered with native species and rich landscaping.

Frontage units (plots 1-8) are provided with "larger than normal" garden depths, which enables them to accommodate tandem parking to the rear, provided in a convenient location and accessed via the Yewhurst Close access. Plots 8's garden is shorter, being circa 8m deep, but being at the eastern end of the development, it benefits from a wider garden, giving it additional private amenity to its side.

Rear units are provided with spacious frontages and within the same width of site as the eight frontage units, provides a less dense arrangement of four dwellings (all four bedroom detached). They are also provided with level access via Yewhurst Close. They are separated from the frontage units by in excess of 30m. A larger gap to the wider countryside is provided to the west of the units, and also between the units to create a gradual transition to the woodland to the south. In addition, a wildlife and semi-woodland area is retained behind them, furthering the transition to the undeveloped woodland beyond. Parking is provided to the side of units and in front of units, split up by hedging and landscaping. An additional landscaping buffer is provided to the east and to the west of these units, creating a buffer to the existing development in Yewhurst Close and a more pronounced buffer to the countryside to the west.

Whilst the parking for all property is provided via Yewhurst Close, views of parking as you drive in are interspersed and masked by hedging and planting, helping to split up and alleviate areas of hard standing. Trees retained (such as T1 & T46) provide focal points as you enter the development and with such heavy landscaping to boundaries, only glimpses of the wider countryside would be seen through rich landscaping around the boundaries.

Secure and convenient cycle storage is provided within the curtilage of all properties and off street parking (together with electric charging) is provided for all the proposed plots. Refuse and recycling storage areas, with the ability to accommodate separate waste receptacles are also provided next to each cycle store, located well away from the dwellings themselves and in accordance with the Council's waste management strategy. The proposed access off Yewhurst Close provides for the collection of waste, together with an appropriate turning head for the access and egress of the Council's large refuse collection vehicle.



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THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS



is only proposed on front doors. Upvc is increasingly used for ease of maintenance and longevity and so is proposed to all windows and rear patio doors. Tiles for hanging will be carefully chosen to reflect the character of clay tiles prevalent in the area, although man-made substitutes are proposed as they are of high quality these days.

Secure cycle stores proposed are internal to each plot, but will be enclosed timber framed structures.

In terms of scale, all units are traditionally two storey, with no provision of further accommodation within roof spaces.

SCALE AND APPEARANCE

The appearance of the proposed scheme has been developed as a result of the original brief (Site Allocation Document) and taking into account the layout, which was formed as a result of that brief and the Mid Sussex Design Guide. Then, elevations have been developed as a result of the character analysis of the local area and the setting within which they relate.

The detail of our designs emanates from traditional design inherent in Sussex domestic architecture, notably the pair of semi detached houses opposite the site on the corner of School Lane and Hammerwood Road. These details being mellow multi stock brickwork, tile hanging to the first floor with decorative "club" tile feature courses, soldier arch brickwork to window and door openings and steep pitched tile roofs with prominent barge boards. We have limited the pitch of roofs as a result of comments relating to roof massing in the pre-application enquiry.

All these elements feature in the proposed design with additional dentil coursing or feature banding below the first floor tile hanging. A reconstituted stone sill course or contrasting brick banding also features below the ground floor windows.

Roofs will be tile or artificial slate either over mellow red tile hanging or multi faced brickwork. It is intended to use two types and colours of brickwork to add interest and sense of place and contrast with the feature coursing and banding. Windows are traditional casements but in this case leaded "lookalikes" are not proposed. Timber is the traditional material, but



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THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS / OTHER MATTERS

