



**LEWIS & CO**

**PLANNING STATEMENT**

60 KEYMER ROAD, HASSOCKS, BN6 8AR

ON BEHALF OF  
STAR GARAGES (BRIGHTON) LTD



Client: Star Garages (Brighton) Limited

Site Location: 60 KEYMER ROAD, HASSOCKS, BN6 8AR

Job History:

Version	Date	Author	Checked	Notes
V1	03/12/2024	J Pearson E Petrow	S Bareham	
V2	07/01/2025	J Pearson E Petrow S Bareham		
V3	07/02/2025	J Pearson E Petrow S Bareham	S Bareham	Following receipt of FVA
FINAL	10/02/2025	J Pearson E Petrow S Bareham	Client	



## CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY	Page 3
2.	APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA	Page 4
3.	PLANNING HISTORY	Page 6
4.	PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	Page 7
5.	PLANNING POLICY	Page 10
6.	PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS	Page 15
7.	CONCLUSIONS	Page 39





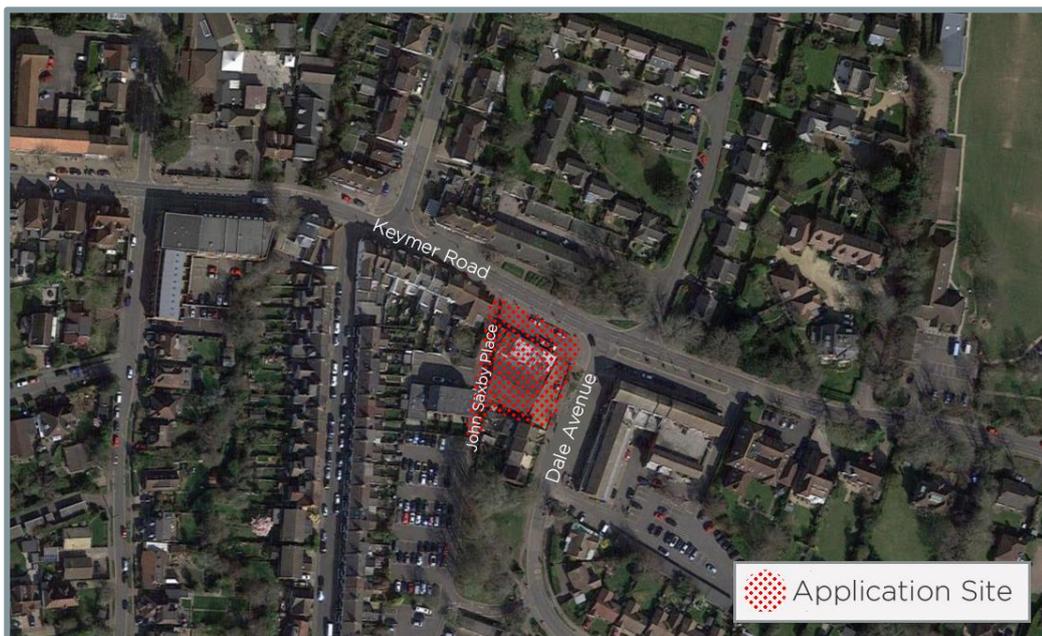
## 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared on behalf of Star Garages (Brighton) Ltd (the applicants) and relates to an application for the *mixed use redevelopment comprised of ground floor commercial/community use and upper floor residential use, alongside associated parking and public realm improvements* at 60 Keymer Road, Hassocks.
- 1.2 This Statement sets out the planning context and demonstrates why planning permission should be granted for the development proposed, including compliance with specific policies in the local development plan.
- 1.3 The proposals have been subject to community consultation, pre-application advice from the local planning authority and advice from the Mid Sussex Design Review Panel.
- 1.4 The development site is located within the village centre of Hassocks and consists of a corner plot south of Keymer Road and between its junctions with John Saxby Place (which forms part of the site ownership) and Dale Avenue. The site was previously in use as a car workshop and auto retail centre.
- 1.5 Further information is provided within the submitted drawings by Bowen & McLachlan and supporting documents that include:
- Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Report by XDA Consulting
  - Design and Access Statement by Bowen and McLachlan
  - Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain Report by EAS
  - Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy by HOP Consulting
  - Preliminary Contamination Risk Assessment by EAS
  - Statement of Community Involvement by Marshall Regen
  - Transport Report by Reeves Transport Planning
  - Viability Assessment by S106 Management
- 1.6 This Statement addresses the proposed development, site and surrounding area and compliance with relevant local and national planning policies and guidance.



## 2.0 APPLICATION SITE & SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1. The application site has been occupied by a single storey building with a total footprint of 580m<sup>2</sup>, incorporating lobby, workshop and storerooms. Prior approval has been granted for the building's demolition under application reference DM/23/0905. The rest of the site is covered in hardstanding.



*Site and surrounding context*

- 2.2. The lawful use of the site is as a sui generis car workshop and auto retail centre, previously in use by National Tyre Centre and Halfords. This use ended in late 2023 and is understood to have begun circa 1960. Prior to this use the site is understood to have been in a residential use known as 'Parklands'.
- 2.3. Part of the site was also previously in occasional use by Hassocks Village Market, but this has subsequently been relocated to the Pauline Thaw Centre car park (see application reference DM/22/3503).
- 2.4. The site area includes John Saxby Place, a private road in shared use that also provides pedestrian and cycle access to Keymer Road from the Dale Avenue public car park.



*Site Context – View from Keymer Road looking southwest*

- 2.5. In its current arrangement the site currently acts as an uncharacteristic break in the continuous commercial frontage along Keymer Road, which forms the village centre of Hassocks.
- 2.6. The site is not located within a Conservation Area or within the setting of any listed buildings, with the closest such features at Keymer – 500m east.
- 2.7. Other than its location within the built-up area boundary of Hassocks, there are no policy designations that directly influence the development.
- 2.8. As set out within Section 2.5 (Connectivity) of the Design and Access Statement, the site is within close walking distance (5 minutes) of all major village centre amenities, including Hassocks Railway Station, health, education and leisure services.
- 2.9. The character of the site and its immediate surroundings is primarily informed by mixed-use mid-20<sup>th</sup> century buildings with ground floor commercial uses and upper floor residential uses.



