

**From:** Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 18 May 2026 16:27:12 UTC+01:00  
**To:** "Tracie Axford" <Tracie.Axford@midsussex.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** DM/26/0757 Charles Bennett Court

Hi Tracie

Comments on the above planning application.

Charles Bennett Court is an unlisted, late 20<sup>th</sup> century sheltered housing development located within the Franklands Village Conservation Area. The Council does not have an adopted character appraisal for this Conservation Area, but its document '*Conservation Areas in Mid Sussex*' provides a brief, high level analysis of its key features:

*'Franklands Village was founded in the 1930s by the local branch of the International Rotary Club, and was established to provide homes for young people and work for local builders. The area retains the character of a 'model village' with a distinct community spirit, representing an important historic link in the evolution of the town.*

*The following features contribute to the character of the Conservation Area:*

- the uniformity of the distinctively designed buildings which gives the area its "model village" character;*
- the spacious layout of the village with wide grass verges, mature trees and hedges and areas of open space;*
- the picturesque village pond;*
- and the unusual timber church.'*

Although Charles Bennett Court is a relatively recent addition to the Area it is broadly sympathetic to the traditional 'village' character of the Area in terms of scale, design and materials, including the use of timber framed windows. Originally the windows to the houses and other buildings within Franklands Village would have been metal or timber framed, and although many have now been changed to uPVC, harming the character of the buildings affected, this is likely to have been done under permitted development rights rather than with the benefit of planning permission.

The current proposal is for the wholesale replacement of the existing timber casement windows within the range of buildings with uPVC windows of a similar design.

Whilst the replacement of the existing windows is not considered contentious in principle, the use of uPVC will be unacceptable in this context. It is not a traditional material, and its extensive use across the buildings at Charles Bennett Court would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the development and of the wider Conservation Area. This is notwithstanding the presence of uPVC to other properties within the vicinity, which detracts from the houses concerned, and from the

character and appearance of the Conservation Area. As noted above, this work is not likely to have been undertaken with the benefit of planning permission.

I would recommend that the application is revised to show replacement painted timber windows of an appropriate design.

As it stands, the application would be considered contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP35. In terms of the NPPF the proposal will result in less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the Franklands Village Conservation Area at around the low-mid point, such that the balancing exercise set out in paragraph 215 will apply.

Thanks,

Emily

Please note that this advice is given at Officer level only and is without prejudice to the formal decision of the District Council.

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Submit your planning application online.

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk>

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