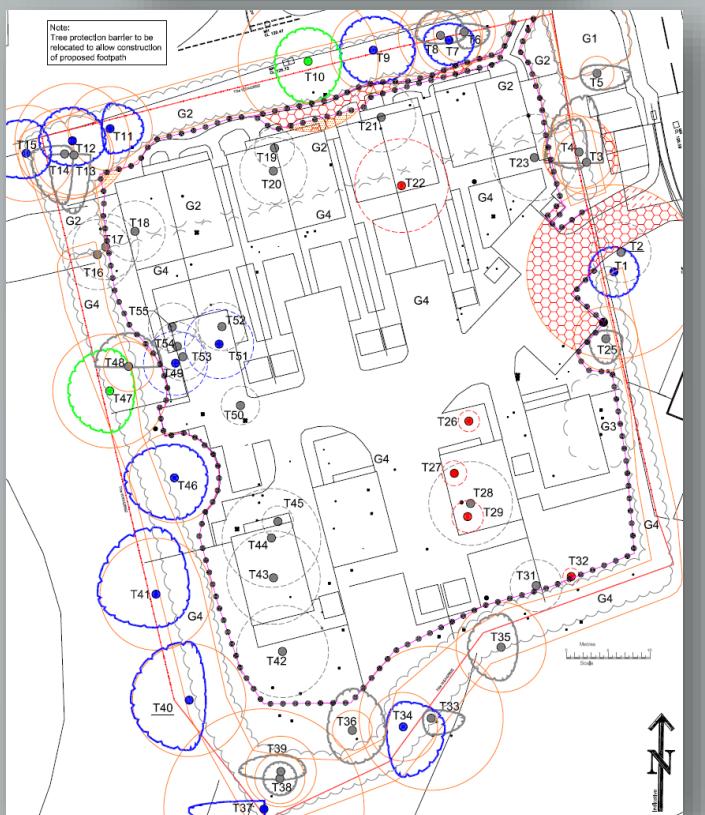
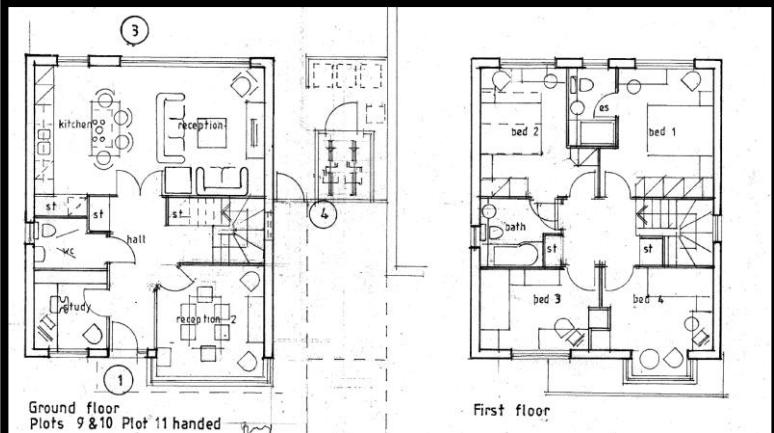
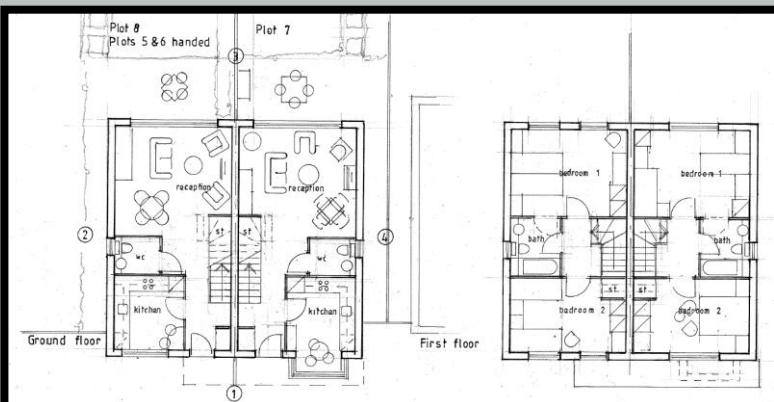
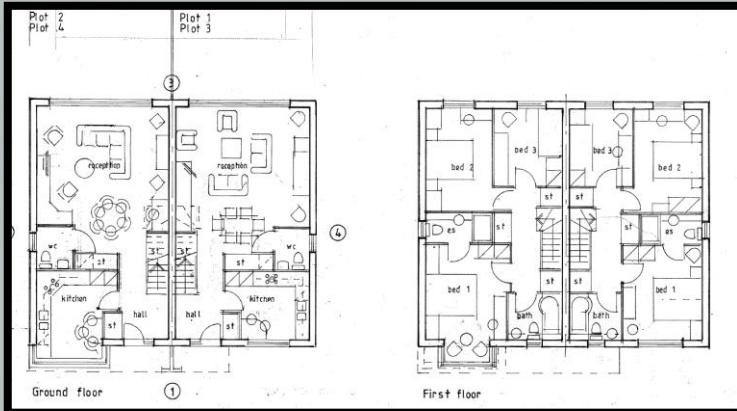


INTERNAL LAYOUTS

Internal layouts are provided to take account of building regulations, the requirements of the Nationally Described Space Standards and Mid Sussex Design Guide. They also respond to local context and local demand to ensure they are marketable and suit modern day living.

