

Urban Design Observations

To: Development Management, Susan Dubberley

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

Application ref: DM/24/3077

Date: 15/01/25

Address: Sussex House, Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex

Description: Demolition of the existing buildings and construction of a new food store (Use Class E(a)), with access, car and cycle parking, landscaping and associated works

Stage: Planning

Site is located at the edge of a zone defined in the Mid Sussex Guide as a 'coarse grain' area which offers development opportunities, but this site doesn't sit within it. In my view, there is no objection to the principle of a redevelopment of the site.

There is an expectation, that this site and a neighbouring 'coarse grain area' will undergo a change and will be significantly improved by repairing and enhancing the street environment, while also helping to regenerate town centre through some level of intensification, and mixed uses, which in return would increase the residential population around existing and new facilities.

It's a shame that opportunities were not taken to placing the building to the front with car parking at the back. This would improve the current inconsistent built form and allow for a better definition of the street.

However, what is proposed in design terms is acceptable. The scheme sufficiently addresses the principles set out in the Council's Design Guides and accords with policy DP26 of the District Plan; I therefore raise no objection to this planning application. To secure the quality of the design, I would nevertheless recommend some small changes and request more information:

1. To protect visual qualities of the street and prioritise pedestrian movement I would suggest introduction of a 'Copenhagen' crossing at the junction of Perrymount Road (or similar).
2. Setting the building back eroded the urban grain along the Perrymount Road. Repairing this gap with row of trees should prevent a stark gap in the streetscape. I would suggest introducing more trees along the western site boundary. Trees should not only bridge the gap but also create a rhythm. For that please choose fastigate trees that have erect branches which results in a columnar form. This type of tree is suitable for projects where space is limited or where a strong effect is desired – a row of cloned trees makes a uniform avenue. Avoid evergreens.
3. I am concerned that due to proximity of the public pavement and the existing underground services delivery of the trees will be compromised at later stage.

Therefore, it's crucial to provide full information on constraints and detailed solutions for the delivery of the row of trees. Please ensure more innovative tree pit design is introduced should the 'classic pit' proved to be unsuitable. Provide final detailed solutions for an approval.

4. For clarity, please update Street elevation and Section A-A with the appropriate street trees' silhouettes and parked cars.
5. Provide separate 'Landscape Lighting Strategy' for an approval.