

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/0953	Case Officer:	Andrew Watt
Application Type:	Full Application		
Proposal:	Proposed pedestrian macadam path and safety railings to Senior School car park.		
Site:	Hurstpierpoint College, College Lane, Hurstpierpoint, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9JS, ,		
Validation Date	7 Apr 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	9 May 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	28 May 2025
Target Date:	2 Jun 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	Andrew Watt

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	Steven King	Date:	29 May 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/0953

**Hurstpierpoint College, College Lane, Hurstpierpoint, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9JS,
Proposed pedestrian macadam path and safety railings to Senior School car park.
Mr Dan Higgins**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

None.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

MSDC Conservation Officer

The application site, Hurstpierpoint College, is an extensive college campus with at its heart a linked pair of Grade II listed buildings - the original quadrangle dating from 1853, and Star House to the east, built as the headmaster's house and dating from 1873. The College campus has developed significantly since its foundation, by incremental additions to the built form around the quadrangle, particularly to the west, north west, and east. The College sits in a rural setting to the north of Hurstpierpoint- this surviving rural setting contributes positively to the historical illustrative value of the listed buildings as a 19th century school deliberately established in a semi-isolated rural position, and to their aesthetic value.

Firstly, I would note that as the works do not appear to physically impact on any of the listed or curtilage listed buildings on the site, an application for listed building consent is not in fact required.

The current proposal relates to the area to the south of the main façade of the quadrangle and Star House, between the existing parking area and sports pitches, and is for the construction of a section of macadamised pedestrian pathway, with railings to the southern side. This will result in the loss of a narrow strip of the existing grassed area between the car park and pitches, which will have a minor impact on the verdancy of the setting of the listed buildings. On balance, however, given the existing context, the effect of the proposal on the character of the setting of the listed buildings is considered to be neutral, subject to detail of the design of the proposed railings.

The proposal is therefore considered to preserve the setting and special interest of the listed buildings, meeting the requirements of District Plan Policy DP34 and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

I would recommend the following condition:

- Detailed elevational and sectional drawings, at an appropriate large scale, and annotated to show materials and finishes, of the proposed railings.

TOWN / PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

The committee's recommendation is that MSDC should give permission.

INTRODUCTION

Full planning permission is sought for a proposed pedestrian macadam path and safety railings to the Senior School car park, off College Lane.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None relevant. An associated listed building application has been submitted alongside this and is awaiting determination (DM/25/0954).

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The site is located between an astroturfed sports pitch, used for hockey and floodlit by 8 x 13m high columns, and a car park accessed off College Lane. It is also located immediately south of the main quadrangle of College buildings and Star House, which are both Grade II listed. The pitch is sunken into the ground, below the level of the adjacent car park and College Lane to the east. Land levels fall from north to south. There is open countryside to the south and other College buildings adjacent to the west and opposite to the east.

The site (and the wider College campus) is located within the countryside to the north of Hurstpierpoint and within a designated Great Crested Newt - Impact Risk Zone (Red).

APPLICATION DETAILS

Full planning permission is sought for a proposed pedestrian macadam path and safety railings to the Senior School car park, off College Lane. This will be installed immediately to the southern boundary of the car park and adjacent to the hockey pitch atop a relatively flat section of a steep grass embankment, approximately 2.3m in height. It will align with the top of the existing kerb and entail some reuse of excavated material to re-grade the adjacent land.

The pathway will measure approximately 1.5m in width and 50m in length, constructed of permeable macadam and finished in red (consistent with existing treatments across the campus, to signify pedestrian zones). The pathway will flank an existing set of steps to the hockey pitch and will also enable viewing of the hockey games. It will be enclosed by a metal safety railing 1.1m in height, with handrail and mid-rail, finished in black (RAL 9005). Surrounding this will be concrete edging kerb.

The application has been submitted to provide safer access from these car parking spaces towards designated pedestrian crossing and onward to school facilities.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND LIST OF POLICIES

Planning legislation holds that the determination of a planning application shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Using this as the starting point, the development plan for this part of Mid Sussex consists of the Mid Sussex District Plan, Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) and the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan.

National policy (which is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance) does not form part of the development plan, but is an important material consideration.

Mid Sussex District Plan (Mar 2018)

The Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 was adopted at Full Council on 28 March 2018.

Relevant policies:

Policy DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside
Policy DP25: Community Facilities and Local Services
Policy DP26: Character and Design
Policy DP34: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets
Policy DP38: Biodiversity

Site Allocations DPD

The SADPD was adopted on 29 June 2022. It allocates sufficient housing and employment land to meet identified needs to 2031.

There are no relevant policies.

Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan (Mar 2015)

Mid Sussex District Council formally 'made' the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan part of the Local Development Plan for the Parish of Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common as of 18 March 2015. The policies contained therein carry full weight as part of the Development Plan for planning decisions within Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common.

Relevant policies:

Policy HurstC1: Conserving and Enhancing Character

Policy HurstC5: Hurstpierpoint College

Other Legislation

Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Other Material Considerations

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 - Submission Draft (Regulation 19)

The District Council is reviewing and updating the District Plan. Upon adoption, the new District Plan 2021-2039 will replace the current District Plan 2014-2031 and its policies will have full weight. In accordance with the NPPF, Local Planning Authorities may give weight to relevant policies of the emerging plan according to the stage of preparation; the extent to which there are unresolved objections to the relevant policies; and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF. The draft District Plan 2021-2039 (Regulation 19) is currently at Examination and the Stage 1 hearings were concluded on 31 October 2024. There are unresolved objections to some of the Policies in the draft District Plan and as such, only minimal weight can be given to the Plan and this planning application has been assessed against the policies of the adopted District Plan.