### **3.0 PLANNING HISTORY**

- 3.1 Prior to submission, the application has been subject to pre-application advice from the District Council under reference **DM/24/0022**, including a site meeting with the Case Officer and Ward Councillors.
- 3.2 The Council's online planning register identifies the following planning applications that are relevant to the site and it's planning history.
- 3.3 As set out above, prior approval was granted for the demolition of the existing building in 2023 under reference **DM/23/0905**, following an earlier refusal under reference **DM/22/3306**.
- 3.4 Planning permission was previously granted in December 2003 for a monthly village market on the forecourt, one Saturday per month (**03/02902/FUL**) following an application by Hassocks Parish Council (now relocated).
- 3.5 Planning permission was granted in April 1992 for the provision of a Petrol Pump and canopy on the front forecourt and underground petrol tank alongside MOT facilities (**KY/039/91**).
- 3.6 The Council issued a split decision on a retrospective application for externally illuminated fascia signs and an internally illuminated 3.90 metre gantry sign - **00/01153/ADV**. A further application for advertising consent (freestanding internally illuminated gantry sign) was withdrawn in January 1992.



## 4.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 Planning permission is sought for the *mixed use redevelopment comprised of ground floor commercial/community use and upper floor residential use, alongside associated parking and public realm improvements.*
- 4.2 The proposed building will include ground floor commercial/community space along the building's Keymer Road frontage, with a separate residential entrance and enclosed parking area both accessed from Dale Avenue. First, second and third floors of accommodation would be comprised of 26 residential flats and communal facilities.



*Proposed building from north-west on Keymer Road*

- 4.3 The proposed residential units would provide a mix of 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom and 3-bedroom apartments:

Unit Type	No	Size (range - GIA)
1-bedroom, 2-person	8	50.6m <sup>2</sup> to 62.1m <sup>2</sup>
2-bedroom, 4-person	15	71.6m <sup>2</sup> to 86.2m <sup>2</sup>
3-bedroom, 5-person	3	90.9m <sup>2</sup> to 92.4m <sup>2</sup>

- 4.4 Each apartment will benefit from private outdoor amenity space, either in the form of an enclosed terrace or balcony.



- 4.5 In addition, all residents would benefit from access to a communal lounge (64m<sup>2</sup>), terrace (66.7m<sup>2</sup>) and guest suite (29.6m<sup>2</sup>) which can be booked for visitors. An internal lightwell is proposed within the residential atrium, creating a high-quality internal space.



*Proposed Residential Atrium*

- 4.6 All residential units would be designed to meet Building Regulations M4 (2) optional accessibility standards, at a minimum. Three units are also designed to M4 (3) accessibility standards, including level access private amenity space. Lift access is provided to all levels.
- 4.7 It is the applicant's intention to explore the possibility of delivery as an over-55s housing development given the high levels of accessibility and social sustainability of the site, as well as the ability to provide communal facilities and guest accommodation. However, as the feasibility of this approach is to be determined the proposal is currently submitted as an unrestricted Use Class C3 residential use.
- 4.8 Public consultation exercises identified local interest in the ground floor commercial space being utilised for community or civic uses given the site's prominent and central location within Hassocks village. The applicants have therefore been engaging with local stakeholders to identify whether this could be achieved, either on a commercial basis or in lieu of alternative infrastructure contributions.



- 4.9 Given the likelihood that such uses may not be capable of paying a competitive commercial rent for the space, the applicants have undertaken a detailed financial viability assessment so that the possibility of offering the space to an infrastructure provider or local Council at an affordable/peppercorn rent can be appropriately quantified.
- 4.10 A detailed approach to sustainability has been taken, incorporating modern technologies and methods of construction to deliver a 21<sup>st</sup> century building that will maximise use of renewable energy and utilise high-performing materials. Section 4.10 of the Design and Access Statement sets out the approach to sustainable construction in detail, with an emphasis on durability, low embodied carbon and efficient use of resources in both construction and operation.
- 4.11 The application site includes John Saxby Place along the site's western boundary, which will be improved and will also offer an alternative escape route from the ground floor parking lot.
- 4.12 New raised planters and planting areas are proposed along both Keymer Road and Dale Avenue alongside additional public realm and an integrated seating space on Keymer Road.



## **5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES**

- 5.1 The adopted Local Development Plan is formed of the adopted Mid Sussex District Plan 2014 - 2031 (2018), Site Allocations Development Plan Document (2022), Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan (2020) and the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024). Relevant policies and guidance are summarised below.
- 5.2 In addition to these adopted development plan documents, the Council have submitted their draft Mid Sussex District Plan 2021 - 2039 for examination, with Stage 1 Hearings taking place in October 2024. As the draft Plan is at an early stage in the adoption process, no significant weight can be given to the draft policies but it gives an indication of the direction of travel.

### **Mid Sussex District Plan 2014 – 2031 (2018)**

- 5.3 The Local Plan was adopted in March 2018 and covers a Plan period from 2014 - 2031. The Plan seeks to deliver a minimum requirement of 16,390 new homes over this period, including 450 'windfalls'.
- 5.4 Policy DP1 (Sustainable Economic Development) identifies a need for an average of 543 additional jobs per year, to be delivered through the development of high quality new commercial premises that meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century businesses. This includes permitting the development of existing employment sites.
- 5.5 Policy DP3 (Village and Neighbourhood Centre development) defines five key 'village centres' across the District, where mixed use developments will be supported provided that they maintain and develop the existing range of shops and services within these locations.
- 5.6 Policy DP4 (Housing) sets a minimum housing requirement of 16,390 new homes over the plan period, with the annualised housing requirement increasing from 2024/25 to 1,090 new homes a year.
- 5.7 Policy DP6 (Settlement Hierarchy) supports new development within defined built-up area boundaries. New developments should be of an appropriate nature



and scale and should not cause harm to the character and function of the settlement. Hassocks is defined as a Category 2 settlement.

- 5.8 Policy DP17 (Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC)) sets out the Council's strategic approach to protecting the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC, through a 400m buffer zone and 7km zone of influence. The application site does not fall within these areas.
- 5.9 Policy DP20 (Securing Infrastructure) secures contributions towards local infrastructure from new development. On-site mitigation and infrastructure provision as well as planning obligations can be used to deliver necessary improvements. Mid Sussex do not currently have an adopted CIL charging scheme.
- 5.10 Policy DP21 (Transport) seeks to deliver development in locations that minimise the need to travel, promote alternative means of transport to the private car, provide adequate car parking for the proposed development and protect the safety of road users and pedestrians. Where practical and viable developments should incorporate electric vehicle charging facilities.
- 5.11 Policy DP26 (Character and Design) provides the Council's strategic design policy that aims to promote high quality design and protect the positive characteristics of existing areas. The policy also seeks to optimise the potential of sites to accommodate development.
- 5.12 Policy DP27 (Dwelling Space Standards) adopts the nationally described space standards for new dwellings as policy.
- 5.13 Policy DP28 (Accessibility) requires that all new developments meet high standards of accessibility.
- 5.14 Policy DP29 (Noise, Air and Light Pollution) seeks to avoid adverse impacts on new developments and their surroundings.
- 5.15 Policy DP30 (Housing Mix) requires a mix of dwelling types and sizes in new residential developments.



