

Urban Design Observations

To: Development Management, Steve King

From: Anna Kramarczyk-Dillon, Architect/Urban Designer, Mid Sussex DC

1. Application ref: DM/25/0014 and DM/25/0015

Address: (Southern parcel) Land West Of Turners Hill Road,
Turners Hill Road, Crawley Down, West Sussex

Description: Outline planning application (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved) for the erection of up to 200 dwellings, and associated infrastructure including new access points off of Turners Hill Road with associated spine roads and car and cycle parking; the provision of open space and associated play facilities; utilities infrastructure, surface water drainage features, and associated features, on land west of Turners Hill Road and south of Huntsland, Crawley Down, West Sussex 'Additional information received on 27/03/25 regarding Transport, Flood Risk, Landscapes, Heritage and an updated access and movement parameter plan, illustrative masterplan.'

Stage: Outline Planning Application

2. Application ref: DM/25/0016 and DM/25/0017

Address: (Northern parcel) Land West Of Turners Hill Road,
Turners Hill Road, Crawley Down, West Sussex

Description: Outline planning application (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved) for the erection of up to 150 dwellings, a 65 bed care home, and community facility, and associated infrastructure including new access points off of Wychwood with associated spine road and car and cycle parking, together with provision of open space, play facilities, utilities infrastructure, surface water drainage features, and associated works.

'Additional information received on 27/03/25 regarding Transport, Flood Risk, Landscapes, Heritage and an updated access and movement parameter plan, illustrative masterplan.'

Stage: Outline Planning Application

Date: 17/04/25

Duplicate applications have been submitted for both the northern and southern parcels. The sites are not currently allocated for development through the adopted development plan. Both sites form a single proposed allocation: Site Policy DPA9 of the Submission Draft Mid Sussex District Plan 2021–2039.

These are outline submissions where appearance, design, landscaping and scale are reserved matters. These applications do include a series of parameter plans and an illustrative masterplan to help demonstrate how the proposed development could be accommodated and look to address the design principles contained in the Mid Sussex Design Guide. I would encourage further development of this Illustrative masterplan to address any raised issues. I support this scheme.

In light of additional information received on 27/03/25 regarding Transport, Flood Risk, Landscapes, Heritage, an updated access and movement parameter plan, as well as updated illustrative masterplan please see below my final comments.

Access:

The updated drawings show some improvements to the proposed access and offer further explanation on several previously raised issues. However, regarding the connection from the southern site exit to the existing bus stop to the south-west, and the potential for a clip-on walking and cycling path along the western edge of the bridge, I feel that while the technical response is acceptable in planning terms, it does not adequately address the issue of the very indirect route. Proposed route fails to align with the natural desire lines that will emerge from this new development. I believe that although presented solution is acceptable, this is an example of a missed opportunity to create a more direct and attractive link that could significantly enhance the likelihood of residents—of all ages and body abilities—using public transport. Improving this connection would contribute meaningfully to making the development more sustainable.

Layout:

I remain of the view that more could be done to create a meaningful central open space to the north-east of the Care Home, which could help establish a stronger sense of a notional centre within the development. As currently presented, the central space appears far too small when considered within the wider public open space hierarchy. Enlarging it would improve legibility and create a more inviting approach from Wychwood Place.

St. Leonard's Lookout (09) will serve as an important gathering space, but it cannot replace the more obvious focal point within the scheme that will hopefully be framed by higher-density buildings (such as the Care Home and flats or maisonettes) to reinforce its role.

I appreciate that the masterplan layout is illustrative at this stage, and that the final layout—including the exact location of the Care Home—is subject to reserved matters. A series of diagrams have been submitted exploring potential locations for the Care Home. Given the potential inclusion of a publicly accessible café, it would be most appropriate for the Care Home to be situated centrally, near the intersection of the main pedestrian and vehicular routes, directly framing the central open space. This would ensure Care Home contributes to the vitality of the public realm.

In terms of the submitted scenarios, the current proposed location appears to be the most optimal. Scenario 3 is a reasonable alternative, while Scenarios 1, 2 and 4 are the least desirable. Scenario 3 presents its own set of challenges, particularly regarding boundary treatment. There is a risk that fencing to the rear will be used to screen the carparking or quite the opposite that carpark to the rear will dominate the street. A preferable approach would be to merge the blue perimeter block with the adjacent block to the north. This would allow the Care Home to be set back from the road, helping with the creation of an open central space at the front of it—as outlined in my previous comments. Additionally, this configuration would support a continuous built frontage, effectively screening the courtyard parking at the rear and enhancing the overall street presence.