

[REDACTED]
1 Woodsland Road
Hassocks
West Sussex BN6 8HE

Stefan Galyas
Case Officer
Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands, Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath RH16 1SS

1 June 2026

Further comment on Planning Application DM/26/0596 — Former Royal British Legion, Woodsland Road, Hassocks BN6 8HE

I write to make a further comment in light of the applicant's revised Financial Viability Assessment (FVA) (with revised Appendix B dated 27 May 2026) and the further consultation response from Hassocks Parish Council dated 20 May 2026. This comment is in addition to my representations of 23 March 2026 and 5 May 2026, the substance of which I maintain.

Substandard internal space — conflict with Policy DP27

Policy DP27 of the Mid Sussex District Plan requires that “Minimum nationally described space standards for internal floor space and storage space will be applied to all new residential development,” and the policy expressly applies to “dwellings created through subdivision or conversion.” DP27 allows departure from the standards only “in exceptional circumstances, where clear evidence will need to be provided to show that the internal form or special features prevent some of the requirements being met.”

The nationally described space standard requires a minimum gross internal area of 50m² for a 1-bed 2-person single-storey dwelling. The applicant's own accommodation schedule (FVA paragraph 3.22) shows that Flats A and B, both designated 1B2P, provide only 49.1m². The FVA acknowledges this shortfall at paragraphs 1.12 and 3.23 but seeks to justify it on the basis that the units “have been designed to need little common area.” That is a design choice, not the “internal form or special features” exception envisaged by DP27, and no evidence has been provided that the existing building physically prevents compliance with the standard. On the face of it, the proposal therefore conflicts with Policy DP27 in respect of two of the six proposed units.

Inadequate private amenity — Design Guide SPD

The Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD provides general guidance of 20m² of amenity per dwelling. The applicant's own accommodation schedule shows that Flat B provides only 10m², Flat E only 7.5m², and Flat F only 6m² of private amenity. Three of the six proposed units therefore fall significantly short of the SPD guidance, and the scheme provides no meaningful communal amenity space to offset this shortfall. This is a material shortcoming, particularly given the very limited external space available on the site.

Parking — disputed PBZ classification

The applicant argues at paragraph 1.16 of the FVA that Hassocks should be treated as Parking Behaviour Zone 3 or 4 rather than its actual PBZ 2 classification under West Sussex County Council's September 2020 parking guidance, on the basis that the site is “close to a main transport

hub like Burgess Hill or Haywards Heath.” Hassocks is not co-located with either of those transport hubs, and the PBZ is determined by the actual location of the development. The applicant is, in effect, seeking to apply a more permissive parking standard than the one that properly applies to Hassocks. Under the correct PBZ 2 classification, the parking provision (6 spaces for 6 flats with no visitor provision) would fall short of the typical demand multiplier, reinforcing the concerns I and the Parish Council have already raised.

Noise and air source heat pumps

I support the Parish Council's request (20 May 2026) for an amended noise impact assessment in light of the relocation of the air source heat pumps shown in the amended plans of 24 April 2026. ASHP relocation can have a material effect on the noise environment of neighbouring properties, and an updated assessment is appropriate before any decision is made.

Viability and the prior commercial consent

The FVA seeks to demonstrate that the previously granted co-working studios permission (DM/25/0393) is no longer financially viable. However, the assessment tests rental values of £15–£20 per sqft, while the applicant's own comparable evidence at section 5 of the FVA includes properties achieving £26.27/sqft (Acora House, Burgess Hill), £28.75/sqft (78 High Street, Hurstpierpoint), and £52.20/sqft (141 South Road, Haywards Heath). The applicant's own scenarios 3 and 4 (at £25–£30/sqft) show the co-working scheme would in fact be viable. The conclusion that the consented commercial scheme cannot be delivered is therefore based on a selective view of achievable rents, and should be treated with caution.

Five-year housing land supply and the planning balance

I acknowledge that the applicant relies on the Council's current inability to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, and therefore on the application of the tilted balance under paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF. However, the tilted balance is not a presumption of approval — it requires that adverse impacts significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole. In this case, the cumulative adverse impacts — substandard internal space contrary to DP27, inadequate amenity space contrary to the Design Guide SPD, parking shortfall on a constrained site near the station, unresolved noise impact from relocated ASHPs, overdevelopment contrary to DP26 and Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan Policy 9, and design conflict with the prevailing character of this part of Woodsland Road — together significantly and demonstrably outweigh the limited benefit of six small market units, two of which do not meet the national minimum space standard.

Conclusion

For these reasons, in addition to those set out in my earlier representations, I maintain my objection and ask the Council to refuse application DM/26/0596.

Kind regards,


1 Woodsland Road, Hassocks, BN6 8HE