

From: Luke Eldridge <luke.eldridge@devinehomes.co.uk>
Sent: 19 June 2026 16:44:23 UTC+01:00
To: "Joseph Swift" <joseph.swift@midsussex.gov.uk>; "Rosie Baker" <rosie.baker@devinehomes.co.uk>
Cc: "Billy Clements" <billy.clements@devinehomes.co.uk>
Subject: RE: DM/26/0073 - Update - Layout amends, trees/drainage, AH

Dear Joseph,

Hope this email finds you well.

I wanted to follow up on your email of 21/05/2026 (below) relating to the surface water drainage and the interaction with the Ancient Woodland. I wanted to provide some more details and explanation as to the proposed solution and methodology, how this avoids impacts on the Ancient Woodland and also specifically address the appeal decision you shared relating to land at Rowhook Road, Rowhook, Horsham.

The responses below are based on input from Allen Watson Limited, who are leading specialist trenchless/'no-dig' contractor with considerable experience of delivering such solutions/techniques. Their expertise has informed the methodological considerations.

Hopefully the below demonstrates that the drainage solution we have put forward has been carefully considered from a methodological, ecological and arboricultural perspective in order to mitigate against impacts on the Ancient Woodland, both short-term in implementation and long-term in operation and maintenance. It

The Rowhook Appeal

Whilst appreciating that the appeal considers the issue of drainage through Ancient Woodland, the circumstances in that case are materially different to the solution we are proposing such that the scale of impact in that appeal is substantially and materially greater than would arise at West Hoathly Road. The key differences are, by reference to extracts from the appeal decision are:

1. *"The route of the drainage would pass through the root protection zones of a number of trees" The routing of the pipe in our proposals has been designed to minimise conflict with root protection zones of surveyed trees. As noted in the submitted Tree Survey and Arb Impact Assessment the routing, depth and trenchless technique "avoids any disturbance of the upper soil layers that are the main constituent part of the ancient woodland designation"*
2. *"The outfall, with its headwall, and one chamber would lie within the ancient woodland, whilst a second chamber would lie within a 15-metre protection zone buffering the Ancient Woodland" – Our proposals do not require the excavation/installation of any chambers within the Ancient Woodland or its 15m buffer zone. The chamber from which the guided auger boring would be undertaken sits outside of the 15m buffer zone. The headwall would, as described in more detail below, be formed non-invasively.*
3. *"It is intended to lay the pipe 600mm below the surface of the ground" Our pipe is proposed to be bored at a depth of 3.7m from the start chamber/launch pit, significantly below the important fine root structures. This significantly greater depth than the appeal scheme (which was*

comparatively shallow at 600mm) mitigates risk of harm to roots and, as above, “avoids any disturbance of the upper soil layers that are the main constituent part of the ancient woodland designation”.

