

Urban Design Observations

To: Development Management, Joanne Fisher

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

Application ref: DM/25/3020

Date: 17/12/25

Address: Land To The West Of, Courthouse Farm, Copthorne Common, Copthorne

Description: Outline planning application for the erection of an extra-care retirement community (Use Class C2) and community pavilion, including associated parking, outdoor amenity space, landscaping and drainage, with all matters reserved except for the new access proposed from Copthorne Common Road.

Stage: Outline planning application.

The site covers an area of 4.3 hectares of underdeveloped grazing land to the south of Copthorne Common Road. The site is outside of the Build Up Area Boundary. The areas to the south of the built-up area, where the site is located, are mainly woodland and farmland.

This is an outline scheme in which appearance, design, landscaping and scale are reserved matters. Being an outline proposal, the scheme is short of information. This makes it difficult to assess its design merits in detail. No pre-application advice has been sought.

This site was not allocated in the District Plan, and it is my understanding that it was not listed as a possible site to be allocated.

'In the next few years, the number of dwellings in Copthorne will be increased by 30% after the approval of 550 new houses to the west of the village, between the existing village boundary and the M23 Motorway. (...) Also, the road network is at full capacity and more at peak times, and action will be needed to mitigate the increased usage as a result of the new housing.

The big challenge for the village will be to achieve this expansion while retaining the village atmosphere which is a primary reason for people wishing to live in the village. Beyond the already approved expansion, it is to be hoped that future development will be on a small scale within the existing built up area and the countryside which surrounds the village will be preserved for the enjoyment of local people, and the Neighbourhood Plan has been draw up to achieve this aspiration'.

(...) 'a significant issue has been identified, which is the lack of suitable housing for older people' (Copthorne Neighbouring Plan 2021-2031).

Access:

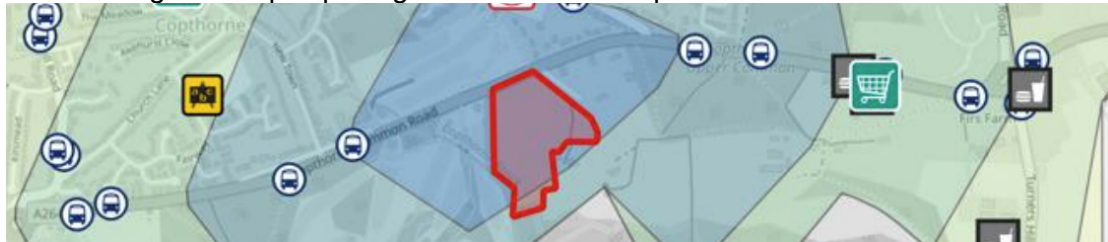
The proposal shows how it would tie into existing pedestrian footway infrastructure but doesn't address the issue of car reliance.

For any proposal in this location, introducing new bus stops near the site entrance would be a logical measure to enhance sustainable transport and address concerns outlined in the Neighbourhood Plan.

As proposed, the nearest bus stop would be approximately a 5 to 6-minute walk from the site entrance, increasing to about 10 minutes from the farthest point within the site. This distance is likely to result in a high reliance on car use.

Currently the existing bus stops are widely spaced, and proposing a new bus stop at the site entrance would help ensure that all bus stops along the road are positioned at more regular intervals.

See existing bus stops spacing marked on the map:



Layout:

Currently submitted information regarding the proposed layout mostly corresponds with the Mid Sussex Design Guide principles.

Internal layout and external appearance:

Currently submitted information regarding the internal layout and fenestration of the buildings largely aligns with the MSDG principles.

However, the external envelopes of the buildings do very little to add to the required **high quality development which takes account of their immediate locality.**

Buildings appear as uninspiring long linear forms with inconsistently provided - projecting private outdoor spaces and inconsistent roof angles.

More needs to be done to address the requirements described in the character areas defined in the Copthorne Neighbouring Plan (especially the CA2 and CA3 category which defines areas south of A264).

For the design and layout of the planning application to be considered favourably, all relevant policies relating to these matters contained within the development plan should be considered and complied with.