Relevant policies:

DPN1: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Recovery

DPN2: Biodiversity Net Gain

DPC1: Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside

DPB1: Character and Design

DPB2: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets

DPI6: Community and Cultural Facilities and Local Services

Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (Nov 2020)

The Council has adopted a 'Mid Sussex Design Guide' SPD that aims to help deliver high quality development across the district that responds appropriately to its context and is inclusive and sustainable. The Design Guide was adopted by Council on 4 November 2020 as an SPD for use in the consideration and determination of planning applications. The SPD is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Relevant design principles include:

Principle DG11: Respond to the existing townscape, heritage assets and historic landscape

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Dec 2024)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 is also a material consideration and paragraphs 8 (overarching objectives), 11 (presumption in favour of sustainable development), 96 (achieving healthy,

inclusive and safe places and beautiful buildings), 98 (social, recreational and cultural facilities and services), 131 and 135 (design), 187 (conserving and enhancing the natural environment), 193 (biodiversity and ancient woodland) and 202-221 (heritage assets) are considered to be relevant to this application.

ASSESSMENT

Design and visual impact on the character and appearance of the area

Policy DP12 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states (in part):

'The countryside will be protected in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty. Development will be permitted in the countryside, defined as the area outside of built-up area boundaries on the Policies Map, provided it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District, and:

- *it is necessary for the purposes of agriculture; or*
- *it is supported by a specific policy reference either elsewhere in the Plan, a Development Plan Document or relevant Neighbourhood Plan.'*

Policy HurstC1 of the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan is similar in intent:

'Development, including formal sports and recreation areas, will be permitted in the countryside, where:

- *It comprises an appropriate countryside use;*
- *It maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the Parish area;*

In the South Downs National Park, policy HurstC2 will take precedent.'

The application does not comply with the first criteria of DP12, but in relation to the second, Policies DP25 and DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and Policy HurstC5 of the Neighbourhood Plan are relevant.

Policy DP25 of the Mid Sussex District Plan includes car parks and education facilities and states (in part):

'The provision or improvement of community facilities and local services that contribute to creating sustainable communities will be supported.'

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states (in part):

'All development and surrounding spaces, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings and replacement dwellings, will be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development:

- *is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;'*

Policy HurstC5 of the Neighbourhood Plan states:

'Development will be permitted within the environs of Hurstpierpoint College where:

- *It does not detract from the special architectural character and appearance of the existing collection of buildings and their setting in the landscape;*
- *It conserves or enhances the character and appearance of Listed Buildings;*
- *It complies with the requirements of Policy C1;*
- *It enhances the role of the College as a school and local employer.'*

In principle, the enhancement of the safe use of the car park and dual use as a hockey viewing platform is supported by the above policies. Accordingly, it is considered that the development would comply with Policies DP12, DP25 and DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and Policies HurstC1 and HurstC5 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Impact on the setting of the Listed Buildings

Hurstpierpoint College contains two designated heritage assets, being Grade II listed buildings, located directly north of the site.

Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that:

'In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.'

Policy DP34 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states (in part):

'Development will be required to protect listed buildings and their settings. This will be achieved by ensuring that:

- *A thorough understanding of the significance of the listed building and its setting has been demonstrated. This will be proportionate to the importance of the building and potential impact of the proposal;*
- *Alterations or extensions to a listed building respect its historic form, scale, setting, significance and fabric. Proposals for the conversion or change of use of a listed building retain its significance and character whilst ensuring that the building remains in a viable use;*
- *Traditional building materials and construction techniques are normally used. The installation of uPVC windows and doors will not be acceptable;*
- *Satellite antennae, solar panels or other renewable energy installations are not sited in a prominent location, and where possible within the curtilage rather than on the building itself;*
- *Special regard is given to protecting the setting of a listed building;*
- *Where the historic fabric of a building may be affected by alterations or other proposals, the applicant is expected to fund the recording or exploratory opening up of historic fabric.'*

Design Principle DG11 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD seeks to ensure that heritage assets are enhanced and preserved where appropriate.

Paragraphs 207, 208, 210, 212 and 215 of the NPPF are relevant, as follows:

207. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

208. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

210. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*

b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

212. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

215. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

The Council's Conservation Officer has made comments (set out above) concluding that the development will preserve the setting and special interest of the listed buildings. These comments are agreed with. However, it is not considered necessary to impose a specific condition requiring detailed elevational and sectional drawings of the railings, as these have been shown on the main drawing at 1:150 scale and in section, and have been specified as being finished in a black colour (RAL 9005). Instead, a more general condition is suggested. Accordingly, the proposal would comply with Policy DP34 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, Policy HurstC5 of the Neighbourhood Plan, Design Principle DG11 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide and paragraph 210 of the NPPF.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states (in part):

'All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development:

- does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution (see Policy DP29)'

By the modest nature of the proposal, it is not considered that it would result in any significant harm to the amenities of any residents, in particular to the student accommodation at Eagle House to the west (in the ownership of the College). Therefore it is considered that the development would comply with Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain this application comprises development below the de-minimis threshold meaning that this development is exempt from providing biodiversity net gain.

Other matters

The site is located within a designated Great Crested Newt - Impact Risk Zone (Red). However, having regard to the nature of the application, it is unlikely to have an impact on newts and accordingly there would be no conflict with the above legislation, policy and guidance.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

The application is deemed to be of an appropriate design in relation to both its context as a school and the rural locality. It would preserve the setting of the listed buildings. It would not cause significant detriment to surrounding residents, and there would be no harm to biodiversity. Accordingly it is considered that the development would comply with Policies DP12, DP25, DP26, DP34 and DP38 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, Policies HurstC1 and HurstC5 of the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common

Neighbourhood Plan, the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD and the NPPF, in particular paragraph 210, and is therefore considered acceptable.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Andrew Watt