- 5.16 Policy DP31 (Affordable Housing) requires a minimum of 30% affordable housing on residential developments of 11 dwellings or more, unless viability considerations show that this would not be achievable. Where provided, a mix of tenures are required with approximately 75% social or affordable rented units and 25% for intermediate units.
- 5.17 Policy DP38 (Biodiversity) supports the delivery of biodiversity and green infrastructure improvements, including ensuring no net loss of biodiversity.
- 5.18 Policy DP39 (Sustainable Design and Construction) seeks to deliver new developments that minimum energy use through design, use renewable sources of energy, maximise efficient use of resources and meet the challenges of climate change.
- 5.19 Policy DP41 (Flood Risk and Drainage) requires a sequential risk-based approach to flood risk, to ensure that development is safe across its lifetime and does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.
- 5.20 Policy DP42 (Water Infrastructure and the Water Environment) requires new developments to meet the optional requirement for water consumption under Building Regulations - Part G.

### **Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan (2020)**

- 5.21 Policy 9 requires that new developments deliver high quality design, that contribute positively to the sense of place and respect the character and scale of the existing built environment.
- 5.22 Policy 14 provides support for new residential developments on sites within the built-up area of Hassocks.
- 5.23 Policy 18 supports developments that will enhance the existing character and sense of place of the commercial/retail centre.



### **Hassocks Village Townscape Appraisal (2020)**

- 5.24 The Village Townscape Appraisal identifies 14 Local Townscape Character Areas. The site is located within Character Area 14 (Village Centre).
- 5.25 The Appraisal identifies the National Tyres garage as failing to positively contribute to the sense of place, and states that the character, scale, form, colour and facing materials “*all undermine local distinctiveness*” - as well as the forecourt undermining the rhythm of the shop facades that otherwise define the Character Area
- 5.26 Other corner buildings are identified as giving character to the centre of the village as well as the terraces that enclose the streetscape. Tree planting is identified as a characteristic feature, and the Appraisal seeks “*more continuous active frontages*” to enliven other parts of the streetscape.

### **A Vision for Hassocks – Village Design Statement (2008)**

- 5.27 The Village Design Statement seeks to preserve and enhance the character of the village and provide guidance to developers and decision-makers.
- 5.28 The Design Statement identifies the importance of new tree planting and high-quality design. New buildings should “*respect and enhance their surroundings in terms of their height, mass, scale and density*”.
- 5.29 New residential developments should include “*some emphasis on smaller units for first time buyers and the elderly downsizing*”.

### **Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD (2020)**

- 5.30 The Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD was adopted in November 2020 and provides detailed design guidance that informs the assessment of proposals against Policy DP26 (Character and Design) and others.



- 5.31 Principle DG38 supports a design approach that is borne from place, including using the design and materials used within the locality as a starting point for the architectural design of the building. The principle does not encourage pastiche or modern replicas and encourages re-interpretation of key features.
- 5.32 Principles DG45, DG46, DG47 and DG48 deal with matters affecting residential amenity, including the amenity of neighbours.



## **6.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT**

6.1 The key material planning considerations relevant to this proposal are:

- The Principle of Development
- Affordable Housing and Viability
- Design and Visual Impact
- Impact on Neighbouring Amenity
- Ecology and Landscaping
- Transport and Active Travel
- Flood Risk and Drainage
- Sustainability

### **Principle of Development**

6.2 The principle of development is supported by Policies DP1, DP3, DP4 and DP6 of the adopted District Plan, Policies 14 and 18 of the Neighbourhood Plan as well as paragraphs 124 and 125 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

6.3 Policy DP6 (Settlement Hierarchy) identifies Hassocks as a Category 2 settlement, defined as a larger village acting as a Local Service Centre that provides services for not only the settlement itself, but also the wider hinterland. New development within the built-up area boundary is supported subject to design considerations.

6.4 Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan Policy 14 (Development Within and Adjoining the Built-Up Area Boundary of Hassocks) supports new residential development within the village where the proposals positively respond to the character and function of the area.

6.5 Hassocks is a Category 2 settlement with a good range of services and facilities and the village has excellent public transport provision, including Hassocks railway station on the London/Brighton mainline and easily accessible in the centre of the village. The village provides a good location for new housing



growth where this is appropriate in scale to the village and does not adversely impact upon the wider rural landscape (including National Park) that surrounds the village.

- 6.6 Within this context, the application site is a brownfield site within the centre of the village that provides an ideal site for mixed use redevelopment. The surrounding built environment along Keymer Road is largely two and three storey buildings with ground floor commercial and residential above, alongside residential dwellings on surrounding streets. As a corner plot within this location, the site can therefore comfortably accommodate a development of the size and scale proposed and local and national policies emphasise the importance of maximising development and the efficient use of land when previously developed sites become available for redevelopment.
- 6.7 Policy 18 (Village Centre) also supports development proposals that enhance the character and sense of place of the Village Centre. The site is located within the Village Centre Character Area (Character Area 14) in the Hassocks Village Townscape Appraisal.
- 6.8 The Hassocks Townscape Appraisal specifically identifies the National Tyres garage as failing to contribute to the sense of place of the Village Centre and states that the character, scale, form, colour and facing materials “*all undermine local distinctiveness*” as well as the forecourt undermining the rhythm of the shop facades that otherwise define the Character Area. The redevelopment of the existing site would therefore be welcome in townscape terms.
- 6.9 Pre-application engagement with the surrounding community and local groups including the Parish Council has shown support for the redevelopment of the site. Consultation comments also identified the potential for community uses at ground floor level – which has led to the proposal for a flexible commercial (Use Class E) and community (Use Class F1) use.
- 6.10 The adopted District Plan (2018) provides for the delivery of a minimum of 16,390 new homes across the district from 2014 – 2031. As part of the District Plan Review the District Council intend to consult on a Regulation 19 draft Plan that would deliver a further 7,459 new homes to meet higher levels of need. The site



is not allocated for development in either document and is therefore treated as a 'windfall development'.

