

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 13 January 2025 16:41:39 UTC+00:00
To: "Susan Dubberley" <Susan.Dubberley@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/24/3077 Sussex House

Hi Sue

Comments on the above planning application.

The proposed development site, which includes Sussex House, Commercial House and 52-56 Perrymount Road. Sussex House is a two storey office building located to the Eastern side of the site, set back from the road; to the site frontage are two further two storey buildings both in retail use. The site includes a significant amount of open space, which is largely given over to car parking.

The site backs directly onto the Heath Conservation Area and specifically onto the open space of the Heath itself, at the cricket ground. There are clear views across this towards the site from the woodland to the east and south east, which sits at a higher level, although the existing development is partially screened from view by the trees and other planting along the boundary.

The Council has an adopted appraisal document for the Heath Conservation Area, which sets out the key features contributing to its character and appearance, and identifies management issues and potential areas for improvement. The importance of the heath and the cricket ground to the Area are highlighted, as well as the need to protect views into and out of the Conservation Area, and to promote good design in new development within it and its setting.

The current planning proposal, which follows on from pre-application advice, is for demolition of the existing buildings on the site and the construction of a food store building, car parking, landscaping and associated works. The submitted plans show a substantial retail store of a single high storey, positioned towards the north east rear corner of the site, with soft landscaping the north and east, and an extensive car parking area to the south and west. Existing planting to the boundary with the Heath is to be retained and enhanced.

The existing substantial building at Sussex House is not of any particular architectural interest, and makes at best a neutral contribution to the setting of the adjacent CA. In this context, the principle of a replacement building of the scale shown is not considered contentious. Although the current proposal sets the bulk of the new store building closer to the CA boundary, this is not considered problematic in heritage terms due to its single storey height and the screening on the boundary.

I will not comment further on specifics of the design or layout of the scheme, which will be the remit of the Council's Urban Design Officer. However, I note that following on from pre-application advice, the current submission includes further details of enhanced planting to the eastern boundary of the site, and a number of verified views which demonstrate that the new store building will be well screened in views from within the Conservation Area and in some cases less visually prominent than the existing building on the site.

In my opinion, therefore, the proposal will preserve the setting of the Heath Conservation Area, and the contribution which this makes to its character and appearance. This will meet the requirements of District Plan Policy DP35 and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

I note that the submitted Heritage Statement also include consideration of potential impact on the setting of St Richard's Church, which is a Grade II listed building located on Sydney Road to the north of the site. However, I would agree with the findings of that Statement that due to the existing building at Sussex House, and the intervening development between the listed building and the site the proposal will not materially impact on the Church's setting or significance.

Thanks,

Emily

Please note that this advice is given at Officer level only and is without prejudice to the formal decision of the District Council.

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