

Conversion of an education building to residential apartment

Queensmere House,
49 Queen's Road,
East Grinstead,
West Sussex,
RH19 1BF

PLANNING STATEMENT

for

RH19 Estates Ltd

January 2024



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement supports the proposal to conversion of the former D1 Educational Building at Central Sussex College, Queensmere House, 49 Queens Road, East Grinstead, into 24 residential apartments. The proposal includes associated works such as the infilling of undercroft areas, provision of car parking, landscaping, cycle storage, amenity areas, installation of a 1.1m high metal fence, and the construction of a new ramp.

1.2 The planning statement has been prepared on behalf of our client, RH19 Estates Ltd. in support of a full planning application for the conversion of the existing building in residential use.

1.3 The application seeks permission for the following development:

Conversion of a D1 Educational Building to 24 No. Residential Apartments with infilling of existing undercroft areas, associated car parking, landscaping, cycle spaces, amenity areas, 1.1m high metal fence and new ramp.

1.4 The application seeks to deliver 24 high-quality residential apartments within Queensmere House, addressing the housing demands of East Grinstead. The client, envisions transforming the currently vacant building into a sustainable, well-designed living environment. The scheme includes a mix of one, two, and three-bedroom units, with enhancements to the building's façade and integration of sustainable features such as landscaping and energy-efficient systems.

1.5 Application Pack

In accordance with the Councils Validation Checklist, this full planning application comprises:

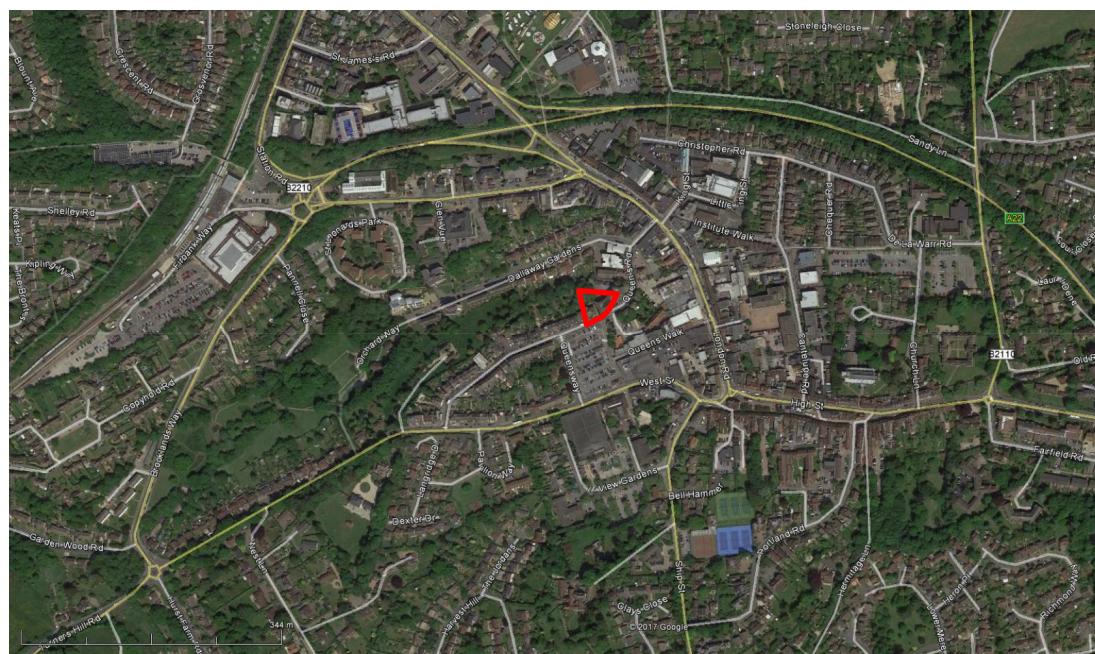
- Site Location Plan
- Existing Drawings
- Proposed drawings comprising proposed floorplans, roof plan, sections and elevations.
- Design & Access Statement
- Affordable Housing Statement
- Air Quality Assessment
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment
- Ecological Impact Assessment
- Foul Sewage and Surface Water Drainage Assessment
- Land Contamination Assessment
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Planning Obligation Instruction Form
- Planning Statement
- Road Safety Audit and Designers Response
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Sustainability and Energy Assessment
- Tree Report
- Viability Appraisal inc. Cost Plan
- Hard and Soft Landscape Design

1.6 Section 2 of this statement provides a description of the application site and the surrounding area. Section 3 gives an overview of the planning history of the site. Section 4 provides a brief description of development proposals. Section 5 gives an overview of the engagement undertaken to date. Section 6 sets out the policy context and Section 7 provides an evaluation of the development proposal in relation to the prevailing planning policy. Section 8 sets out our conclusions and recommendations.