- 6.11 The draft housing strategy policy DPH1 (Housing) includes a reliance on a significant number of 'windfall' sites being delivered over the Plan period, delivering at least 1,768 new homes on such sites. This is a significant uplift from the 450-unit windfall allowance within the adopted District Plan and demonstrates the importance of sites such as the application site coming forward for development in sustainable locations within built-up area boundaries.
- 6.12 Windfall sites are therefore an important part of the intended housing strategy and have been planned for on this basis. Policy DP6 (Settlement Hierarchy) expressly supports the appropriate growth of settlements through infilling and redevelopment within built-up area boundaries.
- 6.13 Furthermore, following the publication of the December 2024 NPPF, the Council can no longer demonstrate a five-year supply of housing land. The higher housing requirement imposed by the updated standard method for housing need increases the five-year requirement for Mid Sussex, beyond that planned for through the adopted District Plan (or the submitted District Plan Review). The delivery of additional housing within a sustainable village centre location would therefore improve the supply of housing locally at a time when this is most needed.
- 6.14 In policy terms, the lack of a five-year supply also engages the 'tilted balance' at paragraph 11 (d) of the Framework. This states that planning permission should be granted unless adverse impacts would "*significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits*". No significant or demonstrable adverse impacts exist and therefore national policy dictates that planning permission should be granted.
- 6.15 Although not allocated within the draft Plan, the Council's Site Selection Paper (within the evidence base for the emerging Plan) clearly anticipates the delivery of this site for housing, with the site only excluded from allocation on the basis that the Council's consider a policy-compliant development can come forward without allocation.



- 6.16 District Plan Policy DP3 (Village and Neighbourhood Centre development) provides specific support to developments within the village centre of Hassocks, provided that the existing range of shops and services within the village centre are maintained and developed. The proposals would extend the Keymer Road commercial frontage by delivering two new, high quality modern commercial or community units – which could also be combined into a single larger use.
- 6.17 Given the District’s lower availability of brownfield/previously developed sites for development and the increasing pressure for additional housing delivery on greenfield land, the provision of new homes and employment/community space on this village centre site is clearly beneficial. The new homes will be in close proximity to local shops and services as well as the railway station and sources of employment.
- 6.18 Policy DP26 (Character and Design) of the District Plan requires that each new development “*optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development*” in line with a wider commitment to maximise the efficiency of new development sites in sustainable locations within the built-up area boundary of settlements. This is particularly necessary on the District’s brownfield sites, with Paragraph 124 of the National Planning Policy Framework encouraging developments to make as much use as possible of previously developed land.
- 6.19 The flexibility offered by the proposed Use Class E/F1 uses and the ability of the unit to meet the needs of different types of occupants clearly meets these objectives and will better connect the existing shopping parade along Keymer Road and at Orion Parade/Dale Avenue to the east. This aspect of the proposals will retain onsite employment that has been lost since the closure of the former vehicle garage and contribute towards the District’s economic growth needs set out within Policy DP1 (Sustainable Economic Development) of the District Plan 2014-2031.
- 6.20 Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan Policy 14 (Development Within and Adjoining the Built-Up Area Boundary of Hassocks) supports new residential development within the village where the proposals positively respond to the character and function of the area. Policy 18 (Village Centre) also supports development proposals that enhance the character and sense of place of the Village Centre.



- 6.21 On this basis, the site meets economic and social needs by providing high quality new homes and employment spaces, whilst contributing to a range of environmental objectives as a result of the improved visual appearance of the site, sustainability of the building and delivery of a clear biodiversity net gain through new planting within the public realm.
- 6.22 The delivery of new development on a site that is itself sustainable and offers environmental benefits by virtue of its location also offers environmental benefits compared to alternatives that might otherwise come forward on less suitable, edge of settlement or greenfield sites. The proposals therefore constitute sustainable development, in accordance with the definition at paragraph 8 of the NPPF.
- 6.23 The proposed development fully accords with the policies and principles of the Mid Sussex District Plan and the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan. The proposals will revitalise an important village centre site by delivering a new commercial frontage and unify the existing street pattern. Additional employment provision and housing on previously developed land should be welcomed and is clearly supported within both the local and national policy context.
- 6.24 The proposed scheme effectively implements strategic policy objectives by appropriately maximising the development potential of the site whilst responding to the character of the local area and providing a range of smaller homes for which there is a demonstrable need within the District over the Plan period.
- 6.25 The proposals result in a reduction in vehicle trips to and from the site and will enhance the character and function of the village centre through the provision of ground floor commercial/community uses.
- 6.26 On this basis the principle of development is strongly supported in policy terms and the proposals will strengthen the Council's housing land supply (at a time when the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year supply) whilst retaining employment uses at ground floor level.
- 6.27 Other material considerations are addressed in detail below.



## **Affordable Housing and Viability**

- 6.28 The application is supported by a Financial Viability Appraisal (FVA) produced by S106 Management.
- 6.29 The proposals for the site include a net increase of 26 residential units and therefore meet the threshold for affordable housing provision under District Plan Policy DP31 (Affordable Housing). The policy sets an affordable housing requirement of 30% on development's delivery 11 or more residential units, except in circumstances where the developer can demonstrate to the Council's satisfaction that the site cannot support the required level of affordable housing.
- 6.30 The FVA shows that at present the proposed development would be incapable of viably delivering the affordable housing contribution sought by adopted planning policies.
- 6.31 National Planning Practice Guidance states that viability studies should use an assumed developer's 'return' equal to 15 - 20% of the gross development value of the project, to ensure that developments deliver sufficient commercial value to progress and ensure their delivery.
- 6.32 The FVA shows that even on the basis of an 100% open market basis, the development would only deliver a return of 4.36%. This places the delivery of the development at high risk and any requirement to deliver onsite affordable housing as part of the development is likely to seriously undermine the ability to deliver the development at all.
- 6.33 On this basis, the proposals currently include no provision for onsite affordable housing however the application meets the requirements of Policy DP31 (Affordable Housing) by robustly demonstrating that the site cannot support the required affordable housing from a viability and deliverability perspective. The adopted policy recognises that this will be the case on certain sites due to site-specific factors.



- 6.34 In addition to these financial viability issues, the low number of units and mixed-use nature of the building may offer management and maintenance challenges for a future registered social landlord and the project team have experienced issues identifying a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) willing to take on units of this nature on comparable projects. This matter could be explored further if the financial viability position were to improve.
- 6.35 There remains the potential for the development to contribute towards off-site delivery of affordable housing should the Council consider this to be a higher priority than other financial contributions sought through the application process, subject to negotiations as part of the Section 106 legal agreement.
- 6.36 There is the potential for the ground floor commercial/community space to provide a future home for the village library, however this would likely only be achieved through an agreement to offer this space at a non-commercial/peppercorn rent.
- 6.37 In order to maintain this possibility as a wider benefit of the development as a whole, it has been considered necessary to quantify the value of an 'in-kind' infrastructure contribution if this space were to be offered to the County Council at a non-competitive rent. Given present uncertainty around whether this would be taken up by the County Council, a Section 106 legal agreement would be required to accommodate either possibility.
- 6.38 The FVA adopts an assumption of the commercial value of the ground floor accommodation (Commercial Assumptions section) based on the latest District Plan viability study as well as a location-specific assumption of comparable market rents, capital values and yields.
- 6.39 The development of brownfield (previously developed) land, whilst preferable in policy and environmental terms, also poses challenges. In viability terms, these can arise from both the land costs of the existing land (compared to lower greenfield land costs) and the abnormal costs that can arise from the development of previously developed land. These challenges are not unique to the application site and a detailed summary of these issues can be found in 'Removing Obstacles to Brownfield Development' published by Campaign to Protect Rural England (July 2014) and other publications.



- 6.40 Similar viability challenges were faced at 68 and 70 Keymer Road, where the viability position was accepted by the Council under application **DM/23/3114** (allowed on appeal in 2024).
- 6.41 On this basis it is considered that the viability position has been firmly established through the Financial Viability Appraisal and compliance with Policy DP31 (Affordable Housing) can be demonstrated. It is anticipated that the assumptions within the FVA will be reviewed by the local planning authority through the application-process and further discussions around appropriate contributions to infrastructure and affordable housing will form part of the negotiations of the Section 106 legal agreement in due course.

### **Design and Visual Impact**

- 6.42 As set out in Section Four, the proposed development has been sensitively designed to reflect the character of the area.
- 6.43 The development seeks to make efficient use of a sustainably located brownfield site, which respecting the prevailing character and scale. The surrounding architectural character of the area is mixed, but the proposed building adopts the dominant eaves line along Keymer Road and makes good use of the lower land level of the site.
- 6.44 The massing has been purposefully broken up at the entrance to John Saxby Place, creating additional public realm alongside a contemporary design feature that reduces the overall massing of the building in a refined way.



*Façade Articulation along Dale Avenue (east) elevation*



- 6.45 Along Dale Avenue, the building has been set back away from the two-storey dwellings to the south to create a gentle transition between the buildings and avoiding a sudden increase in height.
- 6.46 Utilitarian elements of the building, including the onsite parking, heat pumps and solar panels, have been purposefully concealed through the design itself to provide a refined and simplified building form.
- 6.47 The architectural design of the building seeks to incorporate traditional materials that are common to existing buildings in the area. In addition, the proposed use of Keymer tiles is both appropriate to the site's context and the wider cultural heritage of Mid Sussex. Antique finish tiles are proposed, as shown at Section 4.6 of the Design and Access Statement, allowing the building to integrate well with its surroundings at an early stage. However, in accordance with Principle DG38 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide, the proposal offers a contemporary re-interpretation that takes cues from the existing context.
- 6.48 The natural palette of materials reflects the design guidance within Section 2 (Landscape Character) and Principle DG38 (Delivering Architectural Integrity and a Sense of Place) of the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD.



*Application Drawing*

- 6.49 The proposed building therefore provides a unique blend of contemporary and traditional building forms, incorporating high quality appropriate materials whilst

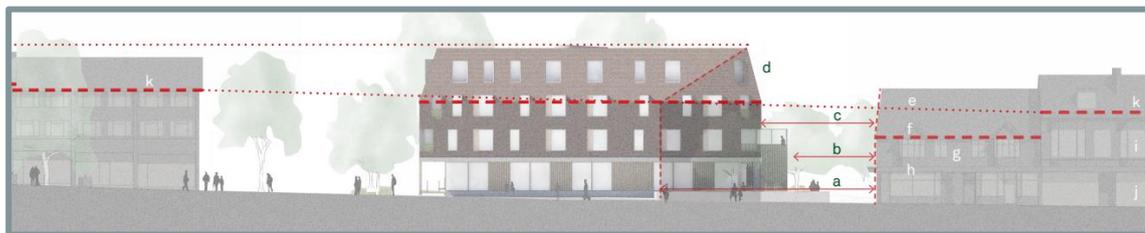


achieving high standards of sustainability through low embodied carbon, modern methods of construction and renewable technologies.

- 6.50 This approach was endorsed by the Mid Sussex Design Review Panel, who gave their ‘full support’ to the architectural approach. The Panel’s formal comments, reproduced within the Design and Access Statement praised the simplicity of the building form and considered the approach to be “*skilfully executed*”.
- 6.51 In townscape terms, the design of the building has been carefully considered to reflect the prevailing character and scale of the site’s immediate context. Section Four of the submitted Design and Access Statement sets out in detail how the proposals have evolved in accordance with different policy considerations and as a result of engagement with local stakeholders, the Design Review Panel and through the Council’s pre-application process. This approach aligns with the expectations of paragraph 137 of the NPPF.
- 6.52 As the site is centrally located within the village centre of Hassocks, the development will only be seen from longer views – including within the South Downs National Park – in the context of the wider settlement. The visual impact from these more sensitive rural receptors is therefore negligible and no further landscape analysis is required.
- 6.53 Similarly, the site is not located within an area subject to heritage designation and will not impact upon local heritage assets, including Keymer Conservation Area or listed buildings, given its significant distance from these heritage assets.
- 6.54 Policy DP26 (Character and Design) of the District Plan requires that each new development “optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development” in line with a wider commitment to maximise the efficiency of new development sites in sustainable locations within the built-up area boundary of settlements.
- 6.55 As there is no specific density requirement, the proposals should therefore respond to the character of the site and surrounding area and the strategic policy objectives of significantly increasing the supply of homes, subject to other policy considerations. The relevant section of Keymer Road features a mix of 2.5-storey, 3-storey (under pitched roofs) and some 2-storey buildings. The Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD states that good practice should see “*the corners of*



*blocks emphasised*” (Principle DG14) and that the scale of new buildings should include consideration of “*whether they act as a focal point, landmark or corner building*” (Principle DG39). Principle DG39 allows for appropriately raised heights above the prevailing height of the block at the corner or end of the axis.



*Street scene analysis – Keymer Road*

- 6.56 With this in mind, the proposals address the existing building lines and scale along Keymer Road well. The proposals achieve a suitable built form and efficient use of the site but also respond to the reduction in scale that occurs along Dale Avenue and other residential streets located off the primary village centre frontage.
- 6.57 On this basis, the proposals will result in a net visual improvement to the site and surrounding area and provide a high-quality modern building within the village centre that will contribute towards the overall sense of place and vitality of the shopping parade.
- 6.58 The building will provide an attractive focal point within a key village centre location, whilst still respecting the prevailing scale of the streetscene and being set down within a lower part of Keymer Road, ensuring the building will not be unduly prominent outside of its immediate context.
- 6.59 For these reasons the development complies with Policy DP26 of the District Plan and paragraphs 131 – 141 of the NPPF.

### **Residential Amenity**

- 6.60 The proposed homes will be high quality and offer attractive contemporary living spaces that will meet the varied needs of future occupants. As an objective reference point, each property significantly exceeds national minimum space



standards (which are locally applied through emerging Policy DP27 – Dwelling space standards). This ensures that the internal space can be flexibly adapted to the changing needs of residents and provides welcome sustainability benefits as a result, including increasing opportunities for homeworking and family space.

