

Urban Design Observations

To: Steven King, Development Management

From: Anna Kramarczyk-Dillon, Architect/Urban Designer, Mid Sussex DC

Application ref: DM/23/2961

Date: 14/05/2026

Address: Land At Hurst Farm, Hurstwood Lane, Haywards Heath, West Sussex

Description: Reserved Matters Application Pursuant to Outline Planning Permission Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) Reference: DM/25/1630, Lewes District Council (LDC) Reference: LW/2510707 at Hurst Farm, for appearance, layout, scale and landscaping only.

Stage: Reserved Matters Application

This is a well-thought-through scheme that had addressed most of the concerns raised at the previous consultations and DRP.

I have reviewed the submitted drawings and information and, before I am able to provide further comments and to ensure the quality of the design, I would like to recommend some small changes and improvements and request additional information/drawings as listed below:

Layout and Architecture:

- Parcel 1: All affordable units in are bland, uninspiring, and visibly substandard in its appearance by comparison to the remainder of the houses. They appear stripped of any meaningful detail or architectural interest, with small windows and a complete lack of vertical articulation within the elevations. The window proportions are awkward, with square subdivisions and overly horizontal emphasis, rather than the more appropriate vertical or portrait proportions expected within the context of the development.

The affordable units require significant improvement, as they sit uncomfortably at odds with the architectural language established elsewhere across the scheme. In particular, the large uninterrupted roof form spanning the three-plot units creates an overly monolithic appearance and should be broken down to provide greater rhythm and individuality. Where row of 3 units is introduced, the elevations should be articulated through the introduction of a series of front gables to reinforce vertical rhythm and improve the overall composition.

The vertical articulation is especially important and much needed for the units along the eastern edge route leading towards Parcel 2 and opening Plots 1–6 (which currently present the most unattractive frontage to Rocky Lane with horizontal banding and fenestration that seem too small for the envelope of the building).

Furthermore, refuse bins must not define the corner facing Rocky Lane, as this further creates poor and unwelcoming aspect at a key point within the development. Overall, I strongly oppose to the poor design of all affordable units on Plot 1 in its current form.

- Similar to the previous comment, the houses shown in Parcel 03, Streetscene C-C, located on plots 285 to 297, exhibit a strong horizontal emphasis in their architectural design. This results in a lack of rhythm within the street scene and gives the buildings a squat appearance. Those houses need to be improved in line with the suggestions made in the previous point.
- Parcel 4; houses type BROM lack detail, interest and vertical emphasis and require improvement.
- Parcel 1: There is a lot of corners that are poorly executed and defined by blank predominantly side elevations. For example, Plots 41 and 50 lack sufficient fenestration to provide visual interest, natural surveillance, or an appropriate corner treatment. Please identify those corners and note that all these elevations require significant improvement through the introduction of additional windows, increased architectural detailing, and a stronger sense of composition.
- Parcel 2: Please relocate visitor parking space (marked in Blue) closer to the junction or elsewhere, so it doesn't block a potential pedestrian link to the Business Park.



- Parcel 2 and Parcel 3: create additional pedestrian link (marked in Red):



- Parcel 2: Plots 107 and 108: Please move the buildings closer to the road and accommodate parking to the rear of the properties. Junctions should not be dominated or defined by parked cars.
- Parcel 2: plot 57– parking should be accommodated to the side of the unit.
- Parcel 2: Similar to the previous comment regarding Plot 144, parking should be accommodated to the side of the unit.
- Parcel 2: Plot 74 – please define boundary treatment to the road
- Parcel 2: plot 104– please define boundary treatment to the Business Park
- Parcel 2: plots 109 to 119– please define boundary treatment to the Business Park

- Many houses are designed with front access steps in order to respond to the challenging topography. I would expect that some will require railings. As the design and choice of railings will have an impact on the street scene, I would like request further information of those.
- I would also like to request additional street elevations, particularly those showing units with front steps and stair runs that are parallel to the front façade.
- Furthermore, other street elevations should be updated to accurately show the proposed steps, as they appear to be missing in many locations, which can be misleading (for example, Elevation D–D, Plot 301).
- Parcel 4: Affordable Units: The 'Brom' type plots; please provide private outdoor space for each unit directly accessible from the main living space; define the outdoor boundary of this space with mixture of 600mm Vertical Metal Railing and hedging.
- Material : It can be commended that overall the elevations provide sufficient variety to create visual interest within the street scenes. However, the scheme can also be criticised for the dwellings appearing unfinished, with materials seemingly peeling away at the edges, and for the use of render, which is not considered acceptable within the district. Please correct.
- Poorly executed and predominantly blank side elevations are exposed on some corners. For example, Plots 41 (Warwick) and 50 (Leamington) lack sufficient fenestration to provide visual interest and passive surveillance. These elevations should be improved through the introduction of additional fenestration, detailing, and architectural treatment.
- All projecting balconies are poorly designed and should be self-supporting.
- Unfortunately, I found it very difficult to understand the location and relationship of each building, each plan, and the level of fenestration and overlooking that each space and street can expect. To allow me to provide more detailed comments regarding the architecture and for ease of reference please provide the following:
 1. Landscape plan showing ground floor plan of each building
 2. For ease of reference, please provide an updated set of drawings for each individual building type, with the relevant plot numbers included in the drawing titles/pdf name.

Landscape:

- All Parcels: Overall, the hard landscape plan seems flooded with tarmac finishes. Considering the amount of front-threshold parking being proposed, it is particularly important that the visual impact be reduced through the use of varied hard landscaping materials. It is poor design to have tarmac roads, tarmac public pavements, and parking spaces all finished in tarmac, as this would create a dreary and monotonous appearance. Employ block paving to all car parking spaces in all Parcels.
- The landscape design appears to prioritize movement and circulation, but it lacks resting spaces, which are a very important component of successful placemaking. These spaces need to be secured at this stage of the design. Please update the drawings to clearly indicate the locations of benches throughout the scheme.
- Please provide sections through the attenuation ponds to illustrate the proposed land profiling, as well as any boundary treatments that may be required