Since the pre-application response, the frontage units have become smaller to accommodate the units required by the Site Allocation and to respond to design comments. Plots 1-4 are 3 bedroom semi-detached, two storey units. They provide open plan living on the ground floor, with a separate kitchen and downstairs toilet. To the 1st floor, they provide three bedrooms (en-suite to bed 1) and a family bathroom. Internal storage areas are also provided on both floors. Plots 5-8 are of a similar design, except they provide two bedrooms on the first floor and no en-suite is required. Plots 9-12 are all four bedroom units, providing similar layouts, but with an additional study room and 2nd reception room on the ground floor. Plot 12 is the largest unit, which also caters for a separate utility room.

All of the units comply with the NDSS and building regulations and they compliment all of the principles being sought. All of the units provide for level access and they conform with Part M of the building regulations and fully accessible (and adaptable) for people with disabilities.



TREES

Canopy Consulting have provided a Tree Survey Schedule, an Arboricultural Implications Assessment, Arboricultural Method Statement and a Tree Protection plan, together with reporting on how trees are managed and protected as part of this scheme. They identified from the outset that there were three distinct categories of trees on-site. The first includes larger mature trees around the site's boundaries and the second includes medium sized trees around the site's boundaries. The third group are smaller, young trees found growing across the site (majority being cherry laurel) covering the majority of the internal area of the site. These were in good condition, but of limited amenity value to the local area. It is also recognised that without the removal of the Cherry Laurel, it would be impossible to provide any residential development on this residential site allocation.

A total of 5 trees are removed due to arboricultural reasons and a total of 21 individual trees (plus part of three groups) are removed to facilitate the proposed development. Their loss is considered as part of the Biodiversity Net Gain calculations provided, however, it is also proposed to plant 23 new trees on the site, together with substantial amounts of new hedging and planting.

Whilst there are no impacts of buildings being within root protection areas, there are some tree roots where "no dig" principles and the use of cellular confinement systems are employed to construct pathways and the access road. T1 is the greatest affected tree (Lawson Cypress) and a decision could have been taken to remove this tree, however, it presents well in the context of Yewhurst Close and the access to the proposed development, and following discussions with our Tree Consultant, it was decided to retain it. In the context of this tree, the hard surface within the RPA will be constructed prior to any further ground works so as to act as ground protection.

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LANDSCAPING ASSESSMENT

A landscape visual impact assessment provided by was commissioned by Virtue Land to consider the impact of the development of this site on the wider countryside views and it has informed the site layout and landscaping proposals. This was undertaken by Ramsay & Co Landscape Architecture. It confirms that the current site is in poor condition, with the woodland neglected and the way in which Cherry Laurel has gradually overtaken the site. It confirms how the good quality trees on-site are mostly retained around the site's boundaries and clearing out the understorey will enable these species to bloom. The assessment clarifies that the visual impact of the proposed development is limited and the way in which the scheme is laid out, helps to retain the sylvan character of the site from Hammerwood Road and how views from the west and the south are interspersed by landscaping.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY & SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainable design plays an important role in new developments and sustainability is at the heart of this proposed development. It also responds to the local plan policy DP39, which seeks to:

- Minimise energy use through the design and layout of the scheme including through the use of natural lighting and ventilation;
- Explore opportunities for efficient energy supply through the use of communal heating networks where viable and feasible;
- Use renewable sources of energy;
- Maximise efficient use of resources, including minimising waste and maximising recycling/ re-use of materials through both construction and occupation;
- Limit water use to 110 litres/person/day in accordance with Policy DP42: Water Infrastructure and the Water Environment;
- Demonstrate how the risks associated with future climate change have been planned for as part of the layout of the scheme and design of its buildings to ensure its longer term resilience.

