

Landscape and Planting Addendum – Revision in Response to Tree Officer Comments

Planning Application DM/25/2884 – Land Adjacent to 48 Wickham Way

This updated landscape statement responds directly to the comments of the Assistant Tree Officer dated 20 February 2026, in which concern was raised regarding the suitability of the proposed mitigation planting and its alignment with Policy DP37 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

The applicants have carefully reviewed those comments and have revised the landscape scheme to prioritise native species and deliver measurable biodiversity enhancement consistent with DP37.

Condition and Remaining Contribution of Existing Trees

The Arboricultural Impact Assessment identifies both Lawson cypress trees as Category B (moderate quality) under BS5837:2012.

The report notes that:

- One tree exhibits observable dieback within the upper crown (approximately the upper quarter), indicating physiological stress.
- Both specimens display signs consistent with drought stress and declining vigour.
- The dense evergreen canopy suppresses understorey growth and contributes to dry, compacted soils beneath.
- Their rooting environment is constrained within a sloping residential frontage.
- The Arborist assessed the trees as having “little ecological value to local wildlife”.
- Estimated Remaining Contribution (ERC) in years is categorised as +20 and not the higher category of +40.

Replacement Tree Strategy (Revised)

The previously proposed trees have been replaced with native species.

The revised scheme proposes:

- 3 × *Betula pendula* (Native Silver Birch)
- 1 × *Sorbus aucuparia* (Native Rowan)

These species have been selected because they:

- Are native to the UK;
- Recommended by the Woodland Trust;
- Provide high ecological value for birds, pollinators and invertebrates;
- Offer a lighter, more permeable canopy than the existing conifers;

- Establish successfully in residential frontages;
- Provide seasonal interest including blossom, berries and autumn colour.
- Whilst the existing Lawson cypress trees are mature, their assessed ERC of +20 years reflects a moderate remaining lifespan. By contrast, the proposed native replacement trees are expected to provide 60–80+ years of healthy canopy succession in a residential context, ensuring continuity of tree cover along Wickham Way and avoiding a future scenario in which both existing specimens decline simultaneously without replacement. According to guidance from the Woodland Trust Tree Species Handbook, Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) and Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) have the potential for significantly longer lifespans under favourable conditions and are recognised as species of high ecological value within the UK.

Planting will be carried out using heavy standard specimens to ensure immediate structural presence and long-term canopy succession.

The introduction of four native trees represents an increase in tree numbers relative to those removed.

Front and Side Boundary Hedging (Revised)

The previously proposed ornamental hedging has been replaced with native species to better align with Policy DP37.

Front and side boundary hedging:

- *Fagus sylvatica* (Beech hedging)

Beech is a native species that establishes well in residential settings and provides year-round structure while retaining a formal, well-maintained appearance appropriate to Wickham Way.

In addition to providing visual enclosure and structure, the hedge will contribute to the continuity of vegetated front boundaries along Wickham Way. Together with the proposed native replacement trees, the frontage planting will enhance the linear wildlife corridor along the street by increasing nectar sources, shelter, and foraging opportunities for birds and invertebrates.

This structured native hedge, combined with canopy succession planting, ensures that the frontage remains verdant in character while delivering improved biodiversity value consistent with Policy DP37.

Understorey Planting (Revised)

Underplanting beneath the birch canopy will include:

- Native shade-tolerant ferns
- Hardy Geranium (wildlife-supporting ground cover)
- Native spring bulbs

This protects the roots of the trees, provide early nectar sources, and structural layering for wildlife habitat.

Biodiversity and Policy Compliance

The revised scheme delivers:

- Native canopy replacement.
- Increased tree numbers.
- Native hedgerow structure.
- Seasonal biodiversity value.
- Long-term management plan.
- Integration with sustainable drainage and rainwater harvesting.
- All replacement trees will be planted as heavy standard specimens and supported by a structured watering and maintenance regime for a minimum of five years to ensure successful establishment and long-term viability.

The proposals now positively contribute toward the objectives of Policy DP37 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and deliver a net enhancement in biodiversity compared to the existing two mature Lawson cypress trees, which are non-native and offer limited ecological diversity.

In light of the revised native-led planting strategy, increased tree numbers, and structured establishment plan, it is respectfully submitted that the landscape proposals now provide appropriate and proportionate mitigation for the removal of the two Category B trees, consistent with the aims of Policy DP37.