2.0 The Site and Surrounding Area

2.1 The site is centrally located in East Grinstead, on Queens Road, within the built-up area as defined by the Mid Sussex District Plan and East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan. The site was previously used as an educational facility by Central Sussex College until 2016, after which it has remained vacant and is currently deteriorating and causing a negative impact to the area.

2.2 The site has a single vehicular access from Queens Road and is within 7km of the Ashdown Forest SPA/SAC. It also lies within a Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone (Amber/Green).



Aerial Photo: Site highlighted in Red

The Surrounding Area

2.3 This Town Centre site is highly accessible, it is a ten-minute walk to East Grinstead Railway Station which provides a regular service to London Victoria. There are also a range of bus services with bus stops location on London Road, these include local services Nos. 84, 400 and 409. A number of regional services provide public transport links to the following destinations Uckfield (No. 261); Brighton and Hayward's Heath (No. 270); Lingfield (No. 281) and Tunbridge Wells (No. 291).

The surrounding area features a mix of residential and commercial uses, a mix of housing typologies including the Martell's redevelopment, community buildings and car parks.

2.4 The property comprises a vacant 3-storey building with an under-croft basement and ancillary car parking with the site spanning approximately 1573.5 sq m (0.157 hectares). The site was previously used as an educational facility by Central Sussex College until 2016, after which it has remained vacant.

2.5 To the east of the the site (other side of Queens Road) there is the Post Office Depot and the rear service yards of retail properties which front onto the London Road. London Road is occupied by several national high street retailers including Boots, Costa and Poundland.

- 2.6 To the west of the building are two storey residential properties which align Queen's Road and front onto Queenway car park.
- 2.7 To the north of the site sits a two-storey community building housing the Literary and social institute as well as other community uses with hardstanding around the building. Beyond this are two residential apartment blocks of and a large carpark area.
- 2.8 To the Northwest of the site back gardens to some properties of Dallaway Gardens back on to the site.

3.0 Planning History

- 3.1 A search Mid-Sussex District Councils Planning application database has revealed the planning history of the site.
- 3.2 Planning Approval (GR/321/84) was granted in July 1985 for the building of the current office development.
- 3.3 Planning Approval (GR/192/85) was granted in October 1985 for an office redevelopment scheme. (We believe this was the permission for the existing office block).
- 3.3 Planning Approval (00/01734/COU was granted in September 2000 for a change of use to the building from office block to a church building.
- 3.4 Planning Approval (00/1931/FUL) was granted in December 2000 for a change of use to the building from office block to educational purposes with ancillary offices. (This was the last use of the site as Central Sussex College ceased using property in 2016).
- 3.5 Planning Approval (DM/17/2725) was granted in January 2018 for the 'Conversion of a D1 educational building to 14 no. residential apartments with new additional set back third floor and infilling of existing undercroft areas. Associated car parking, landscaping, cycle spaces, amenity, 1.1m high metal fence and new ramp.'
- 3.6 Planning Approval (DM/18/1272) was a Non-Material Amendment to the above application involving the change to the internal layouts of the apartments and 1 no. additional balcony to the rear.
- 3.7 Planning Approval (DM/19/4314) discharged conditions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 10 for planning approval DM/17/2725. Planning Approval (DM/19/4826) discharged condition 9. Planning Approval DM/20/4528 discharge of condition 8. These were all submitted prior to the time period lapsed on the planning approval.
- 3.8 The previous owner of the site then implemented to scheme however a lawful development certificate to confirm its lawful implementation was returned due to no fee being paid for this.

4.0 The Scheme

4.1 A comprehensive description of the proposed development is provided within the accompanying Design and Access Statement. The proposal has evolved through a pre-application meeting with Mid Sussex District Council and a public consultation exercise. The results of the public consultation are included within the accompanying Statement of Community Involvement submitted in support of this application.

