

From: planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk <planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 29 January 2025 13:48:37 UTC+00:00
To: "Joanne Fisher" <joanne.fisher@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: Mid Sussex DC - Online Register - Comments for Planning Application
DM/24/3051

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

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

Comments were submitted at 29/01/2025 1:48 PM.

Application Summary

Address:	Highfields West Hill East Grinstead West Sussex RH19 4DL
Proposal:	Demolition of existing dwelling and the erection of a care home (Class C2) and a separate building with additional care units (Class C2).
Case Officer:	Joanne Fisher

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Address:	Tree Top , West Lane East Grinstead
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Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour or general public
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

Comments:	<p>I would object to the proposed development on the following grounds;.</p> <p>Traffic and Access.</p> <p>It is understood that the staffing levels for this category of development are one member of staff to every five residents. In consideration that staffing will be on a shift basis, with additional administration staff, cleaners, kitchen, laundry, maintenance workers etc it can be conservatively estimated that there will be well in excess of one hundred additional traffic movements over a</p>
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twenty four hour period with the associated disturbance and loss of amenity caused to local residents.

The proposed access to West Hill will inevitably cause conflict with traffic trying to exit from West Lane. As it exists the West Lane/West Hill junction is hazardous to negotiate and is noted as being a sub standard junction. Negotiating this junction relies on anticipating traffic driving up West Hill, that cannot be seen until the last moment due to poor lines of sight and is generally well over the meridian line to further compromise it being seen. In conjunction with having to estimate the speed of approaching traffic driving down West Hill appearing from a blind corner to all but disappear from sight as it proceeds down West Hill currently raises concerns in itself. To have additional traffic emerging from the proposed new access road which appears does not have a clear line of sight of traffic trying to emerge from West Lane can only further compromise safety.

It can be seen from the submitted splay angles for the junction of the development that the junction of West Lane with West Hill cannot be seen, this is despite numerous assurances in the application and referral to independent surveys to the contrary. With traffic turning left exiting the proposed development this will not be seen by vehicles exiting West Lane until having committed to cross the carriageway.

To exacerbate matters, where a large vehicle turns out of the proposed development it will likely encroach on both carriageways meaning traffic will have to stop and not unlikely reverse, this being seriously detrimental to highway safety.

To enable large delivery, refuse vehicles and those of the emergency services turning in and out of the new development it will inevitably mean no vehicle parking will be permitted opposite the new junction, not only a loss of amenity for residents of West Hill but placing greater demand for what permit parking is available. In addition, to ensure that no vehicles encroach on a 'no parking' zone this shall need to be constantly monitored.

A further concern regarding the proposed access road is that it is of an appreciable gradient perpendicular and leading directly on to West Hill. Given the 365 day, 24 hour operation of the facility in the winter ice and snow would need to be anticipated and cleared. This duty would need to be acted on pro actively to meet the duty of care to the public and to forestall any out of control vehicles catastrophically skidding across both carriage ways of West Hill; no winter risk assessment is referred to in the event of ice and snow

The designer's response to concerns raised regarding pedestrian access from West Hill being hazardous is that pedestrians will not access the development via the access road as there is a footpath at the north end of the plot which is closer to the town. This would seem a little disingenuous to say the least, as anyone taking a direct walking route from the train station or coming up West Hill to the development would take the earliest opportunity to reach the development which would be by the apparent access road.

Surface Water Drainage

With regard to surface water drainage and run off management. It is noted that the existing footprint of Highfields is some 890m² whereas the development currently being proposed has a footprint with terraced areas and excluding the access road of 3100m², which is approaching an increase of 400%. In addition, this figure would need to be multiplied by factors taking into account the roof design and elevational facades.

It is not known what surface water drainage management system is currently employed at Highfields, however despite the soft landscaping it has been noted as being woefully inadequate on several occasions in the last eight years. The result being that water courses either on the surface of the clay soil over mantle, or through the Tunbridge Sandstone, Ardingly Sandstone sub strata, flowing out across the grounds of lower properties on the southern boundary with Highfields.

The concern is that with water running on occasion ankle deep that there is a threat of undermining foundations of those properties either by the washing out of soil fines, softening of the founding soil or more likely the deleterious action of both. The issue is of sufficient concern that significant land drainage schemes have had to be put in place on properties to mitigate flood water threats. The model used with the submitted application for estimating surface water run off and event years does not reflect the situation. Significant rainfall has occurred at least every two years over the last eight years, again causing sufficient flood water encroachment so as to necessitate mitigating engineering works on adjacent properties.