In compliance with this policy, the proposed development will:

- Consist of predominantly A or A+ Green Guide rated elements, A+ rated construction elements including pitched roof construction, internal upper floors, internal timber partitions and external cavity walls.
- Responsible sourcing – The suppliers used for the proposed development will be responsible for sourcing certified suppliers, carefully selected to align with Virtue Property Group's responsible sourcing policies.
- Timber that is procured sustainably and independently accredited by either the FSC or PEFC schemes.
- Our target for waste management from sites includes at least 95% construction waste diverted from Landfill and reductions in construction waste intensity.
- The site is located within flood zone 1, the lowest probability evaluated by the Environment Agency. This is considered best practice for a positive sustainable development and would be well located for a site that is resilient to climate change.
- The development will provide active EV charging points for all plots, promoting sustainability and a sustainable lifestyle for residents. It aligns with the governments policy to stop the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030. This also conforms with the new Part S regulations.
- Water use will be limited and all dwellings on site will be designed to achieve the maximum of 105 litres per person per day of internal potable water. An additional allowance for external water of 5 litres per person per day is intended, and the specification of water fittings will be identified at the detailed design stage. This is also in accordance with Policy DP42 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.
- A target air pressure rating of 5.01m³/hr.m² has been set for all houses on site which is a 50% improvement on the maximum allowable rating in the 2013 Building Regulations.
- 100% Low-E lighting fixtures shall be fitted to all properties and ventilation requirements will be met via intermittent extract fans to wet rooms and natural ventilation.
- Solar Hot Water and PV can be easily incorporated into the new build house designs and have the potential to reduce the energy demand and Carbon emissions. PV panels are now usually the preferred option and it is currently proposed that plots subject to Part L 2021 will benefit from PV panels to meet the 31% uplift required.

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ECOLOGY AND BNG

The site has been surveyed for over a year by the Ecology Partnership to consider the ecological qualities of the site and to ensure that ecology is dealt with sensitively and any protection or mitigation measures are put into place. An additional survey was conducted by Deepdene Ecology.

The preliminary ecological assessment clarifies that the site mostly comprises of woodland dominated by Cherry Laurel.

Evidence showed that badgers forage on the site, with a latrine present in the north west corner, but no sett present.

Bat activity surveys were conducted between May and October 2024 and a separate report is provided. This confirmed very low levels of bat activity within the site, with the majority of the registrations from common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle. Common and soprano pipistrelles are both common and widespread across the UK. As several bat species make use of the boundary features onsite, it is recommended that light should be directed away from these features, maintaining these as 'dark corridors'.

Whilst the site was generally unsuitable for Dormice, full surveys were undertaken by Deepdene Ecology, which confirmed that Dormice were not present on site. There was no evidence of Great Crested Newts, with no ponds present on-site. The majority of the woodland is also unsuitable for them. The woodland was not considered to be a suitable habitat for reptiles and no evidence was found of their presence on-site. The majority of the site is woodland and so has the potential to support nesting birds, although this is limited by the extensive Cherry Laurel.

The report confirms that the development of the site has no impact on priority habitats, priority habitats nearby or any designated sites. However, the site falls within the Ashdown Forest 7km zone of influence, which was created to help ensure suitable mitigation is secured from any proposals which result in a net increase in residential units, with these developments providing Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) provisions.

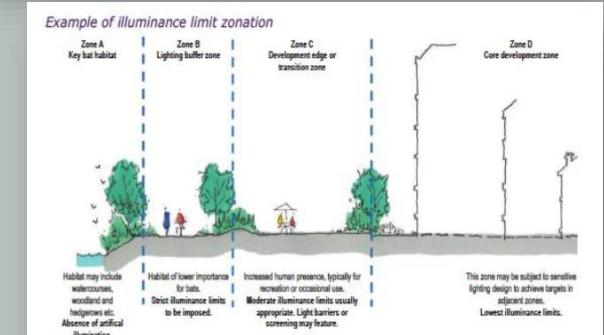
In conclusion, the following measures will be implemented as part of the development of the proposed scheme:

- New tree planting identified on the site plan will be native and, where possible, Oak.
- The removal of the Cherry Laurel is seen as an ecological benefit and is removed to facilitate development.
- A condition relating to lighting is expected and when discharged, it will be low level and will direct lighting away from areas on-site that have the potential for bats to forage, creating "dark corridors".
- Ecologists should conduct a further walkover of the site prior to commencement of works to double check for badger activity.
- Precautionary measures are suggested during the construction phase to avoid injury to mammals such as badgers, foxes and hedgehogs commuting or foraging.
- Removal/clearance of vegetation should be conducted outside of breeding bird season, or following a nesting bird check undertaken by a qualified ecologist.