4.2 It is proposed that the building is changed from a D1 Educational Use Class to C3 Residential Use Class.

4.3 The proposed scheme, for which a detailed planning application has been submitted, comprises the following:

3no. 1 bed 1 person Studio apartments
14no. 1 bed 2 person apartments
3no. 2 bed 3 person apartments
3no. 2 bed 4 person apartments
1no. 3 bed 5 person apartment

24no. apartments total

4.4 The scheme includes provisions for sustainability and accessibility, with a reduced 15no. off-street parking spaces to promote sustainable living in the town centre. Additionally, 24 secure cycle storage spaces will be provided.

4.5 Queens Road will be enhanced with two new front door entrances to ground floor units with front gardens, planting, trees and fencing making this visually pleasing.

4.6 The rear undercroft and ramp will be filled in in line with the building footprint above to provide 5 units. These encompass 4 units that span back to front benefiting from being dual aspect with light wells to the front of the building and private external entrances and gardens at the lower ground floor level.

4.7 The existing tired timber cladding to the projecting windows at first floor and set back second floor will be replaced with Aluminium Vertical cladding panels, RAL colour 1020, and all windows and doors replaced with products of RAL colour 7035.

Access and Servicing

4.6 The main pedestrian access into the building will be using the existing entrance core to the East side of the site from Queens Road. This entrance provides lift and stair access to all floors. Additional pedestrian access is provided from the rear lower ground floor level from the car park.

4.7 The residential car park will be accessed via a new ramp along the North Eastern boundary of the site running between the building and the boundary leading to the rear car park where 15 car parking spaces and 24 cycle storage places are provided.

4.8 Within each apartment, space will be provided to accommodate waste and recycling. Residents will be responsible for disposing of their waste in the appropriate communal bin ahead of collection. A total of 7 1100 litre bins have been provided. It is envisaged that the reuse and waste will be collected fortnightly by the Council's waste and refuse team.

Sustainability and Energy Efficiency

- 4.9 A comprehensive description of the The Energy Strategy is included in STROMA's report. The scheme is using a fabric first approach by internally insulating the building to reduce each dwellings consumption for the life of the construction. Space and water heating will be provided via clean mains gas combi boilers.
- 4.10 Photovoltaic panels will be installed across the site to deliver a 10% energy saving, to meet Planning Policy DP39 of the Mid Sussex council development Plan for renewable energy generation.
- 4.11 Dwellings will target the consumption of 110 litres of water per person per day or better, in line with Building Regulations and Planning Policy 42 of the Mid Sussex Council Development Plan.

5.0 Engagement

5.1 A pre-application discussion was held with Mid Sussex District Council on the 4th September 2024. The main topics discussed included:

- Existing Trees
- Quality of the accommodation
- Affordable housing
- How to improve the aesthetics of the building

5.2 The scheme took on board the comments raised particularly the Quality of Accommodation and re-arranged the lower ground floor units to be dual aspect with own private entrances and light wells along Queens Road. This has reduced the number of units from 25 to 24.

Public Consultation

5.3 A leaflet drop public consultation was conducted in December 2024 to neighbours on Queens Road, Dallaway Gardens and London Road. Four responses were received via email with concerns raised around amount of parking and wildlife with two responses in favour of the development.

5.4 The concerns of residents and the feedback from the pre-application is discussed and commented on in full report in Statement of Community Involvement report that accompanies this application.

6.0 Planning Policy Considerations

6.1 The following documents have been consulted as part of the application and taken into consideration:

- Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (Mar 2018)
- East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan (Nov 2016)
- Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 – Submission Draft (regulation 19)
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Dec 2024)
- Technical Housing Standards: Nationally Described Space Standard (Mar 2015)
- West Sussex County Council: Guidance on Parking at New Developments (Aug 2019)
- Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (Nov 2020)

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT PLAN 2014-2031

6.2 The Mid Sussex District Plan provides the overarching framework for sustainable development within the district. The relevant policies include the following:

DP2: Town Centre Development

6.3 Policy Text: DP2 supports town centre developments that enhance their vitality and viability, ensuring that they contribute positively to the character and quality of the environment. Proposals should make efficient use of land, support town centre services, and provide a mix of uses where appropriate.

Assessment: The proposal aligns with DP2 by redeveloping a vacant building in the town centre, increasing footfall, and supporting local services. The design respects the site's character while maximising its potential as a residential development.

DP4: Housing

6.4 Policy Text: DP4 encourages sustainable housing development to meet the needs of current and future generations. Housing should be delivered in sustainable locations that reduce reliance on private vehicles and align with local housing strategies.

Assessment: The development meets DP4 objectives by converting a centrally located, underutilised building into residential units. Its proximity to services and public transport reduces the need for private vehicle use.

DP6: Settlement Hierarchy

6.5 Policy Text: DP6 establishes a hierarchy of settlements, prioritising larger towns like East Grinstead for significant housing and infrastructure development due to their ability to accommodate growth sustainably.

Assessment: The site's location in East Grinstead, a primary settlement, is ideal for redevelopment under this policy, supporting sustainable growth in a high-priority area.

DP17: Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

6.6 Policy Text: DP17 requires mitigation for any development within 7km of the Ashdown Forest to offset recreational and ecological impacts. This includes contributions to Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM).

Assessment: The development will mitigate impacts on the Ashdown Forest through financial contributions, complying with this policy as set out in the Ecological Impact Assessment.

DP20: Securing Infrastructure

6.7 Policy Text: DP20 requires that new developments provide or contribute to the infrastructure and community facilities necessary to support it. This includes transport, education, health, recreation, and utilities infrastructure. Financial contributions may be required through planning obligations or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Assessment: The client is open to contributing to necessary local infrastructure through CIL payments to be agreed during the S106 agreement. As such we have signed the Planning Obligation Instruction Form with the clients legal representative details included.

DP21: Transport

6.8 Policy Text: DP21 seeks to promote sustainable transport measures, reduce reliance on private vehicles, and ensure developments provide safe and efficient access to the transport network. It requires developments to prioritise pedestrian and cycle connectivity and to minimise traffic impacts.

Assessment: The development incorporates sustainable transport measures, including 24 secure cycle parking spaces to encourage cycling. Its town-centre location reduces reliance on private vehicles, with easy access to public transport and local amenities. The provision of 15 parking spaces aligns with policy requirements to balance car usage with sustainable alternatives.

DP25: Community Facilities and Local Services

6.9 Policy Text: DP25 supports the retention and enhancement of community facilities and services. Where the loss of a community facility is proposed, evidence must demonstrate that it is no longer viable or required.

Assessment: The previous use of the site as an educational facility ceased in 2016, and the building has been vacant since. The loss of the educational use is justified as the need for the facility has diminished. Its conversion to residential use supports local housing needs and ensures the site is brought back into productive use.

DP26: Character and Design

6.10 Policy Text: DP26 requires developments to reflect local character, reinforce local distinctiveness, and integrate sensitively with their surroundings.

Assessment: The proposal respects the existing building and incorporates landscaping and the use of complimentary materials to blend with the area's character.

DP27: Dwelling Space Standards

6.11 Policy Text: DP27 requires that all new residential developments comply with the nationally described space standards, ensuring adequate internal space for living, sleeping, and storage.

Assessment: The proposal complies with the national space standards for all residential units, ensuring that each apartment provides a high standard of living for future occupants.

DP28: Accessibility

6.12 Policy Text: DP28 ensures that new developments are accessible to all members of the community, including people with disabilities or reduced mobility. Proposals should comply with inclusive design principles and meet Building Regulations Part M4(2) requirements for 20% of the dwellings.

Assessment: As indicated in DP28 developments are exempt from complying to this policy 'Where new dwellings are created by a change of use'. All internal areas of apartments have been designed in compliance with M4(2). An existing lift within the building is retained providing level access from the communal front entrance door off Queens Road. However, due to the steeply sloping nature of the rear of the site level access cannot be provided from the proposed car parking bay into the development. As such the scheme does not comply wholly with M4(2) standard however wherever possible it has.

DP29: Noise Air and Light Pollution

6.13 Policy Text: DP29 requires developments to minimise noise, air, and light pollution, protecting the health and well-being of residents and the environment. Proposals should include assessments to demonstrate compliance.

Assessment:

Noise: Minimal noise impacts are expected due to the residential use. Please see Noise Impact Assessment that forms part of this application. Construction noise will be managed through a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

Air: Limited parking and emphasis on sustainable transport reduce air quality impacts. Please see the Air Quality Assessment that forms part of this application.

