

DESIGN, ACCESS & HERITAGE STATEMENT



Site: 21 Wivelsfield Road, Haywards Heath, RH16 4EF

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Design, Access and Heritage Statement (DAHS) supports a planning proposal for the construction of two semi-detached dwellings within the large rear garden of 21 Wivelsfield Road. This follows receipt of pre-application advice (Ref: DM/24/1072) issued by Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) in June 2024, and further design commentary in August 2024.

The purpose of this document is to demonstrate that the proposal:

- Represents a policy-compliant infill development;
- Responds positively to detailed officer comments;
- Aligns with local character and settlement morphology;
- Adheres fully to national and local planning policy frameworks;
- Preserves and enhances the character and amenity of the area;
- Minimises visual, ecological, and arboriculture impacts;
- Incorporates high-quality, sustainable design.

This document covers the relevant statutory planning context and provides a detailed response to each applicable policy. This ensures a clear, evidence-based justification for the proposal and addresses every aspect of concern previously raised by the LPA.

2. SITE ANALYSIS

Location: Within the built-up area boundary of Haywards Heath, a Tier 1 settlement as defined by the Mid Sussex District Plan.

Host Property: A newly refurbished, late-Georgian, semi-detached dwelling with a pitched roof and large rear garden measuring approx. 33m x 17m. The garden has been subdivided into a lawned lower section and a wider, overgrown upper garden beyond a pergola, which will accommodate the proposed development.

Surroundings: The surrounding area is predominantly residential with a wide mix of detached and semi-detached dwellings, intertwined with commercial and public buildings. Nearby non-residential uses include a mosque, supermarket, and car dealership, all of which confirm the site's sustainable location within walking distance of amenities and public transport. Importantly, Wivelsfield Road itself displays a broad variety of architectural styles and lacks a single defined character, supporting the acceptability of sympathetic infill development. The dwellings to the rear, particularly along St. Edmund's Road, follow the Sussex vernacular incorporating traditional rooflines and materials such as clay tiles and red brick.

3. DESIGN RESPONSE TO PLANNING POLICY

3.1 Mid Sussex District Plan (MSDP 2014–2031)

DP4: Housing

Encourages windfall development within built-up areas to meet a minimum housing requirement of 16,390 dwellings (2014–2031).

Compliance: The proposal represents small-scale, sustainable windfall development on underutilised urban land. It directly supports the housing delivery objectives without compromising environmental or design standards.

DP5: Planning to Meet Future Housing Need

Requires developments to meet current and anticipated housing demands, including smaller family homes and a range of types and tenures.

Compliance: The scheme proposes two 3-bedroom dwellings suitable for families, aligning with identified local need and Policy DP30 (Housing Mix).

DP6: Settlement Hierarchy

Directs new development to the most sustainable settlements. Haywards Heath is a Category 1 town with high sustainability credentials.

Compliance: The site is within walking distance of employment (Princess Royal Hospital, Town Centre), shops, services and bus routes. The principle of infill housing here is fully compliant.

DP21: Transport

Promotes sustainable travel, reduced car reliance, and appropriate highway access.

Compliance: Vehicular access is proposed from Wivelsfield Road with dropped kerb and turning area. Off-street parking (1 per unit) aligns with sustainable transport objectives. Site is accessible to bus routes and services.

DP26: Character and Design

Requires high quality design respecting local context in terms of character, scale, and appearance. Key expectations:

- Protecting gardens and green spaces.
- Ensuring coherent massing, siting, and materials.

Compliance: The revised scheme adopts a typical Sussex vernacular inspired form, complementary to the host dwelling and the surrounding area. Dwellings are modestly scaled (subordinate to host), landscape-led, and screened with native hedging. This directly responds to officer comments on scale, visual openness, and design language.

DP27: Dwelling Space Standards

Mandates compliance with the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS).

Compliance: Both dwellings exceed the minimum GIA (91.6 sqm vs. 86.5 sqm for 4p, and nearly meeting 95.5 sqm for 5p). Functional layouts, adequate storage and internal circulation are demonstrated.

DP30: Housing Mix

Requires new housing to reflect demographic and market needs.

Compliance: The dwellings address the identified demand for 2- and 3-bedroom homes in the District and provide a sustainable, adaptable form for families.

DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

Prohibits loss of significant trees unless justified, and promotes enhancement through landscaping.

Compliance: The proposal retains key mature trees and introduces mitigation planting and new native hedgerows.