- 6.61 As set out above, all homes will be delivered to a minimum accessibility standard of M4 (2), exceeding both Building Regulations and planning policy requirements and ensuring a consistent approach to accessibility throughout the development.
- 6.62 The applicants are seeking consent for unrestricted Use Class C3 residential uses, however given the central location of the site and the overall accessibility of the units it is considered that the proposed new homes would be well-suited for older peoples housing/older living. The smaller size of the apartments could meet a local need for good quality homes that would be attractive locations for those wishing to downsize from larger homes in later life.
- 6.63 Residents would also benefit from communal space, with a guest suite that can be booked for visiting guests within the first floor accommodation – offering enhanced facilities for residents beyond those usually provided within comparable developments.

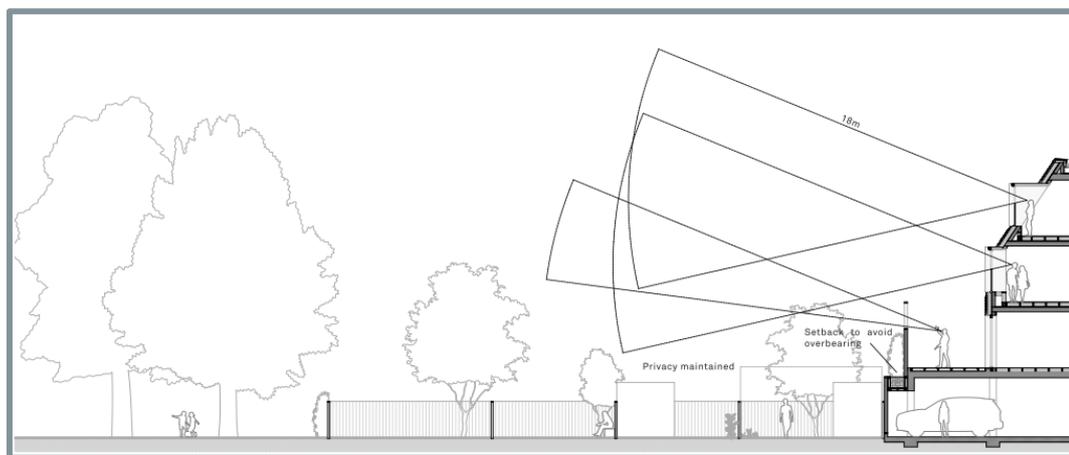
### **Impact on Neighbouring Amenity**

- 6.64 As set out in Section Two the application is surrounded on three sides by existing streets and the building largely overlooks public spaces. Most surrounding buildings also have a side-facing relationship with the application site, with very few windows facing directly towards the proposed building.
- 6.65 The nearest neighbours are located to the south of the development (along Dale Avenue) as well as mixed-use buildings to the east, west and north on Keymer Road. Neighbouring uses along Keymer Road primarily face onto public roads/spaces.
- 6.66 On this basis, overlooking and privacy issues have primarily been considered in terms of the relationship between the proposed building and neighbouring



gardens to the south along Dale Avenue. Existing building forms prevent overlooking of these private gardens from the majority of the internal accommodation, however within the south-western corner of the building there is some potential for overlooking.

- 6.67 Mitigation measures have been adopted to obscure downward views from specific windows, through the use of a solar shield film for all sections of glazing below 1.5m. Details are provided at Section 4.11 of the accompanying Design and Access Statement.



*Design Measures to mitigate against overlooking*

- 6.68 The proposals have also been subject to a daylight, sunlight and overshadowing assessment by XDA Consulting that has informed the proposal throughout the design process. The assessment considers the impact of the proposed building on the closest neighbouring property in accordance with BRE standards for Daylight and Sunlight.
- 6.69 The Report demonstrates that the impact on all neighbouring buildings will be 'negligible'. Only one existing window (58 Keymer Road) would be subject to reductions to vertical sky component that would fail to meet BRE guidance, however the Report shows that the affected window is a secondary window to a room that also benefits from south-facing patio windows
- 6.70 All other assessments in respect of annual probable sunlight hours and overshadowing would be met without further consideration or amendments. On this basis the development would meet all relevant design guidance for Daylight,



Sunlight and Overshadowing and would not result in any material adverse impacts to neighbouring occupiers.

- 6.71 The proposals will remove a noisy vehicle garage use from a village centre area and introduce new small-scale commercial/community uses and residential uses that are wholly compatible with the mixed character of the village centre.
- 6.72 The accompany transport work demonstrates that the proposed uses will also generate a lower number of vehicle trips to and from the site, reducing the impact of vehicular traffic and providing an additional amenity benefit to neighbouring users.
- 6.73 On this basis the amenity impacts of neighbouring users have been carefully considered. Where necessary appropriate design interventions have been taken to avoid the potential for new amenity impacts. The proposals therefore accord with the requirements of Policy DP26 (Character and Design).

### **Ecology and Landscaping**

- 6.74 The application is accompanied by an Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain report produced by Environmental Assessment Services.
- 6.75 The existing areas of habitat onsite are extremely limited given the commercial nature of the car garage use. The land is therefore predominantly classified as developed land/sealed surface. Limited areas of ground level planting are identified within the red line area and form a baseline habitat of 0.01 units.
- 6.76 The Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain assessment included a site walkover to assess for potential to support notable or protected species or habitats. The site does not include or neighbour any such habitat and has negligible potential given the factors discussed above. The existing building is considered to have negligible potential for nesting bats or birds. No species surveys are therefore required.
- 6.77 The proposals are required to deliver a biodiversity net gain of at least 10% under mandatory requirements introduced by the Environment Act 2021. Statute



provides the ability for this to be delivered onsite or offsite, through the Biodiversity Gain Plan condition and therefore all developments required to deliver biodiversity net gain are capable of doing so, with the details confirmed at discharge of condition stage.

- 6.78 In this instance, the development can comfortably deliver 'mandatory' net gain of 10% onsite and there is no requirement for offsite measures. The applicants have sought to design the biodiversity and landscape enhancements to fit the development and context and the Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain Report shows that these improvements would deliver a net gain of 27.42% - significantly exceeding the minimum requirement.
- 6.79 The development is therefore considered a net positive for biodiversity and aligns with the requirements of Policy DP38 (Biodiversity) of the District Plan and statutory requirements for biodiversity net gain, whilst ensuring no adverse impacts on existing features or habitats.

### **Transport and Active Travel**

- 6.80 The application is supported by a Transport Statement produced by Reeves Transport Planning.
- 6.81 The Transport Statement concludes that the development would result in a reduction in vehicle movements to and from the site (tbc) and would deliver a safe development that will not adversely impact upon highway safety. The proposal is therefore meets the requirements of District Plan Policy DP21 (Transport) and Aim 7 (Traffic and Accessibility) of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.82 As set out in detail in the Transport Report, the lawful use of the site generated a significant number of vehicle trips to and from the site. As a vehicle repair and retail site the existing use specifically generated a higher proportion of private vehicle uses, despite the sustainable village centre location of the site.