Light: Low-intensity, directional external lighting will prevent light spill and minimize disruption to neighbours. A lighting plan is expected to be conditioned as part of this application.

The proposal meets DP29 by addressing potential pollution impacts and ensuring a safe, healthy environment for residents and the community.

DP30: Housing Mix

6.14 Policy Text: DP30 emphasizes the need to deliver a mix of housing types to meet varying community needs.

Assessment: The development provides a balanced mix of unit types suitable for the area and the conversion of an office building. The scheme has included one three-bedroom scheme in line with comments raised during the pre-application. This is to provide potential family housing to address local housing needs

DP31: Affordable Housing

6.15 **Policy Text:** DP31 requires that developments delivering 11 or more residential units provide affordable housing, with a target of 30% affordable housing in the area. Contributions may also be sought in lieu of on-site provision.

Assessment: As part of the application a Viability Assessment has been carried out by Savills including a Cost Plan. Please refer to this document as well as the Affordable Housing Statement that forms part of this application.

DP37: Trees, Woodland, and Hedgerows

6.16 Policy Text: DP37 aims to protect and enhance trees, woodlands, and hedgerows. Proposals should avoid the loss of important trees or habitats, and where unavoidable, appropriate mitigation or compensation should be provided.

Assessment: The site's existing landscaping will be enhanced through the addition of new planting and maintenance of green spaces. Any tree works will be undertaken in line with arboricultural recommendations as set out in the tree report, to ensure minimal ecological impact. Removal of some existing trees was explored post Pre-application Meeting due to comments from tree officer however the impact of this weighed heavily on the Bio-diversity Net Gain result and as such all existing trees are to be retained.

DP38: Biodiversity

6.17 Policy Text: DP38 seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity and habitats, requiring proposals to deliver a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible. Developments should mitigate any negative impacts on protected species or designated sites.

Assessment: The site lies within a Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone (Amber/Green). Appropriate surveys and mitigation measures will be undertaken to ensure compliance with DP38. The proposal includes landscaping enhancements to support biodiversity. As part of this application an Ecological Impact Assessment and Bio-Diversity Net Gain Report have been conducted for the site and should be read to show how the scheme looks to meeting Policy DP38.

DP39: Sustainable Design and Construction

6.18 Policy Text: DP39 promotes the use of sustainable construction methods, renewable energy, and energy efficiency measures. Developments should minimise carbon emissions and incorporate water and resource efficiency.

Assessment: The development incorporates energy-efficient construction methods and materials, in line with DP39. Opportunities to integrate renewable energy

systems, such as solar panels, and water-saving fixtures have been explored as part of the Energy Strategy Report and show how the scheme will provide a 10% improvement on the Current Part L Building Regulation in line with the Council's sustainability objectives.

DP41: Flood Risk and Drainage

6.19 Policy Text: DP41 requires developments to minimise flood risk on and off-site by incorporating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and ensuring appropriate mitigation measures for any identified risks.

Assessment: Although the site is not within a designated flood risk zone, SuDS will be integrated into the design to manage surface water drainage effectively. Please see as part of this application the drainage design that has been proposed to show compliance with DP41 and mitigates any potential impacts of the development on local drainage systems.

DP42: Water Infrastructure and the Water Environment

6.20 Policy Text: DP42 supports the efficient use of water resources and requires that developments do not compromise the capacity or quality of water supply and wastewater infrastructure.

Assessment: The proposal will incorporate water-efficient fixtures and appliances, reducing demand on local water infrastructure as set out in the Energy Strategy report. Consultation with water authorities will ensure the development connects to existing networks without adverse effects on capacity or quality

EAST GRINSTEAD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (2016)

6.21 The East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan complements the District Plan, offering local-level policies to guide development:

EG3: Promoting Good Design

6.22 Policy Text: Developments should incorporate high-quality design that respects the town's heritage and distinctiveness.

Assessment: The proposal incorporates high-quality, context-sensitive design, enhancing the local urban fabric, using suitable materials that match the existing building and the wider context. The proposal will enhance this area of the town by bringing back to use a vacant building which is deteriorating in the area. The provision of additional entrances along Queens Road will provide more active frontage and street activity.

EG5: Housing

6.23 Policy Text: Supports housing development within the town's built-up area, particularly where it meets identified local housing needs.

Assessment: The proposal addresses local housing demand while utilising a vacant, previously developed site with the addition of 24 residential apartments. 10 additional apartments from the consented planning scheme.

