

Sarah Valentine

From: Vicky Stoney <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 17 June 2025 12:47
To: planninginfo
Subject: Application reference DM/25/0484

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Formal Objection:

Proposed Development in Central Hassocks

I am submitting this objection as the resident and business owner most directly affected by the proposed development. My home and childcare business at No. 1 Dale Terrace lie immediately adjacent to the site. I have lived here for over 15 years, and I can say with certainty that this application, in its current form, represents an ill-considered and deeply inappropriate intervention in the heart of our community.

Far from being a well-balanced regeneration initiative, this proposal reflects a disregard for local context, community wellbeing, and proper planning practice. It raises serious and unresolved concerns about overdevelopment, residential harm, poor design, and a lack of transparency throughout the application.

Disruption and Harm to Residential Amenity

This development would introduce unacceptable levels of disturbance and intrusion into a quiet, residential setting as well as posing a significant threat to the viability of my registered childminding business, which operates from my home directly adjacent to the site. Prolonged exposure to construction noise, heavy machinery, vibrations, and airborne dust particles will create an environment that is entirely unsuitable for the care of young children. These are not minor inconveniences — they represent a sustained disruption to daily operations, making it difficult to maintain the calm, safe, and healthy atmosphere required under childcare regulations. Additionally, the health and wellbeing of both my own family and the children in my care could be seriously compromised by poor air quality and continuous high noise levels, which are known to contribute to respiratory problems, sleep disturbances, and increased anxiety in young children. The cumulative impact may force parents to seek alternative childcare, placing my livelihood at risk and undermining the stability of a vital local service relied upon by working families.

The amenity issues do not stop once construction is complete. The inclusion of three floors of residential windows and communal lounges directly overlooking neighbouring gardens, along with terraces immediately adjacent to private boundaries, represents a blatant invasion of privacy. And although I have been given a light and privacy report stating that frosted glass

will block the line of sight, it will still feel like an invasion of privacy as it will not create a sound barrier therefore leaving my garden, and their balconies vulnerable. These design choices show a complete lack of consideration for the residents most affected. Although it isn't perfectly clear from the drawings but my understanding is that the windows of this new development look directly into the bedrooms of my home. The planning documents fail to offer meaningful mitigation and make no serious effort to prevent the significant harm that would result.

Unacceptable Scale, Massing, and Visual Intrusion

The proposed scale is grossly disproportionate to its surroundings. The four-storey element is entirely out of keeping with the residential character of Dale Avenue and breaks with the established height and form of neighbouring buildings. This is not a subtle or contextual addition to the village, it is a dominating, oversized structure shoehorned into a site that cannot accommodate it without damaging the character and appearance of the area. Not to mention the lack of parking the village already faces.

Rather than enhancing the streetscape, the scheme bulldozes its way into a highly visible corner with no attempt at sensitive transition or respect for the village's built rhythm. The proposal flagrantly disregards the prevailing urban form, instead prioritising density and volume at the expense of integration.

Vague, Incomplete, and Misleading Documentation

The application materials are vague, inconsistent, and in some cases, misleading. Multiple artistic impressions present contradictory versions of the building's scale and form. Crucial details such as dimensions, material specifications, and accurate boundary positions appear to be omitted or obscured. These omissions are not minor technical oversights, they undermine the ability of the community and the LPA to properly assess the proposal.

It is unacceptable that a scheme of this scale has been submitted with such ambiguity. The planning process must be transparent and accountable, this application appears to be neither.

Overlooking and Invasion of Private Space

The harm to neighbouring properties, particularly mine, is indisputable. The proposal places a four storey building with residential windows, communal spaces and outdoor terraces within a few metres of our gardens and rear windows. This will obliterate privacy, introduce constant noise and activity, and fundamentally change the experience of living in these homes. I use my garden not only for recreational use for myself and my family, but also for my childminding business, having children playing upside. Which would potentially be compromised with such a build.

The suggestion that window glazing or screening might mitigate this harm is inadequate and unconvincing. The level of overlooking proposed is entirely inappropriate and would not be tolerated in any reasonable residential planning context.

Structural Risks and Boundary Encroachment

The close proximity of the proposed structure to existing homes raises serious questions about structural integrity and boundary impact. With just one metre between some existing homes and the proposed build, and with indications that a carport may be placed directly against my boundary fence, there is real concern about subsidence, encroachment, and legal disputes over party walls.

The application fails to provide reassurance or technical clarity on how these issues will be managed. The absence of such detail again points to the hasty and careless nature of the submission.

Lack of Clear Purpose or Justification

There is also no clear explanation of what this development is actually for. Is it intended to serve over-55s, as suggested in parts of the Planning Statement? If so, why is there no formal designation? Why are features such as guest suites and communal lounges included without confirming whether this is supported by evidence or need?

This ambiguity is not academic, it has real implications for the scale and design of the scheme. Until these questions are clearly answered, the application remains speculative and unfit for determination.

Architectural Failings

The architectural design lacks cohesion, finesse and adequate detail. While token references are made to local materials, the elevations are generic and underdeveloped. There is no information about key features such as shopfronts, eaves, brickwork detailing, or window reveals. What is presented appears conceptual and incomplete, as though the application is still in draft form.

It is baffling that the Design Review Panel described the design as “skilfully executed,” given its unresolved bulk, lack of integration, and absence of fine grained detail. This only reinforces the impression that the review process has failed to grasp the site’s true context.

Minimal Community Engagement

Despite the impact this development would have, the applicant has made virtually no effort to consult or inform the local community. A single leaflet issued several years ago is not engagement, it is box-ticking. This lack of consultation not only falls short of Mid Sussex’s own Statement of Community Involvement but also speaks volumes about the developer’s priorities.

False and Misleading Claims

The Planning Statement's reference to the possible relocation of the village library to the development is misleading and inappropriate. No agreement exists with Sussex County Council, and no formal provision is included in the application. Suggesting otherwise is a cynical attempt to generate public support without substance. If the library was truly part of the proposal, it should be clearly stated, evidenced, and consulted upon.

Absence of Affordable Housing

What appears to be the complete omission of affordable housing is both surprising and unacceptable. This is a centrally located brownfield site within a growing community. The absence of any affordable provision should not be casually accepted and must be scrutinised by independent viability testing.

Conclusion

This proposal is not a sensitive development or a thoughtful contribution to the village centre. It is a gross overdevelopment that prioritises density over design, speculation over substance, and developer convenience over community interest. It disrespects the character of Hassocks, threatens residential wellbeing, and fails every reasonable test of good planning.

I urge the LPA to refuse this application in its current form or request its immediate withdrawal. The local community deserves better and so does the planning process.

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