



ARBORICULTURAL PLANNING CONSULTANTS

THE OLD POST OFFICE
DORKING ROAD
TADWORTH
SURREY KT20 5SA

Tel.: (01737) 813058
E-mail: sja@sjatrees.co.uk

Directors: Simon R. M. Jones Dip. Arb. (RFS), FArborA.,
RCArborA. (Managing)
Frank P. S. Spooner BSc (Hons), MArborA, TechCert
(ArborA), RCArborA. (Operations)
Claire E. Jones BSc (Hons) (Finance)

17th December 2025

Our ref: SJA ten 24168-01

Land Adjacent to Rocky Lane, Haywards Heath

Response to concerns expressed by Mid Sussex Council in submitted application

1. On behalf of my client, Cross Homes Ltd. (the Applicant), I have been instructed to prepare this technical note to address concerns expressed by Mid Sussex Council's tree officer in its response to the application relating to this site, dated 11th December 2025.
2. As an arboriculturist, this note will be in response to the arboricultural matters raised by the tree officer only, as I am unable to comment on aspects of their comments that fall outside of my specialism.
3. SJAtrees has visited the site on two occasions in preparation of the planning submission; firstly in April 2024 and secondly in May 2025. As such, a further site visit was not conducted in preparation of this technical note.
4. My understanding of the arboricultural concerns expressed by the Council's tree officer for this site are:
 - the proposed block pushes the development closer to the group of TPO trees to the north;
 - boundary screening to the adjacent railway line will be lost and not replaced; and
 - replacement planting will not have sufficient space to reach their full potential thus impacting landscape views.
5. I will discuss each of these topics in turn.

Proximity to TPO trees

6. The TPO referenced in the tree officer's comments is G1 of TPO TP/15/0009 (hereinafter referred to as G1) which is situated along the northern boundary of the development.

7. The two existing apartment blocks adjacent to G1 are 22m and 11m away from the canopies of TPO trees respectively and no objection was raised by the tree officer on account of their proximity to TPO trees during their application (application ref: DM/16/5547).

8. The new proposed block will be situated 16m from canopies of TPO trees; as such the proposals will not result in any additional encroachment by built structures towards these TPO trees than is already present and has been assessed and approved by the LPA. Consequently, objecting to the scheme on this basis would be inconsistent with previously approved works as the proximity to TPO trees is significantly lower. Moreover, there is no policy within the Mid Sussex District Plan that forms a basis for objecting to a structure which is situated more than 10m from the canopies and root protection areas (RPAs) of the trees in question.

Loss of boundary screening to the adjacent railway

9. The section of group G2 to be removed consists of no more than 5 individual specimens of sycamore, hawthorn and ash (as shown in **Photograph 1** below). The larger of these specimens have been reduced to ground level in the past and so consists of small diameter epicormic growth and consequently have negligible potential for future growth.



Photograph 1: specimens in group G2 to be removed

10. With the exception of these few specimens, all of the screening to the adjacent railway is situated on Network Rail land. With this in mind, all of the trees in this group are likely to be subject to regular management in the future to ensure they don't interfere with railway operations. As such, none of the trees in this area are likely to grow significantly beyond their present size, irrespective of the proposed development and cannot be relied upon for screening beyond their current context in any event.

11. In any event, in response to comments provided by Network Rail, the applicant has prepared an updated site layout which leaves a 3m buffer between the proposed structure and the railway boundary, further limiting the impact on existing off-site boundary screening.

Replacement planting

12. The tree officer's comment regarding replacement planting suggests that the development will harm landscape views as planting approved as part of the existing apartment blocks will no longer be possible and that planting that is implemented will not be able to reach its full potential.

13. The primary public view of the site is along the A272 and in long views to the south and south-west. The existing trees along the northern boundary obscure the site in views to the north.

14. To soften the built form of the new development the area of soft landscaping and embankment is to be planted with a mixture of medium and large ultimate size trees such as oak and field maple, in keeping with the planted area adjacent to the neighbouring apartment block. Given that this area encompasses 700m² of soft landscaping, there is ample space for new planting of sufficient density to provide screening in the short-term and be thinned out in the long-term to allow select specimens to reach maturity. With this in mind, the space available allows for the planting of new medium-sized trees more than 10m from the proposed structure and large trees more than 13m away without encroaching into the adjacent road. These distances present ample spread for the mature specimens of the species to be planted. In this way there will be sufficient space to both screen the newly built form as well as become landscape features in an area that would otherwise remain a grass embankment.

15. Given the space available there is no reason to believe these trees will come under significant pressure for removal or heavy pruning by new occupiers as they will not be sufficiently close to cause apprehension and will benefit residents by screening the adjacent road. In any event, once the trees reach a sufficient size to contribute to the local landscape, the LPA could control their management via the imposition of a TPO.

16. The locations, density, species and distances from building of all replacement planting could be further secured via the imposition of a planning condition.

Conclusion

17. In conclusion, the concerns raised by the tree officer are largely unfounded and several relate to non-arboricultural matters. The existing TPO trees will be impacted to a lesser degree than the previously approved scheme, that is to say they will not be impacted at all. The boundary screening to the adjacent railway line does not have capacity to become a more substantial buffer than it already is due to the need for regular management, irrespective of development and the large area available for new tree planting ensures screening will be implemented in the short-term and allows new established feature trees to develop in the long-term.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Spooner

**Senior Consultant and Operations Director for
SJAtrees**