With reference to last summers torrential rains, despite these works to mitigate this threat a surge of water in excess of six inches depth swept through my property, the 'high tide' witness mark is still discernible. This is downhill of the Highfields plot that currently has soft landscaping. With the hard landscaping of the proposed development and increased building structure size it can be appreciated that this situation will be significantly exacerbated. As the proposed development is conservatively envisaged to increase the run off water amount four fold it would be expected to demonstrate that it can manage this amount with additional capacity. The proposed outline development scheme does not even approach addressing this issue. There is at best a vague notion presented that perhaps a SuDS installation may be an answer. This statement is of concern given that a cursory inspection of the proposed development would raise the question of exactly where could an installation be placed, regardless of the necessary volume of an appropriate SuDS installation. In addition, there would be the question of whether the ground conditions are suitable for a SuDS installation given the sloping topography around the site. Undermining foundations of surrounding properties is one matter but causing the conditions for a shallow landslide of the steep bank down to the road level of West Hill would need to be demonstrated by an engineered model as not to pose cause for concern.

From the applications submitted soils report it is stated that the

ground makeup is of Tunbridge Wells fissured sandstone and fines. It should be noted that following last summers heavy rains great plumes of washed out sandstone fines could be observed on the bank running parallel with West Hill. At the time of writing there is still one plume of fines visible. Needless to say a SuDS scheme would not be effective in this situation without leading to potential loss of ground integrity.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties

It is reasonable to suppose there will be a significant amount of external lighting for both security and the access road. There is no statement how this light pollution will be mitigated in order that neighbouring properties are not subjected to living in a permanent state of twilight conditions. It would also need to be addressed in order to not affect normal cyclical activity of wildlife.

It is noted that amongst the amenities to be provided as part of the development are a laundry, restaurant and hair salon. It is considered seriously inappropriate to have effectively commercial scale businesses introduced into a residential area, again affecting the quiet enjoyment of neighbouring properties with kitchen and laundry odours and the associated noise of extractor fans and heat exchange units.

Properties on the south west boundary will also have the proximity of the proposed sloped access road which will be within an estimated 6 - 7m of one property. The home owner will consequently suffer from the noise of general vehicles, also delivery and refuse vehicles labouring up the slope, likely in a low gear having turned off West Hill. This will result in noise, diesel fumes and likely odours spoiling the quiet enjoyment presently benefitting the property. As rear bedrooms in bungalows face the proposed access, windows will need to be kept shut to try and mitigate the noise, fumes and also ingress of burnt diesel particles damaging soft furnishings.

Properties on West Hill immediately opposite the proposed access road will be strafed by vehicle headlights coming down the gradient of the proposed access, this nuisance can only be exacerbated by the expected shift work patterns needed to staff a development of this type.

The establishment and construction of the proposed access road will no doubt require significant works and sheet piling, there is no acknowledgement how this will likely affect nearby properties or what mitigating works could be implemented to minimise disturbance given the proximity and depth of excavations.

Development On Site Provisions for Vehicles, Staff and Visitors

The car parking allowances seem inadequate for a proposed development this size, particularly when you consider the likelihood of a high volume of visits at traditional holiday times; mother's day, father's day, Christmas, Easter etc. It is noted that from the application that the distance from some public transport access such as trains is given as the crow flies and not factually, as being via a steep hill and rise and a narrow unlit twitten, hardly a convenient route to be considered user friendly.

In consideration of these matters the proposed development is

perceived as being particularly car centric and not in line with the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan of reducing car use.

It is not entirely clear from the submitted plans of the proposed development but large fire appliances require a minimum turning circle between kerbs of 16.8m diameter where the access road is in excess of 20m. The proposed development access road leads in effect to a dead end and the available turning circle does not appear to meet this requirement.

The Proposed Development.

The proportions of the outlined development are overbearing, out of proportion and out of character with the surrounding area of residential housing. In effect what is being proposed is the development of a hotel, with all the associated environmental encroachments in a residential setting. This issue would be more pronounced during winter months when surrounding trees lose their foliage and in the long term further aggravated by the issue, as noted in the submitted tree survey report, of the loss of surrounding trees that are coming to the end of their healthy life.

Existing Wild Life Impact

The survey of wildlife on the site has touched on the significant bat activity at the south west of the site and it is strongly suggested that a detailed resurvey is undertaken to ensure a large roosting site is not inadvertently destroyed.

As bats can roost in fissures in trees and knots of decaying trees it would have been thought reasonable that where these trees are nearing the end of their healthy life and suggested are likely to be removed, that this habitat is replaced with appropriately located bat boxes, this does not seem to have been a consideration.

The south east corner of the development has an additional seven, care units proposed. There is concern that there are active badger sets in this area and that both the structure and associated parking bays will encroach on this habitat where colonies can extend up to 80m underground.

In addition, it is known from previous development of this site that it was a condition that a badger 'corridor' was established along the south west boundary, it is not immediately apparent that this condition is to be maintained with the proposed development. It should be noted that this 'corridor' linked badger setts, latrines and scrapes on the Highfields plot with those on the banking to the east side of West Hill. This link/corridor will effectively severed by the proposed access road, the destruction of any existing badger setts notwithstanding.

The proposal appears to have been poorly considered and thought to be considered unfeasible not least because of these matters of concern.

It should be noted that no comment can be made on the proposed tree removal schedules and a number of other embedded documents as the associated digitally supplied application documents showing, the plot, trees and other embedded schedules are of inadequate resolution so as to be indiscernible.

Kind regards