Response to Specific Queries

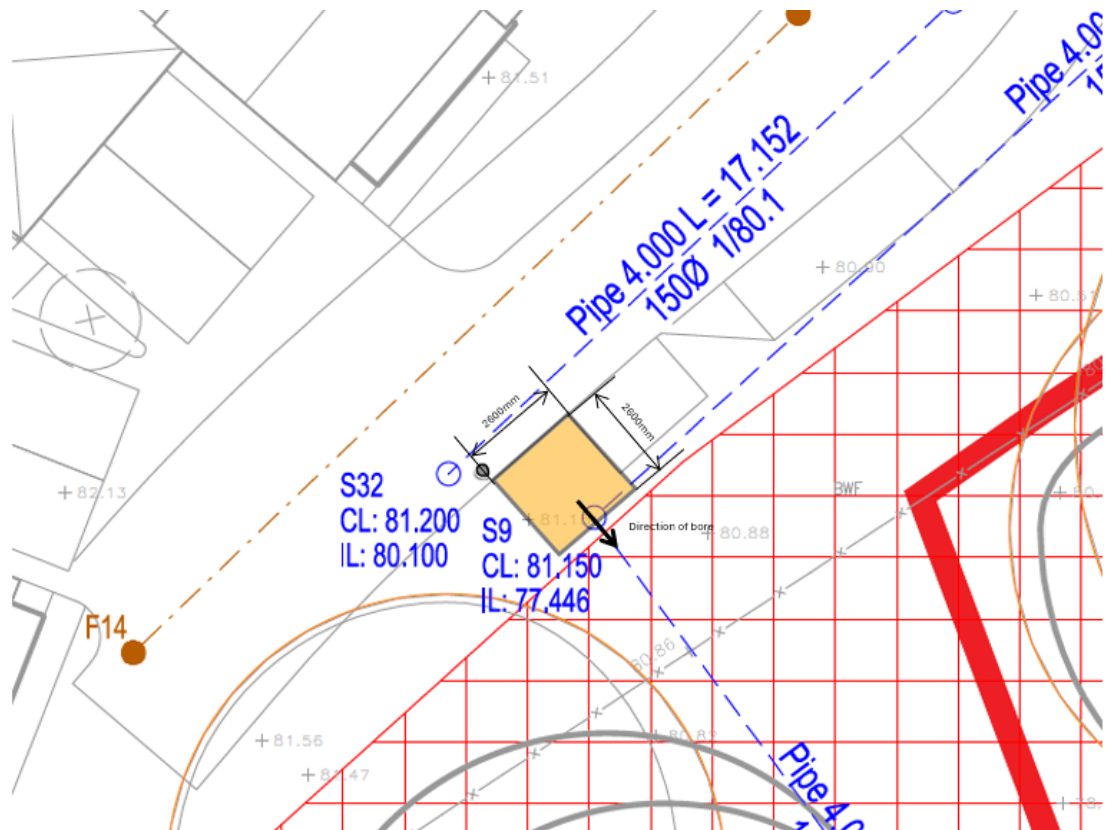
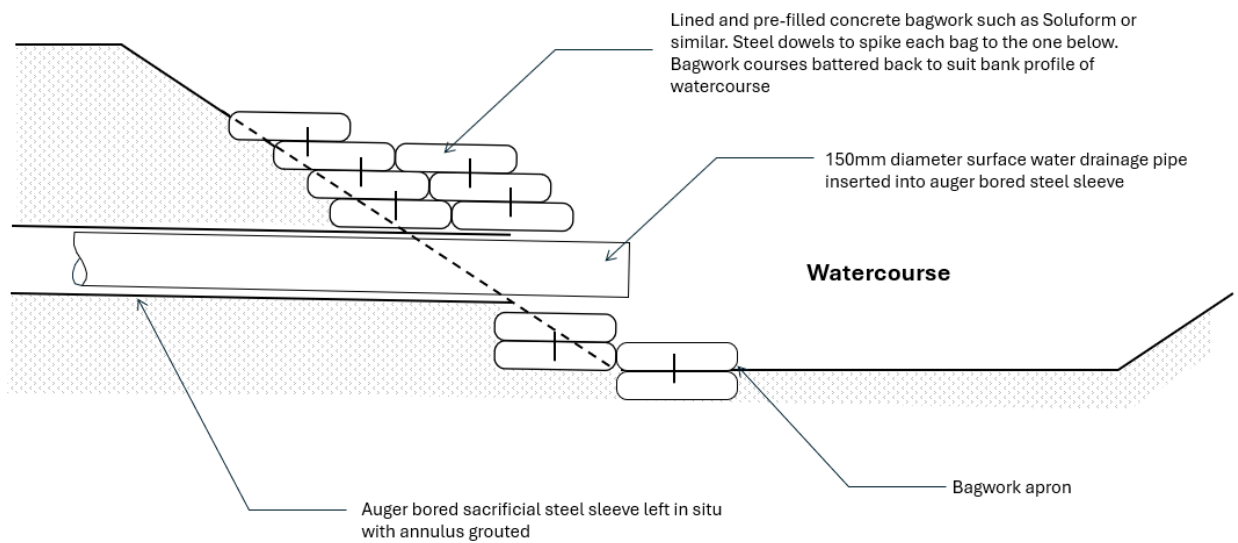
To address your specific questions:

1. It appears that it would require a substantial launch and reception pit alongside the use of heavy hydraulic jacking equipment. I would be concerned that the launch pit could encroach into the 15m buffer of the Ancient Woodland and how the reception pit be formed as the outfall and headwall would be located within the Ancient Woodland.

Reception Pit: *A reception pit at the outfall/within the Ancient Woodland is not required in this case. The bore will be undertaken from a launch pit outside of the Ancient Woodland buffer (in the position of manhole S9 on the Drainage Layout) and will be bored in a single location to emerge out of the bank of the watercourse. A sacrificial steel sleeve will be inserted as part of the boring, meaning that only short 1m pilot rods would need to be removed at the outfall end. The final drainage pipework would then be installed through the steel sleeve which would be left in situ. The pilot rods can all be carried out by hand, resulting in no need for heavy machinery moving back and forth through the Ancient Woodland. The pedestrian route to recover the pilot rods can be fenced to minimise the area of human activity, and the ground appropriately protected.*

Launch Pit: *as above, the launch pit would be formed outside of the Ancient Woodland buffer, in the position of manhole S9 on the drainage layout. The boring rig can be operated from a small launch pit which would typically be either a 2.4m diameter pre-cast concrete ring manhole, or a square pit of 2.6m x 2.6m. The size/location of the launch pit is indicated on the plan below (orange square). This can be conditioned (as part of detailed Method Statement) to occur outside of the Ancient Woodland buffer, with appropriate ecological and arboricultural supervision and permanent protective fencing used to prevent access to the buffer zone. No heavy hydraulic jacking equipment is required to be used, positioned or operated within the Ancient Woodland buffer zone or Ancient Woodland itself.*

Headwall: *The headwall would be formed non-invasively as a concrete sandbag headwall. Concrete sandbags would be laid under and around the outfall pipe to prevent the risk of soil erosion to the bank of the watercourse. Below is a generic cross section demonstrating the type of headwall construction. A suitable type of pre-filled lined bagwork would be used, such as Soluform, to ensure containment of any cement fines, ensuring there would be no ecological risk or adverse impact whilst the bags harden. This form of bagwork can be hand placed, so that there is no need for heavy machinery to operate within the Ancient Woodland or its buffer zone to form the headwall.*



2. As mentioned, the outfall and headwall would be constructed within the Ancient Woodland and the attached appeal in part states “the ancient woodland is an irreplaceable habitat and the loss or deterioration of any part of it, no matter how small a proportion, acts to undermine its value as a whole.” *As set out in the methodology above, the outfall will be bored without the need for a reception pit and the headwall can be formed non-invasively with hand placed, pre-filled concrete bagwork. These works can be carried out by hand without machinery, avoiding any adverse impact upon the Ancient Woodland. As above, this can further be reinforced through a Method Statement condition which incorporates protective fencing to the Ancient Woodland buffer, a restrictive pedestrian route through to the watercourse (defined by fencing and with appropriate temporary ground protection) and a requirement for both arboricultural and ecological supervision. Unlike the appeal decision, which required installation of significant infrastructure (chambers, etc.) within the woodland and the buffer, the solution for West Hoathly Road and the methodology will not cause loss or deterioration to the Ancient Woodland.*

3. In relation to the long-term maintenance of the proposed drainage. If there is a major blockage or structural collapse of the system how could this be repaired without the need for emergency open trench excavation?

Likelihood of blockage/upstream protection: *The likelihood of blockage is extremely low based upon the design of the surface water system, and given the on-going maintenance measures and regime which are required by the LLFA. As set out in the Drainage Strategy (Section 10), the system includes permeable pavements and a SuDS basin which provide mitigation against pollution and provide natural cleansing of the surface water for silt, etc. In addition, the drainage layout incorporates upstream catchpit manholes which will trap/collect silt and debris, preventing it from travelling through the system. The Hydrobrake manhole (immediately upstream of manhole S9) will also prevent debris reaching the outfall pipe and therefore prevent risk of blockage. However, to provide additional protection, S9 could be provided as catchpit manhole, providing a final opportunity to collect any remnant silt or debris before water travels through the outfall pipe.*

Maintenance: *As the length of the outfall pipe through the Ancient Woodland is comparatively small, cleansing of the outfall pipe in the extremely unlikely event of a blockage (such as jetting/hydro-jetting, etc.) can be carried out from manhole S9 with no issue, with any need to enter the Ancient Woodland or buffer zone.*

Durability/Structural collapse: *The solution proposed will prevent any material risk of major structural collapse of the system. As above, the drainage pipe is proposed to be ductile iron, which has a 100+ year lifespan. This would be encased within the sacrificial steel sleeve which would be left in situ as part of the auger boring, with the annulus filled with grout and thus providing a double protection to the actual drainage pipe. This negates any risk of root ingress which would be the only tangible reason for pipe failure.*

The above demonstrates the likelihood of blockage or structural failure is low, appropriate maintenance can be carried out from the upstream manhole without the need to access the Ancient Woodland and there would be no need for open trench excavation over the long-term.

4. As set out within the attached appeal it raised an issue on the impact on the hydrological system, with changes in soil moisture levels, groundwater recharge and seasonal

wetting patterns and the risk of deterioration of the ancient woodland and the ecosystem that has built up within it. Has any work been done to assess this impact?

Based upon the natural topography, a significant proportion of the site would currently drain overland to and across the north-east boundary with Sunnyside recreation ground. Even in undeveloped state, this catchment of the site would not be expected to drain surface water via the boundary Ancient Woodland and thus surface water arising from this catchment would not materially contribute to soil moisture levels or seasonal wetting. Of the part of the site which could potentially currently drain its surface water overland to and across the Ancient Woodland, the plan below demonstrates that a significant proportion of this catchment would remain as permeable surface (shown green). In these areas, surface water will continue to permeate to ground or run-off naturally into the ditch via the Ancient Woodland.

Additionally, as can be seen from the second plan below, our site (outlined in green) comprises a very small part of the overall catchment draining to the watercourse and thus potentially the Ancient Woodland (outlined in orange). In this context, any minor changes on site would be expected to have an imperceptible impact given the flows of surface water from the wider catchment.

This is also addressed in our submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal which discussed potential impacts on the Ancient Woodland and does not identify any adverse impacts (specifically 4.17 in relation to the drainage).



Site Topography and Drainage Catchments



Indicative Wider Drainage Catchment (Based on OS Terrain Topography)

I trust the above allows you to conclude positively as to the drainage solution, subject understandably to appropriate planning conditions to secure the final detailed drainage design, a detailed Method Statement for the installation of the pipe and headwall, and ecological and arboriculture supervision of the works.

We hope to be in a position to submit the full pack of amended plans (in accordance with the layout shared previously) next week, to enable you to reconsult as appropriate and hopefully report the application to Planning Committee thereafter.

Kind regards,

Luke Eldridge
Head of Land & Planning

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From: Joseph Swift <joseph.swift@midsussex.gov.uk>

Sent: 21 May 2026 11:39

To: Rosie Baker <rosie.baker@devinehomes.co.uk>

Cc: Luke Eldridge <luke.eldridge@devinehomes.co.uk>; Billy Clements
<billy.clements@devinehomes.co.uk>

Subject: RE: DM/26/0073 - Update - Layout amends, trees/drainage, AH

Good morning Rosie,

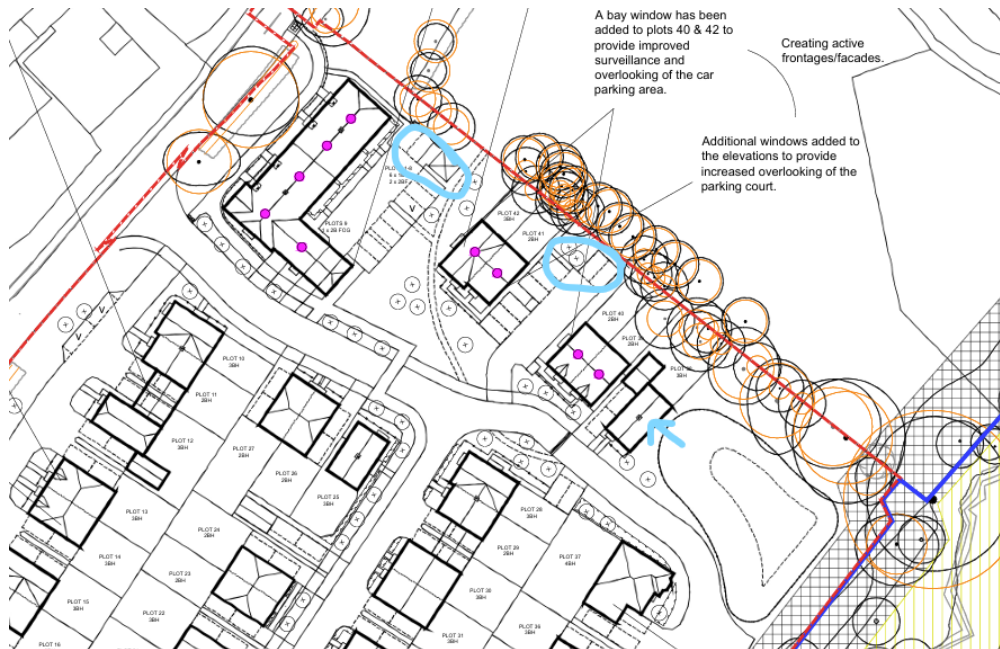
Thank you for your emails.

In relation to the layout amendments, I have discussed with the Urban Designer who has made the following comments:

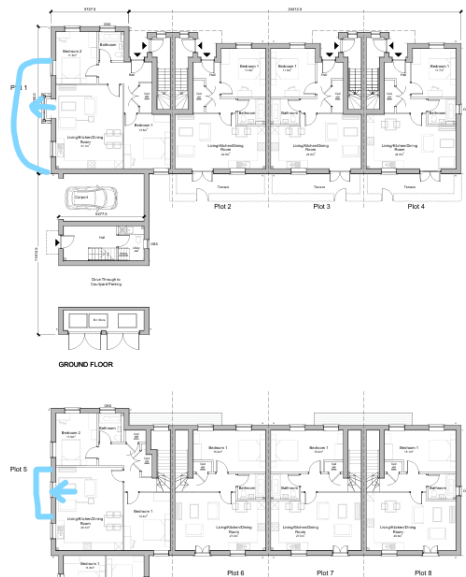
I have reviewed the revised layout, and I think it's now much improved.
I am looking forward to more information following those changes.

However, I have few comments regardless:

- Regarding the overlooking of the recreational ground, I accept the explanation to some degree. However, I would like to see amendments to Plot 39, with the front doors relocated to the south-east elevation. This would improve the immediate setting and provide better surveillance of the pond and main play area by creating a more active frontage.
- Furthermore, I would encourage the inclusion of additional FOGs in the marked locations, as these would also improve surveillance and help with housing delivery by adding two further units to the scheme.



- Regarding the flats without direct access to private outdoor space, I do not accept the explanation provided. Please adjust the levels and create directly accessible outdoor spaces for the marked units.



- It is important that the Boundary Treatment Plan and Sustainability Strategy are secured at this stage. These documents need to be provided now and should not be deferred to the condition stage.

Furthermore, I have chased up the ecology consultant, but I am yet to receive a response.

Nonetheless, I have been looking into the proposed drainage solution through the Ancient Woodland and I have been made aware of the attached appeal.

As you can see this appeal was dismissed, with a number of comparable issues.

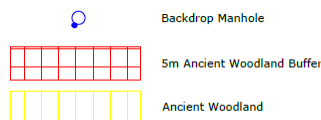
Looking into the proposed guided auger bore installation, it appears that it would require a substantial launch and reception pits alongside the use of heavy hydraulic jacking equipment. I would have concerns that the launch pit could encroach into the 15 metre buffer of the ancient woodland and how will the reception pit be formed as the outfall and headwall would be located within the Ancient Woodland?

As set out within the attached appeal it raised an issue on the impact on the hydrological system, with changes in soil moisture levels, groundwater recharge and seasonal wetting patterns and the risk of deterioration of the ancient woodland and the ecosystem that has built up within it. Has any work been done to assess this impact?

As mentioned, the outfall and headwall would be constructed within the Ancient Woodland and the attached appeal in part states *"the ancient woodland is an irreplaceable habitat and the loss or deterioration of any part of it, no matter how small a proportion, acts to undermine its value as a whole."*

In relation to the long term maintenance of the proposed drainage. If there is a major blockage or structural collapse of the system how could this be repaired without the need for emergency open trench excavation?

Also just to note that the drainage plan is incorrect and only states a 5m Ancient Woodland buffer:



I look forward to hearing from you on the above points.

I trust the above is of some assistance.

Kind regards

Joseph Swift BA (Hons) MPLAN
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Working together for a better Mid Sussex

From: Rosie Baker <rosie.baker@devinehomes.co.uk>
Sent: 20 May 2026 13:27
To: Joseph Swift <joseph.swift@midsussex.gov.uk>
Cc: Luke Eldridge <luke.eldridge@devinehomes.co.uk>; Billy Clements <billy.clements@devinehomes.co.uk>
Subject: DM/26/0073 - Update - Layout amends, trees/drainage, AH

Hi Joseph,

It would be great to have yours and Anna's feedback on the layout amends issued last week. I hope we have developed the scheme satisfactorily to overcome the concerns raised and we can reach agreement to progress the work to update the drawing pack.

Please can you also come back to me re trees/drainage and feedback on the additional information submitted on affordable housing.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

Rosie Baker
Planning Manager
(working hours Monday - Wednesday)

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From: Rosie Baker
Sent: 12 May 2026 14:49
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Cc: Billy Clements <billy.clements@devinehomes.co.uk>; Luke Eldridge <luke.eldridge@devinehomes.co.uk>; 'steven.king@midsussex.gov.uk' <steven.king@midsussex.gov.uk>; 'irene.fletcher@midsussex.gov.uk' <irene.fletcher@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: DM/26/0073 - Layout amends

Joe,

Apologies I attached the wrong layout to my previous email. Attached is the correct one which shows further variation to the roof forms as described in my email and reflective of the new West Hoathly streetscene. Please could you forward to Anna, your urban design officer as I don't have her correct email, together with my email below.

Many thanks

Kind regards,

Rosie Baker
Planning Manager
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Sent: 12 May 2026 14:16

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Cc: Billy Clements <billy.clements@devinehomes.co.uk>; Luke Eldridge <luke.eldridge@devinehomes.co.uk>; steven.king@midsussex.gov.uk; 'anna.kramarczyk-dillon@midsussex.gov.uk' <anna.kramarczyk-dillon@midsussex.gov.uk>; irene.fletcher@midsussex.gov.uk

Subject: DM/26/0073 - Layout amends

Joseph,

Please find attached a revised layout (inc roofplan) and primary streetscene adjacent to West Hoathly Road in response to consultee comments received from the Council's urban designer and tree officers, together with the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee, and Place Services Landscape.

This is submitted to you informally as a draft for comment.

The changes can be summarised as follows:

- Review of West Hoathly Road streetscene and wider site to introduce greater variety both to house types and form to better reflect the HWNL character and improve the streetscape. Amongst other things we've introduced more car barns, removed a number of the narrow fronted detached houses, reviewed the 4 beds

both in terms of design and location and changes roof forms introducing more gables, barn hips and some cat slides. Parking has been broken up with the introduction of more landscape buffer strips and it is the intention to introduce picket fencing to the streetscene (albeit I appreciate post and rail fencing is shown on the streetscene presented).

- Dwellings reorientated to face the tree belt to the south with road repositioned, removing bulk and mass from the highest part of the site and providing a softer edge to the site boundary and greater separation to the existing tree line. This has resulted in the loss of two units.
- Review of massing in views towards the site from further north along West Hoathly Road – roof forms have been revisited to minimise mass in views from the north.
- Pedestrian connections have been reviewed linking routes around perimeter blocks, with the introduction of a new route between what is now plots 33 and 34
- To the south plots have been moved away outside of RPAs (what is now plots 33 and 34).
- Whilst we have not rotated the housing to front Sunnyside Rec for the reasons discussed previously we have added more windows to enhance overlooking and improve surveillance both to the parking court and the pedestrian footpath and added more detailing to the elevations identified.
- Reduction to two character areas to achieve more distinction between the two – materials to the front to be focussed on clay tiles and brick, with the rear of the site characterised by brick and weatherboarding (this could be white or black your preference). See revised West Hoathly Road streetscene which shows the switch to predominance of clay tiling on this elevational stretch to better reflect the character of the road. We've introduced a new porch design to the WH Road frontage picking up on the numerous examples of gables in the vicinity, whilst retained the strategy site wide of using chimneys and materials to enhance more prominent buildings in the streetscape and deliver natural wayfinding.

I hope we can find agreement that this layout and streetscene address a large number of the matters raised by the above consultees. Following officer feedback we would then look to update the drawing pack, provide a short DAS addendum and the visualisation requested from further north looking back towards the site from West Hoathly Road.

I note I have a scheduled meeting with Anna and Steven tomorrow on Ansty at 1130. Would it be a possibility for you to join that call in the latter stages to discuss if this layout addresses concerns raised to enable us to proceed with the update to the wider application documents?

We are also waiting on your agreement to the proposed drainage strategy and feedback on the additional information submitted on affordable housing. If you could give me a call to update me so we can move these items forward that would be great. We have the additional information now on newts so I will forward this separately to you.

Kind regards,

Rosie Baker
Planning Manager
(working hours Monday - Wednesday)

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