- 6.83 In contrast, the proposed residential and commercial uses will reduce the total volume of vehicular trips. The Transport Report provides a representative trip rate for the proposed development using TRICS data.
- 6.84 The sustainable location of the site offers a variety of more sustainable modes of transport for residents, staff, customers and visitors. There are a variety of shops and services within close proximity to the site due to its village centre location, including convenience store (70m), pet store (25m), Adastra Hall (village hall – 160m), newsagents (40m), pharmacy (30m) as well as hairdressers, coffee shops, opticians, takeaway restaurants and other day to day shops and services. The site is 150m walking distance from Hassocks Infant School, 400m from 200m from Adastra Park and 400m from Hassocks Railway Stations – all within five minutes’ walking distance.
- 6.85 Walking therefore offers the most likely method of transport for the majority of trips.
- 6.86 The site is within 60m of bus stops at Orion Parade with services to Burgess Hill, Hurstpierpoint, Ditchling, Haywards Heath and Lewes, as well as 400m from the railway station providing services between Brighton and London and further afield. The site therefore has high levels of accessibility to sustainable modes of public transport.
- 6.87 Sustainable modes of travel and active travel therefore provide genuine alternatives to private vehicle use.
- 6.88 The proposals will also deliver electric vehicle (EV) charging points for 100% of spaces delivered onsite. This will ensure that even private vehicle trips to and from the site will become more environmentally sustainable as cars transition away from petrol and diesel.
- 6.89 Sustainable modes of transport clearly provide a realistic transport option to and from the site in line with local and national policy objectives. The accessibility of the site is also significantly better than permitted housing developments on the outskirts of the village and the proposals therefore meet all relevant policy objectives in this regard.



- 6.90 Car parking provision has been considered with reference to the West Sussex County Council parking demand calculator. In line with this guidance, the site can realistically promote lower levels of vehicle due to the site's high levels of accessibility and the potential provision of a car club facility. The Transport Report provides an assessment of parking demand based on local car ownership and factored upwards in accordance with a TEMPro growth estimate.
- 6.91 The proposals therefore directly address the anticipated parking demand for the development within its specific local context, along with an uplift for future car ownership growth. The Transport Report robustly evidences this approach and full details can be found in the Report and its appendices. This approach will help achieve reduced levels of car ownership within the development in recognition of the site's genuine access to sustainable modes of transport.
- 6.92 Appropriate cycle parking has been provided for the proposed dwellings and commercial units across different areas of the site. A total of 28 cycle parking spaces will be provided, above the minimum cycle parking standard of 0.5 spaces per flat. This enhanced level of provision will encourage cycle ownership and use.
- 6.93 The communal long-term cycle parking area will be located within the ground floor parking area. In addition, short-term cycle parking is also provided in two locations on the site entrance at Dale Avenue and also adjacent to the commercial entrance on Keymer Road.
- 6.94 A dedicated area for mobility scooter parking (four spaces in total) is also located within the ground floor parking area.
- 6.95 The application site already benefits from existing accesses/crossovers onto Dale Avenue and Keymer Road. The proposed development will utilise the Dale Avenue access and allow redundant crossovers to be removed.
- 6.96 On this basis the development can be safely delivered using the existing access and is expected to reduce the total number of vehicle trips. The site is located in a highly sustainable location that will minimise private vehicle use and ownership. The proposals therefore comply with Policy DP21 (Transport) and the NPPF.



## **Flood Risk and Drainage**

- 6.97 The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainable Drainage Strategy undertaken by HOP Consulting.
- 6.98 Flood risk is a relevant consideration with Hassocks and the village is covered by a Flood Plan. The application proposals have carefully considered in this regard and will incorporate appropriate sustainable drainage solutions to both reduce the risk of flooding and prevent the site being adversely affected by any flood risk events.
- 6.99 In accordance with the sequential test, the development ensures that proposed uses that are 'more vulnerable' to flood risk are located within compatible zones – in this case ensuring that all residential uses are located at first floor level or above. Ground floor accommodation is limited to 'less vulnerable' commercial uses
- 6.100 The application is accompanied by detailed floor risk data supplied by the Environment Agency (see Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy) which is taken from a modelling exercise for Hassocks by JBA Consulting. The flood modelling identifies predicted flood depths including an appropriate allowance for climate change. This data allows a suitable design floor level to be identified that will mitigate against fluvial flood risk on this site, and an additional allowance has been made as a precautionary measure in accordance with EA guidance.
- 6.101 Relevant Environment Agency and Mid Sussex Strategic Flood Risk Assessment mapping and data has been used to assess the site's flood risk in terms of groundwater, surface water, sewer, tidal and reservoir flood risk and ensure that the development is designed to manage the flow of water within the site and mitigate against flood risk both onsite and any possible offsite impacts.
- 6.102 Given the site's potential exposure to fluvial flood risk, the development proposals must meet the requirements of the sequential test, and if necessary the exceptions test – as detailed at paragraph 175 of the NPPF.



- 6.103 As set out within the Sequential and Exception Test section of the submitted Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy, the Council has not been able to identify sufficient sites across the district in areas of low/no flood risk and therefore must deliver development in some locations where the Sequential and Exceptions Tests must be met. Furthermore the Council can no longer demonstrate a five-year supply of housing land and therefore existing commitments and allocations cannot sufficiently meet local housing needs without further sites coming forward for development.
- 6.104 The wider sustainability benefits to the community are significant and wide-ranging, including the delivery of 26 high quality homes in a sustainable village centre location at a time when the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of housing land. The proposals will regenerate a vacant brownfield site that has long-been highlighted as having a detrimental impact on the village centre as a whole within the Hassock Village Townscape Appraisal. The proposals will deliver high quality new employment and community facilities and offer a highly sustainable, exemplary development that will raise the standard of architecture and significantly enhance the village centre as a whole.
- 6.105 These significant local benefits, in addition to the financial contributions that proposal will offer towards wider infrastructure enhancements, provide a clear case for compliance with paragraph 178 (a) of the NPPF. The proposals have been subject to notable public support throughout the pre-application process and have been carefully designed in flood risk terms to provide an overall betterment.
- 6.106 The site-specific flood risk assessment demonstrates that the development will be safe for its lifetime, in accordance with paragraph 178 (b) of the NPPF. The exceptions test is therefore met in full.
- 6.107 Surface water runoff is to be carefully managed using attenuation SuDS, allowing discharge of surface water to the sewer beneath John Saxby Place at a restricted flow rate.
- 6.108 All ground floor levels are designed to be raised above the potential flood level in all scenarios and mitigates the risk from overland flows entering the building, as well as directing runoff away from entrances. Additional mitigation can be



provided internally through raised wall sockets, telescopic air vents, concrete or tiled ground floor finishes and flood resistant doors. Future owners and residents will be signed up to the Environment Agency's Floodline Warnings Direct service to provide early flood risk warnings where possible.