The following measures are recommended to provide ecological enhancements on-site and are fully endorsed by the applicant:

- Provision of bird boxes, hung on mature trees retained along the boundaries of the site to increase the number of breeding opportunities.
- To enhance the local bat population, provide additional roosting opportunities (bat boxes).
- Log piles to be placed in the southern woodland part of the site.
- 13cm x 13cm holes at the bottom of fencing (if not post and rail) to ensure connectivity for hedgehogs.
- Bee bricks to be incorporated into buildings.

BNG – The metric enclosed is provided. Due to the loss of the Woodland, despite it being considered poor quality, the trading rules for BNG cannot be satisfied on-site. Habitats have been bolstered as much as possible, but there is still a stark contrast following the introduction of this legislation being introduced after the site was allocated for residential development. It is therefore recommended that off-site credits of 1.80 are purchased via a habitat provider, and this should be conditioned as part of the planning permission process.



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ACCESS AND PARKING (continued)

The proposed development has been designed in accordance with Manual for Streets 2 and in direct accordance with the West Sussex County Council Local Design Guide Supplementary Guidance for Residential Development Proposals, including the Mid Sussex Waste Storage and Collections Guidance for New Developments. Yewhurst Close is an adopted highway, with its own junction to Hammerwood Road. This proposed scheme is intended to link directly with the adopted part of Yewhurst Close. It is proposed that the new access road will remain in private ownership.

The proposed access retains the existing width of Yewhurst Close and two piano key parking spaces are relocated to the north of the same line of spaces, enabling the creation of the new access. The existing pavement is continued into the site, but then the access becomes a shared surface. The access road is 4.5m wide at its entrance, widening to 5.5m in some parts within the proposed development (to enable manoeuvring out of parking spaces). It is proposed to be permeable tarmac.

PARKING – The proposed scheme provides a total of 34 parking spaces, which is two above the minimum required in the Parking Demand Calculator, which takes into account whether spaces are allocated or unallocated. A copy of the completed calculator is provided with this application (please note that habitable rooms of dwellings has been used, rather than bedrooms, as this provides a more accurate result of the required number of allocated and unallocated spaces). Most of the proposed parking spaces (all but three) are suitable for people with disabilities. Please also note that where spaces are close to vertical structures such as fences or hedges, further space has been provided to enable easy access and opening of doors.

ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING – All of the units are proposed to have their own dedicated and active EVC charging facility, which will promote the use of electric cars.

REFUSE COLLECTION – Each unit is provided with a bin and recycling location within their respective plot, which is easily located for bins and recycling to be placed by the roadside for collection on the relevant collection day. Tracking of the Council's refuse collection truck is provided on a separate plan to demonstrate that the size of this is commensurate with the vehicle used.

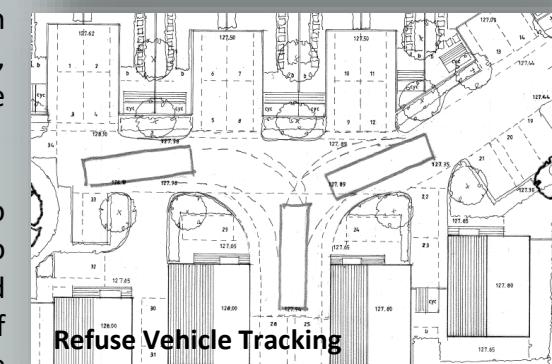
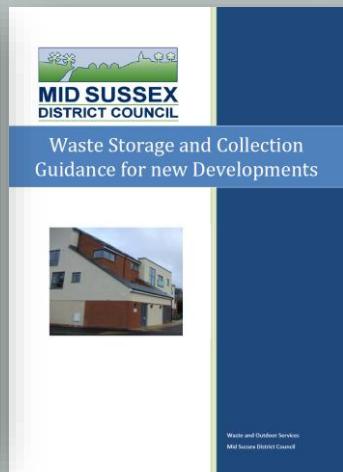
CYCLE STORAGE – Separate storage is provided for each unit to store bicycles, which will promote sustainable travel options. Two spaces per unit are provided in lockable, timber cycle stores (some brick and some timber - see picture herewith for timber and see plans for brick version) Each store is also shown for each unit on the site plan.