DP38: Biodiversity

Requires development to achieve at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

Compliance: A Biodiversity Metric assessment will demonstrate measurable net gain through:

- Hedgerow creation
- SuDS features integrated into the landscape
- Tree management practices will ensure the long-term health of retained specimens
- A diverse hedgerow mix of native species will enhance ecological corridors along plot boundaries and access routes.

DP39: Sustainable Design and Construction

Encourages renewable energy, efficient water use, and sustainable construction.

Compliance: Proposed measures include:

- Air-source heat pumps (subject to feasibility)
- Water butts and water-efficient fittings
- EV charging points
- High insulation levels and energy-efficient lighting

DP41: Flood Risk and Drainage

Requires SuDS and management of surface water.

Compliance: Site is not in a flood zone. Permeable paving, garden infiltration, and soakaways will manage runoff.

3.2 Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan (HHNP 2014–2031)**Policy H8: Housing Development within the Built-up Area Boundary**

Permits small-scale infill housing where it reflects the character and scale of surroundings.

Compliance: Revised design reflects the formality and rhythm of Wivelsfield Road rather than more urban back land precedents. Massing has been reduced, and gardens retained to preserve character.

Policy H9: Housing Density and Design

Promotes density that reflects surroundings and avoids overdevelopment.

Compliance: Plot sizes are modest but not cramped. The rear garden character is maintained, and gaps between units provide a sense of openness.

Policy E9: Reinforcing Local Character

Requires development to contribute positively to townscape.

Compliance: Materials and design echo local vernacular (red brick, gable roofs, sash-style windows), and landscape features are reinforced with new planting.

Policy E13: Private Outdoor Space

Requires usable, private amenity space.

Compliance: Each dwelling provides approx. 50sqm of private garden space, well above the minimum standard.

Policy T3: Car Parking

Requires compliance with WSCC guidance and support for active travel.

Compliance: 2 spaces per unit. Site encourages walking/cycling due to proximity to town centre and bus routes. Secure cycle storage to be integrated.

Policy E7: Drainage

Mandates appropriate surface water management.

Compliance: SUDS integrated into driveway and garden design.

3.3 Supplementary Planning Guidance

Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD

- **DG19:** Parking should be screened and discreet.
- **DG38:** Designs should draw from nearby building forms and materials.

Compliance: Parking is positioned beside homes and screened by hedging along the new access road. Materials and proportions mirror the established housing form of Wivelsfield Road.

West Sussex County Council (WSCC) Parking Guidance (2020)

- 1.7 spaces per dwelling required in this location.

Compliance: 4 spaces provided across the development, compliant when considering sustainable access.

Nationally Described Space Standards (2015)

- 3-bed 5-person two-storey homes = 95.5 sqm minimum.

Compliance: 91.6 sqm provided, sufficient for 4-person occupancy, near threshold for 5-person. Layouts accommodate family living.

4. ACCESS STRATEGY

- **Vehicular Access:** Provided from Wivelsfield Road via new dropped kerb (subject to WSCC approval). Turning head provided for safe egress in forward gear.
- **Pedestrian Access:** Pathways included with tactile surfacing and lighting. Entrance thresholds are level and Part M compliant.
- **Cycle Access:** Secure stores provided within rear gardens.
- **Refuse Access:** Bin storage located within 25m of collection point, compliant with WSCC and MSDC refuse guidance.
- **Fire Access:** Dwellings located within 21m of highway. Swept path analysis to confirm access if required.

5. HERITAGE CONSIDERATIONS

While the host dwelling is not listed nor within a Conservation Area, it represents a locally significant example of Georgian architecture. The revised proposal:

- Retains the host building unaltered;
- Protects the formal setting and garden of the existing house;
- Avoids visual intrusion by careful massing and siting of new dwellings;
- Reflects local historic character through traditional materials and proportions.

As such, the scheme meets the requirements of **NPPF Para 203–206**, respecting non-designated heritage assets.

6. CONCLUSION

The revised proposal for 2 semi-detached dwellings at 21 Wivelsfield Road:

- Complies with all relevant policies in the **Mid Sussex District Plan, Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan**, and **national planning guidance**;
- Incorporates detailed feedback from the LPA pre-application process;
- Protects and enhances local character, heritage value and green infrastructure;
- Delivers high quality housing in a sustainable and appropriate location;
- Provides biodiversity enhancements, sustainable drainage, and efficient transport solutions.

This submission is a policy-led, sensitive, and professionally considered response. We respectfully request the support of the Local Planning Authority for this high-quality residential scheme.