- 6.109 The Flood Risk Assessment provides a detailed maintenance and management plan for the drainage system within its appendices, which will ensure the effective long-term operation of these flood risk measures.
- 6.110 Offsite works have also been undertaken by flood risk authorities, with the Mid Sussex Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) identifying stream and bank clearance along the Herring Stream to alleviate fluvial flood risk.

### **Sustainability**

- 6.111 The approach to sustainability is set out within the accompanying Design and Access Statement, including sections 4.8 (environmental credentials) and 4.10 (sustainable construction).
- 6.112 The proposal aligns with the requirements of Policy DP39 (Sustainable Construction) by benchmarking the proposed development against the Building Research Establishment's (BRE) Home Quality Mark criteria.
- 6.113 Both the materials selected and proposed methods of construction are designed to lower the carbon footprint of the development and make efficient use of resources both at construction and operational phases. The energy strategy utilises air-source heat pumps and solar PVs to maximise the use of renewable technologies and the building's overall energy efficiency will enhance the effectiveness of these systems.
- 6.114 The proposal will deliver biodiversity net gain onsite, and exceed mandatory targets by increasing areas of planting across the site and introducing new natural features to the streetscene across 617m<sup>2</sup> of public realm.
- 6.115 All parking spaces provided across the development will include EV charging facilities, supporting a transition to low carbon private vehicle use.



- 6.116 The development will incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems and protect against future flood risk (including climate change allowances).
- 6.117 On this basis the proposals will deliver wide-ranging sustainability improvements across a range of sustainability objectives and will meet the requirements of Policy 39 (Sustainable Construction) and 40 (Renewable Energy) of the District Plan in full.

### **Site Conditions**

- 6.118 A Preliminary Contamination Risk Assessment has been undertaken by Environmental Assessment Services Ltd. The site history identifies that the use as a garage commenced around 1960 and continues to the present day.
- 6.119 Potential contamination associated with these land uses include polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), petroleum hydrocarbons (TPHs), heavy metals and fuel additives (such as MTBE).
- 6.120 Historic applications also show records of an underground fuel storage tank that was removed on 5th May 1999.
- 6.121 As a result there is some potential for contamination but risk can be reduced to low through the implementation of recommendations set out at Section 10 of the Preliminary Contamination Risk Assessment. These recommendations include the removal of contaminated materials and further remediation work if unexpected contamination is encountered.
- 6.122 Subject to the findings of further intrusive investigation, WRAS approved polyethylene (PE) barrier pipes (with an aluminium layer) with associated fixings may be required.
- 6.123 These precautionary measures could be secured by condition and would ensure the protection of end-users and those involved at construction stage.



## **Air Quality**

- 6.124 The application site is located approximately 950m from the closest Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) at Stonepound Crossroads which was designated in 2012.
- 6.125 Over a decade of monitoring, the nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) levels have shown a gradual improvement. Monitoring results from the 2024 Air Quality Annual Statement Status Report (June 2024) showed no exceedances in measured NO<sub>2</sub> at any receptor at Stonepound Crossroads in 2024. This reflects a consistent record of no exceedances over a five-year period.
- 6.126 The District Council now intend to revoke the Air Quality Management Area given the consistent downward trend and air quality is therefore not considered to be a barrier to development. Existing monitoring points will continue to be assessed by the Council on an annual basis.
- 6.127 The District Plan seeks to support the objectives of Air Quality Management Plans under Policy DP29 (Noise, Air and Light Pollution).
- 6.128 Air quality is improving across the district as mitigation strategies take effect and the emissions impact of vehicles improve over time. Increased uptake of electric and hybrid vehicles should continue to support the air quality improvements noted in the Air Quality Annual Statement Status Reports.
- 6.129 The application proposals support this transition to lower emissions vehicles and will provide Electric Vehicle charging facilities for all onsite parking spaces, notably exceeding normal policy requirements.
- 6.130 The application site is in a sustainable village centre location with good access to sustainable forms of transport that will maximise alternative choices to private car use. The availability of EV charging facilities will encourage residents to switch to electric-powered vehicles and reduce the impact of the development on air quality.
- 6.131 In addition to the above, the submitted Transport Report shows that the proposals will result in an overall reduction in daily traffic movements. This will



reduce the impact of the site on the wider road network and air quality within the soon-to-be revoked AQMA.

- 6.132 On this basis the proposals will ensure that the development does not have an unacceptable adverse impact on air quality within the Stonepound Crossroads AQMA and will continue to support the improvement of air quality within this area and across the district. The proposals therefore meet the requirements of Neighbourhood Plan Policy 8 (Air Quality Management) and District Plan Policy DP29 (Noise, Air and Light Pollution).



## **7.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 7.1 The application relates to the proposed redevelopment of 60 Keymer Road, Hassocks as a mixed use development comprised of ground floor commercial/community uses and residential flats above.
- 7.2 The proposals would deliver a significant number of new homes in a highly sustainable location within the centre of Hassocks, whilst retaining employment uses that will continue to contribute to the viability and vitality of the village centre.
- 7.3 The delivery of new housing on a windfall site within the village centre is especially welcome now that the Council can no longer demonstrate a five-year supply of housing land and will reduce pressure to deliver new homes on less suitable, greenfield sites elsewhere in the District.
- 7.4 The design of the development has been given the full support of the Mid Sussex Design Review Panel and incorporates an approach to sustainability that exceeds local and national requirements. The proposal will deliver a high-quality contemporary new building that minimises the carbon footprint and environmental impact of development both in construction and operation.
- 7.5 Mid Sussex District Council have previously reviewed the site for residential development through their Site Allocations process and determined that a policy compliant development could be delivered as a windfall site without the need for allocation in the District Plan.
- 7.6 The application is supported by a range of supporting documents including a detailed Transport Assessment, Flood Risk and Drainage strategy and Site Conditions Report that ensure the development can be delivered safely in accordance with best practice and local policy requirements. The design of the development and proposed uses have also been informed through active engagement with the local community, including local residents, community groups and political leaders.



- 7.7 The sequential and exceptions tests have been addressed in full and are met. There are no significant or demonstrable adverse impacts arising from the development.
- 7.8 In light of the above, Mid Sussex District Council is respectfully requested to grant planning permission for the proposed development without undue delay.

*Lewis and Co Planning*  
*February 2025*