DRAINAGE & FLOODING

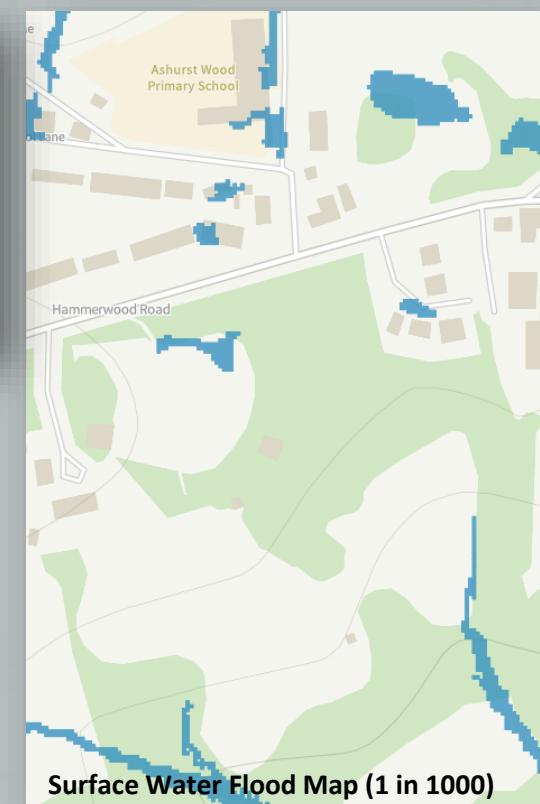
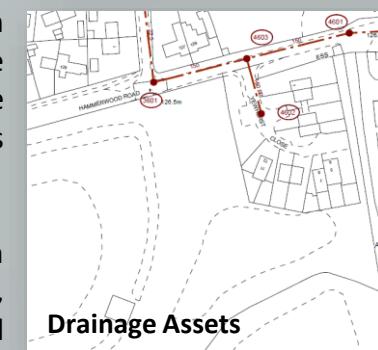
All matters relating to flooding and drainage are dealt with by our consultants Nimbus Engineering and they are contained in the separate report provided with this application. They accord with Policy DP41 of the District Plan relating to flood risk and drainage, ensuring that the development is safe across its lifetime and that it will not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and so is not at risk from flooding from rivers or seas. The site does not have any issues associated with surface water flooding and the map provided here shows the extent of surface water flooding in a 1 in 1000 annual event.

In terms of foul drainage, the proposed scheme is intended to connect to the foul connections in Hammerwood Road, subject to capacity checks.



PARKING DEMAND INCLUDING ALLOCATED PARKING				
Number of Bedrooms	Number of Habitable Rooms	Enter Total Number of Allocated Spaces	Unallocated Parking Demand	Total Parking Required if Design Allocated Used
1	1 to 3	6	2	8
2	4	8	2	10
3	5 to 6	8	2	10
4+	7 or more	3	1	4
Total		25	7	32



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CONCLUSION

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This plot is allocated for a residential development of circa twelve units and the proposed scheme will enable the delivery of twelve residential dwellings (four of which are provided for affordable housing). It is proposed that development would start on-site in early 2026, with completions taking place in early 2027.

The scheme is submitted following extensive research and engagement with the Local Planning Authority through the pre-application design process. It also follows a significant amount of work to consider the ecological and arboricultural conditions that exist on-site. This work was predominantly required as a product of the existing site being a woodland, albeit mostly Cherry Laurel. Surveys such as Bat and Dormice surveys took a number of months to complete and they, like many protected species surveys, were seasonal.

The proposed scheme creates a high quality residential layout that responds to its landscape, surrounding ecology and the wider landscape of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The proposed scheme is sensitive to its context, sensitive to neighbouring development and provides an interesting and cohesive design, emanating from Sussex domestic architecture.

The scheme also complies with all Local and National Planning Policy and the Site Allocation Document SA26, and contributes to the delivery of family sized dwellings in the Ashurst Wood area.