EG7: Housing Mix and Density

6.24 Policy Text: EG7 seeks to ensure that new housing developments provide a suitable mix of dwelling types and densities to meet local housing needs while respecting the character of the surrounding area. Developments should optimise land use without compromising design quality.

Assessment: The proposed development provides a mix of residential units (1, 2 and 3 bedrooms) suitable for the town centre location, contributing to local housing needs. The density is appropriate for the site and aligns with nearby developments, such as the Martells redevelopment. The design respects the character of the area, ensuring compatibility with the surrounding built environment.

EG11: Mitigating Highway Impact

6.25 Policy Text: EG11 requires developments to mitigate potential highway impacts by promoting sustainable transport, ensuring safe access, and minimising additional traffic congestion. Proposals should incorporate measures to support walking, cycling, and public transport use.

Assessment: The proposal mitigates highway impacts by providing 24 secure cycle parking spaces, reducing reliance on private vehicles. Its central location encourages walking and public transport use. The inclusion of 15 parking spaces ensures traffic generation is minimised, with a single vehicular access point designed to maintain safety and efficiency on Queens Road. As part of the application a Road Safety Audit has been conducted and included as part of the application.

EG12: Car Parking

6.26 Policy Text: Developments must provide adequate parking facilities to avoid exacerbating existing parking pressures.

Assessment: The proposal provides 15 parking spaces, adhering to EG12 by balancing accessibility and sustainable travel objectives.

EG16: Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA

6.27 Policy Text: EG16 requires that developments within 7km of the Ashdown Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA) avoid significant impacts on the site's protected habitat and species. Mitigation measures, such as financial contributions to Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM), are required to address recreational pressure.

Assessment: The site lies within the 7km zone of the Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA. The development will mitigate potential recreational impacts through financial contributions to the SAMM strategy, in line with policy requirements as set out in the Ecological Impact Assessment and the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment..

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT PLAN 2021-2039 – SUBMISSION DRAFT (REGULATION 19)

6.28 The emerging Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 is currently under review and at the Examination stage. Once adopted, it will replace the existing District Plan 2014-2031, providing an updated framework for guiding development in the district. In line with the NPPF, the weight given to policies in the emerging plan depends on their stage of preparation, the extent of unresolved objections, and their consistency with the NPPF. As of January 2025, the plan has unresolved objections to most policies, meaning it carries minimal weight in decision-making.

Relevant Policies in the Emerging Plan

6.29 While limited weight can currently be attributed to the emerging policies, the proposal demonstrates alignment with the following draft policies:

1. Policy DPH1: Housing Mix and Delivery

This policy emphasises delivering a range of housing types to meet local needs, prioritising efficient use of brownfield sites. The proposal aligns with this objective by converting a vacant building into a mix of apartments, contributing to housing delivery in a sustainable location.

2. Policy DPQ1: Quality of Design

The emerging plan reinforces the importance of high-quality design, ensuring developments are attractive, functional, and sustainable. The proposal includes features such as good quality materials, enhanced landscaping, and providing active frontages, aligning with this policy.

3. Policy DPS1: Supporting Sustainable Communities

This policy encourages developments that integrate well with existing communities and infrastructure. The site's central location in East Grinstead and proximity to amenities support this aim by adding to the mixed used nature of the local area providing helping to regenerate the town centre.

4. Policy DPN1: Mitigating Climate Change

The emerging plan highlights the need for energy-efficient construction and sustainable transport measures. The proposal includes sustainable design measures such as improving the existing thermal fabric of the building, proposed PV installation and encourages active travel through cycle parking provisions, reducing environmental impacts.

5. Policy DPE1: Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

This policy emphasises biodiversity net gain and protecting sensitive ecological sites. The proposal mitigates its proximity to the Ashdown Forest SAC/SPA through financial contributions to Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM). A Ecological Impact Assessment and Bio-diversity Net Gain Assessment form part of the application.

6.30 Although the Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 carries minimal weight at this stage, the proposal aligns with its emerging objectives of housing delivery, sustainable development, and environmental protection. This consistency demonstrates the proposal's forward-looking approach, ensuring compliance with both current and future planning frameworks.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF) – DECEMBER 2024 UPDATE

6.31 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in December 2024, reflects the government's priorities to accelerate housing delivery, address housing shortages, and balance development with sustainability. The updated framework introduces significant changes relevant to the proposal for converting the former Central Sussex College building into residential apartments.

Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes (Paragraphs 60-80)

6.32 The NPPF emphasises the importance of boosting housing supply, especially in areas with acute housing shortages. This aligns with the proposal's objective to repurpose a vacant educational building into 24 residential apartments, making efficient use of previously developed land in a sustainable location.

Promoting Effective Use of Land (Paragraphs 119-125)

6.33 The updated NPPF reiterates the need to make efficient use of underutilised land, particularly brownfield sites in town centres, to reduce the pressure on greenfield land. The proposal supports this objective by reusing an existing building within East Grinstead's urban area, contributing to housing delivery while minimising land consumption.

Sustainable Transport and Accessibility (Paragraphs 104-113)

6.34 The framework continues to prioritise developments in sustainable locations that promote walking, cycling, and public transport use while reducing reliance on private vehicles. The site's central location, proximity to amenities, and provision of cycle parking spaces align with these objectives.

Design and Quality of Housing (Paragraphs 126-136)

6.35 High-quality design remains central to the NPPF, ensuring that new developments are visually attractive, functional, and considerate of their surroundings. The proposal incorporates appropriate density, active street frontage and enhanced landscaping, to provide high-quality amenity spaces and enhance the character of the area.

Climate Change, Biodiversity, and Environmental Impacts (Paragraphs 152-173)

6.36 Sustainability and biodiversity remain key considerations in the NPPF. Proposals must address flood risk, water management, biodiversity net gain, and energy efficiency. This proposal integrates landscaping, sustainable construction, and mitigations for nearby biodiversity sensitivities, including the Ashdown Forest SAC/SPA.

Strategic Housing Mitigation (Paragraph 180)

6.37 Developments within ecologically sensitive areas must avoid adverse impacts on protected habitats, such as the Ashdown Forest SAC/SPA. This proposal includes financial contributions toward Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM), reducing recreational pressure on the forest.

TECHNICAL HOUSING STANDARDS (2015):

6.38 Policy Text: This document outlines nationally described space standards for residential units.

Assessment: The proposed apartments comply with these standards, ensuring adequate living space for future residents.

MID SUSSEX DESIGN GUIDE (2020):

6.39 Policy Text: Encourages high-quality, inclusive, and sustainable design responsive to the site's context.

Assessment: The development incorporates these principles, ensuring compatibility with the local setting while enhancing its architectural quality

WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL GUIDANCE ON PARKING (2019):

6.40 Policy Text: Requires appropriate parking provisions based on the development's scale, location, and accessibility.

Assessment: The proposed parking and cycle facilities meet these guidelines, supporting sustainable travel options.

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 The proposed conversion of the former Central Sussex College building into 24 residential apartments represents a sustainable and policy-compliant development that aligns with both local and national planning frameworks.

7.2 The site is well-located within the built-up area of East Grinstead, making effective use of a vacant brownfield site in a sustainable town-centre location. The proposal delivers much-needed housing, contributes to housing supply targets, and meets the requirements of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031, the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan, and the updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024). It also anticipates the objectives of the emerging Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039, ensuring long-term policy alignment.

7.3 Key policy considerations, including housing delivery (DP4, EG5, NPPF), efficient land use (DP2, EG7, NPPF), and high-quality design (DP26, EG3, NPPF), have been addressed in the proposal. Measures to mitigate transport impacts (DP21, EG11), support sustainable travel (NPPF), and protect the Ashdown Forest SAC/SPA (DP17, EG16) demonstrate the proposal's commitment to sustainability and environmental protection. Additionally, the design incorporates biodiversity enhancements, flood risk management, and sustainable construction techniques (DP37, DP38, DP39, DP41, DP42).

7.4 The inclusion of landscaping, cycle parking, and amenity areas ensures the scheme meets accessibility, space standards, and community integration requirements (DP27, DP28, DP31, EG12). The mitigation of potential impacts on noise, air, and light pollution (DP29) further underlines the development's sensitivity to its context.

7.5 In summary, this proposal delivers a well-designed, sustainable, and policy-compliant residential development that will bring a vacant building back into beneficial use. By addressing housing needs, supporting sustainable growth, and respecting environmental and design standards, the scheme represents a positive contribution to the local area and aligns with the overarching principles of local and national planning policy.