



Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 1SS

Date: 16 October 2025
Our ref: 10204

For the attention of: Planning Department, planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk

Application ref:	DM/25/2223
Location:	Juhring And Hobbs Field At Saint Hill Manor Saint Hill Road East Grinstead
Proposal/Description:	Hard paved car park with 121 spaces and toilet facilities adjacent to Saint Hill Road. Hard paved access road servicing both Juhring and Hobbs fields. Engineered grass surfaced provision of 619 spaces for temporary parking for specific events in Juhring field. Re-contouring of Hobbs field with grassed surface and provision of permanent pads for a marquee together with washroom facilities and substation with backup generator.

Thank you for requesting advice on this Full planning application from Place Services' landscape advice service. This service provides advice to planning officers to inform Mid Sussex District Council planning decisions regarding potential landscape impacts from development. Any additional information, queries or comments on this advice that the applicant or other interested parties may have, must be directed to the Planning Officer who will seek further advice from us where appropriate and necessary.

This review is based on a desktop study without a site visit of the above-referenced application and its submitted documents. Our Landscape comments are as follows:

Pre application

It is noted in the Design and Access Statement (page 8) that during pre-application, reference has been made to the importance of both the visual impact and the settling of High Weald National Landscape. Although we have not been formally involved at the pre

application meetings, we have reviewed how the application addresses these points within the submitted plans and reports.

Site context (Landscape)

The site is accessed by Saint Hill Road which runs to the east of the Manor. The site is located within the grounds of Saint Hill Manor. East Grinstead Rugby and Cricket Clubs lie to the east and north of the site. The application relates to two individual fields (Hobbs field and Juhring Field) to the north and west of the Manor. The fields are generally contained within the landscape by mature woodland planting, which is a typical feature of the parkland settling.

Landscape Character

The site is located within the Landscape Character Area (LCA) 6 High Weald. This LCA is the largest Landscape Character Area in Mid Sussex, containing the highest ground levels in West Sussex and lies wholly within the District and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)/National Landscape.

Para 9.11 of the LCA recognises the characteristics of 'Parkscapes' within the landscape and the role they play in this character area. The LCA references the key issue of change impacting on the landscape. Relevant to this application are:

- Visual impact of new urban and rural development including village expansion, modern farm buildings, horse riding centres and paddocks.
- Increasing pressures for a wide variety of recreational activities.
- Gradual suburbanisation of the landscape including the widespread use of exotic tree and shrub species.

Again, relevant to the proposals, the LCA Management Objectives reference the following Land Management Guidelines:

- Avoid skyline development and ensure that any new development has a minimum impact on long and other views and is integrated within the landscape, paying particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.

- Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees and re-plant hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.

High Weald National Landscape Management Plan 2024-29

The High Weald National Landscape Management Plan is the principle guidance for ensuring that the statutory purposes of the protected landscape are met. The following objectives from the Management Plan are relevant to this application and should be referred to within the application material:

Natural Systems (Geology, Soils, Water and Climate)

OBJECTIVE G1 To restore the natural function of rivers, water courses and water bodies.

The proposals should seek to protect people and communities from flooding.

The proposals include regrading level changes which may impact on the existing water table, flooding and surface water draining.

See summary and recommendations.

Dark Skies

Objective DS1 To preserve the dark skies of the High Weald AONB by minimising light pollution, obtrusive external lighting and internal light spill from domestic, commercial and public premises in both existing and new developments within the High Weald, and from highways lighting.

From a landscape perspective the submitted lighting design addresses the requirements of the DS1 Objective.

Aesthetic and Perceptual Qualities

Objective PQ1 To increase opportunities for learning about and celebrating the High Weald's character and aesthetic qualities, and to promote and facilitate contributions by communities and individuals to the conservation and enhancement of the High Weald.

Objective PQ2 To protect the unspoilt rural landscape with its intrinsic sense of naturalness, valued views, and the extent of green space which foster experiences of rurality and tranquillity.

Objective PQ3 To foster and promote equitable access and informal enjoyment of the High Weald landscape and the integrated management of its resources for the enjoyment of natural beauty by all.

See summary and recommendations.

Public Realm in the High Weald AONB

Planning Principle 6

Page 73 of the High Weald AONB Management Plan recommends that:

- Historic public realm features in the AONB are given consideration as Heritage Assets and should be retained in-situ and repaired appropriately, in order to conserve their contribution to the natural beauty of the AONB.
- Partners responsible for management of roadside verges and works in their vicinity follow best practice advice, including Managing grassland road verges 2020 (plantlife.org.uk).
- Existing trees in villages and towns, including street trees, are retained, managed well, and supplemented where appropriate, to reinforce the verdant character of High Weald settlements and to help with climate adaptation.
- Design choices for new or replacement public realm infrastructure, including paving, signage and lighting, are sensitive to the character of the AONB, use traditional designs and materials, and have regard to the objectives of the Management Plan.
- New public realm soft landscaping schemes are informed by the advice in the High Weald Housing Design Guide regarding creating multi-layered planting strategies of native trees, (including street trees), hedging plants and wildflowers, avoiding ubiquitous, suburbanising planting of ornamental ground-cover shrubs or locally non-native or invasive species.

See summary and recommendations.

Section 85 Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000

The planning statement accompanying the application fails to reference or justify the development proposals against Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act. We would expect a clear narrative justifying the proposals against this act including an assessment on avoiding harm, enhancing and mitigation within the National Landscape.

Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)

The submitted Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) does not include a methodology outlining how the visual assessments have been undertaken and what it seeks to review. The LVIA also fails to reference to the appropriate guidance, such as GLVIA 3rd Edition and the more recent TGN 05/23.

The 8no. viewpoints selected to assess the proposals (Fig 14) fail to include several locations where according to the 'Combined Zone of Theoretical Visibility' (Fig 13) views to the site are unfiltered. These are typically to the south to western arc of the development site.

The marked up photographic viewpoints 1 to 8 should specifically make reference to lighting columns and the 'annual temporary structures'.

The lighting columns are set to a height of 6.0-6.2m. It is unclear whether the lighting columns have been assessed by the LVIA.

The application itself seeks to include infrastructure to support 'annual temporary structures' in the form of an event and catering tent. If these uses are part of the submitted application, we would expect these structures (although temporary) to be assessed within the LVIA, especially when considering the nature and scale of the use within a National Landscape. The proposed toilet blocks are single storey and (if suitably elevated), will have minimal visual impact on the wider landscape.

Site proposals and details (Landscape)

The proposed regrading of Hobbs Field (1500-1950mm) should be referenced in greater detail. Sections, topographical plans both linked to the landscape proposal should be produced to accompany the application. If the surface is specified as permeable, what will the implications of this be when the 'annual temporary structures' are in place? Any proposed landscape features should be designed to address and reflect the historic context of the site and the National Landscape Objectives G1 and PQ1-3.

The southern section of the plant enclosure (1093 67 A 23.09.2025) would benefit from some additional landscape planting to help screen this structure.

Summary and recommendations

The following recommendations listed below relate to the landscape elements of this application.

- The proposals should include additional information regarding the proposed level changes on Hobbs Field which may impact on the existing water table, flooding and surface water draining. Topographical plans, sections and technical details of the landscape treatment should be produced.
- The application should provide additional justification against Section 85 Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000.
- The Landscape Visual Impact Assessment should be updated to address the comments raised in this response, including;
 - An assessment of the viewpoints to the south/west,
 - An assessment of the visual implications of the lighting columns and the 'annual temporary structures',
 - A methodology outlining how the visual assessments have been undertaken and what it seeks to review.
- Light column colour has not been specified or referenced within the application reports. There is guidance on the use of colour within the National Landscape, this should be referenced to inform the proposals.
- The elevational design and specification of the toilet blocks should also reference and be informed by the guidance on the use of colour within the National Landscape.

- Detailed plans outlining the planting specification, hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatment should be produced (referencing the appropriate guidance/s for the National Landscape). These plans could be submitted as planning conditions.
- Detailed Landscape Management Plan to be submitted (referencing the appropriate guidance/s for the National Landscape). This could be submitted as planning conditions.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries in relation to this advice.

Place Services – Landscape Team

Email: landscape@essex.gov.uk



Place Services provide landscape advice on behalf of Mid Sussex District Council.

Please note: This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter.