



Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 1SS

Date: 18 July 2025
Our ref: 05993

For the attention of: Planning Department, planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk

Application ref:

DM/25/1434

Location:

Land Rear Of Chesapeake Reeds Lane Sayers Common
Hassocks

Proposal/Description:

Proposed demolition of an existing dwelling house, stables and barn buildings and the proposed development of 27 dwellings, with a new vehicular access, associated landscaping, parking, open space, and all other associated development works.

Thank you for consulting with Place Services on the above application. This letter sets out our consultation response on the landscape impact of the application and how the proposal relates and responds to the landscape setting and context of the site.

Site Context:

The application site is located within the south-west of Sayers Common village. Existing residential development defines the northern, eastern and part of the western site boundaries. Access to the site is from Reeds Lane to the north. The site itself comprises a number of small irregular assarted fields, which are currently paddocks, grassland and some buildings. A public right of way (PRoW) crosses through the site.

Planning Policy Context:

Mid Sussex District Plan (MSDP) (Adopted March 2018)

Policies considered relevant include [inter alia]:

- Policy DP12 Protection and Enhancement of Countryside
- Policy DP13 Preventing Coalescence
- Policy DP37 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
- Policy DP38 Biodiversity

Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan (Made 2015)

The following policies are considered relevant to this application:

- POLICY Countryside Hurst C1: Conserving and enhancing character:
- POLICY Countryside Hurst C2: South Downs National Park

- POLICY Countryside Hurst C3: Local Gaps and Preventing Coalescence:
- POLICY Housing Hurst H1: Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common new housing development:
- POLICY Housing Hurst H3: Sayers Common housing sites:
- POLICY Housing Hurst H5: Development principles:
- POLICY Housing Hurst H6: Housing sites infrastructure and environmental impact assessment

Policy C3 Local Gaps states: “Development will be permitted in the countryside provided that it does not individually or cumulatively result in coalescence and loss of separate identity of neighbouring settlements, and provided that it does not conflict with other Countryside policies in this Plan.”

Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study (2007/2014)

The site is located within 80 Trusler's Hill Lane Footslopes. The Landscape Sensitivity of this area is assessed as moderate/high. The area is also assessed as having moderate value, owed to sense of rurality, thick hedgerows and being fairly quiet and naturalistic. This is assessed overall as having Low/Medium Capacity for development.

Table 3.4 states “A Low/medium capacity rating indicates that development is likely to have an adverse effect on most of the character area and while smaller development may be possible in a very few locations within the character area, it will not be suitable for strategic scale development.”

Review of the proposal/submitted information:

The application has been accompanied by the submission of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) undertaken by Pegasus Group, dated 10th April 2025. The methodology included broadly follows GLVIA3 guidelines.

A Design and Access Statement (DAS) has been submitted, however Sections 2.0 Assessment and 3.0 Evaluation are missing. Sections of 4.0 Design have also been submitted multiple times.

Landscape Character

The site is located within:

- LW10 'Eastern Low Weald' of the East Sussex Landscape Character Assessment
- LCA 4 'Hickstead Low Weald' of the Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment

Key characteristics across these LCAs include arable and pastoral rural landscape, mosaic of small and larger fields, scattered woodlands, shaws and hedgerow trees, quieter and more secluded, confined rural landscape, biodiversity in woodlands, meadowland, ponds and wetland and suburban village development.

The LVIA assesses that there is a medium overall effect on the site landscape character. Considering that a large proportion of the site character is being replaced by built development, we judge the overall effects of landscape character for the site will exceed medium.

The LVIA assesses that there is a negligible overall effect on LCA 4: Hickstead Low Weald. Since the landscape and visual sensitivities of the LCA include the high level of perceived naturalness and rural quality west of the A23, woodland cover and mosaic of shaws and hedgerows contribute to the essence of the landscape and pockets of rich biodiversity. There are a number of sensitive features which contribute to the landscape character and are present within the site, and we judge that the ability to experience these LCA features will be impacted by the development. We would therefore judge that the magnitude of change would be higher than negligible, and therefore we judge that the overall effects for LCA 4 is too low.

Notwithstanding the above, where our judgements may differ these are not deemed substantial. We judge effects may be minor and therefore this does not require further discussion.

Visual Amenity

Figure 7 identifies the selected viewpoint receptors included within the LVIA. Overall, we are generally in agreement with the selected viewpoints and judge this appropriately represents the available views of the site.

The site is largely contained by surrounding vegetation and therefore views into the site are limited. PRoW 'West Sussex HSC 11Hu' runs through the site and provides the most open views of the development area.

Table 7 of the LVIA judges that PRoW 11Hu has high sensitivity, medium magnitude of change, and a moderate adverse overall effect. At present, we judge the visual effects on this PRoW could be higher than that assessed, owed to the proximity of the development to the PRoW and the current undeveloped character of this route. Notwithstanding this, we judge that the visual effects on this PRoW can be reduced by proposing some additional planting to bolster the gaps in the hedgerow to the south of the existing ditch. As per Viewpoint 2B, proposing some additional hedgerow and tree planting within this view would mitigate the potential effects of development in the northern fields.

Summary:

Overall, we have some difference in judgements regarding the assessed impacts within the submitted LVIA, however these are not deemed substantial. We have included a number of recommendations which we advise are considered with any forthcoming submissions

Recommendations:

The Design and Access Statement (DAS) included information on the hard and soft landscaping. However, at application stage we would expect to see comprehensive landscape proposals that provide soft, hard and boundary landscape treatments provided.

The soft landscape plan should include a landscape specification and planting schedule, with details of quantity, species, size/type (bare root, container etc). It should also include details of implementation and materials (i.e. soils and mulch) and any protection measures that will be put in place (i.e rabbit guards). The hard landscape plan should include details of all hard surface materials and boundary treatments to be used within the development with a timetable for implementation, including all means of enclosure and boundary treatments, such as walls and fences.

Details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance of soft and hard landscape assets will also need to be provided in the form of a landscape management and maintenance plan. This should include a schedule of works and cover a minimum period of 5 years. The submission of the landscape management plan can be a condition of any consent.

We advise the following recommendations are considered to inform the layout:

- G1 (Category C) within the AIA forms part of the western site boundary and separates the site from the residential dwellings on Meadow View. We have concerns regarding the visual impact on these residential properties since G1 is proposed for removal. We do however welcome the proposed tree planting on this boundary to reintroduce the vegetated boundary that currently forms screening. We would welcome the further inclusion of trees lining the proposed streets within the development, as per para. 131 within the NPPF.
- We advise that the SuDS areas are designed to be multi-functional to allow public access. We therefore advise that the banks of the basin are proposed as 1:6 in places to allow public access, with 1:4 the predominant basin gradients.
- Estate railings are proposed running through retained trees alongside the watercourse which runs through the site. The alignment of the estate railings will need reconsidering within the submitted landscape plans.
- There are missed opportunities to include planting surrounding the SuDS basin which would contribute to biodiversity, health and safety along the pathway, and visual amenity. We advise SuDS planting including shrubs, scrub and trees are proposed surrounding and within the basin.
- As per the current Site Layout, we advise that no railings are proposed surrounding the basin to encourage access to and around the basin and to improve permeability of the development site.
- We have concerns regarding the alleyway proposed between Plots 8 and 10 as the primary access for residents of Plot 6-8 from the rear car park. We welcome the frontage which overlooks the SuDS basin to the south from these plots however.
- The open spaces north and south of the watercourse should also include benches and other furniture, such as bins.
- A pumping station is shown on the Layout Plan in the eastern side of the proposals. No further information is submitted on the appearance or requirements for this, and this is required.
- To the north-east of Plot 1 is a large swathe of planting which represents a missed opportunity for a landscape intervention. A planting bed of this depth will create maintenance issues in future.

- A feature tree should be proposed north of Plot 1 as this is a primary view into the site from the entrance.
- It would be recommended that hedgerows are planted in double staggered rows, preferably 5 plants per linear metre. There should also not be equal numbers of each species. Instead, it is recommended that it is specified in percentages, as shown below:
 - 60% Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
 - 20% Field maple (*Acer campestre*)
 - 10% Hazel (*Corylus Avellana*)
 - 5% Trees (wild cherry, oak or hornbeam)
 - 5% made of holly, spindle, crab apple, dogwood, blackthorn and guelder rose (only a few % each IF they are present in the locality).
- Development should avoid the root protection areas (RPAs) of all trees within or surrounding the Site. Any hard landscaping proposed within the RPA of existing trees must use no-dig surface solutions.
- A predominance of one species or variety should be avoided in order to minimise the risk of widespread biotic threats to the urban forest and to increase species diversity. Preference should be given to native trees and shrubs, but in certain urban and residential situations, better results might be achieved by the use of naturalised trees and shrubs, which are not necessarily native but are the correct tree for site conditions and would add landscape and arboricultural value.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries in relation to this advice.

Place Services – Landscape Team

Email: landscape@essex.gov.uk



Place Services provide landscape advice on behalf of Mid Sussex District Council.

Please note: This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter.