Tree, Landscape and Planting Addendum

Planning Application DM/25/2884 – Land Adjacent to 48 Wickham Way

This addendum supplements the submitted Planning Statement and Arboricultural Report and provides further detail on the proposed tree removal, replacement planting and landscape strategy. It clarifies how the proposals respond to arboricultural constraints and deliver long-term benefits in terms of biodiversity, drainage, amenity and sustainability.

1. Existing Trees: Species, Quality and Context

The two trees proposed for removal are identified within the Arboricultural Report as **Chamaecyparis lawsoniana (Lawson cypress)**, a non-native conifer species commonly planted in domestic gardens during the mid-20th century.

In accordance with **BS5837:2012**, both trees have been categorised as **Category B**, reflecting moderate quality with a limited remaining contribution within their current context. While visually prominent due to their height and elevated position at the top of Wickham Way, their amenity value derives primarily from scale rather than form, species quality or ecological function.

The trees are located on sloping ground within a constrained residential frontage and in close proximity to overhead utility lines. Their dense evergreen canopies and extensive root systems give rise to ongoing management conflicts that limit their long-term suitability in this location.

2. Landscape Function, Drainage and Environmental Constraints

The existing Lawson cypress trees materially restrict the functional and environmental performance of the site:

- Dense evergreen canopies intercept rainfall and significantly limit light penetration.
- Root dominance results in dry, compacted soils beneath the trees.
- The sloping site amplifies runoff while preventing meaningful understorey planting.
- The root protection areas constrain the siting of soakaways and sustainable drainage infrastructure.
- The trees shade key roof planes intended for solar panels, reducing renewable energy efficiency.
- Their location conflicts with access, parking layout and long-term maintenance requirements.

As a result, although mature, the trees do not provide an effective or sustainable contribution to biodiversity, drainage or residential amenity.

3. Replacement Planting Strategy – Overview

The proposed removal of the two Lawson cypress trees is mitigated by a comprehensive replacement planting scheme designed to deliver:

- increased biodiversity;
- layered and seasonally rich planting;
- improved soil moisture and drainage performance;
- enhanced visual amenity at street level;
- long-term manageability appropriate to a residential frontage.

The strategy introduces lighter-canopy broadleaf trees and diverse underplanting that cannot establish beneath the existing conifer canopy.

4. Feature Tree Planting and Biodiversity Enhancement

Replacement Trees

The scheme proposes:

- **3 × Betula utilis 'Jacquemontii'**,

Birch has been selected due to:

- its light, permeable canopy;
- reduced wind loading compared to mature conifers;
- distinctive white bark providing year-round interest;
- suitability for residential front gardens;
- compatibility with understorey planting.

Underplanting and Seasonal Interest

The birch feature bed will be underplanted with:

- *Cornus alba 'Sibirica'* (winter stem colour),
- drifts of snowdrops and dwarf narcissus for spring interest,
- *Liriope muscari* as an evergreen ground layer.

An informal low hedge is proposed along the front boundary, using a mix of:

- *Pittosporum and Photinias*.
- This combination delivers year-round visual interest, improves habitat value and supports pollinator and ground-dwelling invertebrates. This approach maintains a soft, verdant edge to the street, consistent with the character of Wickham Way.

5. Front Garden Planting and Privacy Strategy

A curved planting bed is proposed adjacent to the main lounge window, forming a soft privacy screen approximately **1.5 metres in height**, while retaining clear pedestrian access to the side of the house.

Proposed species:

- *Hydrangea paniculata 'Phantom'*
  or
- *Hydrangea arborescens 'Strong Annabelle'*

Both species are suited to partial sun conditions and provide strong seasonal interest.

Underplanting

This area will be underplanted with: hostas, ferns and *Hakonechloa macra* (Japanese forest grass), creating layered planting that improves biodiversity and visual richness, which is currently absent due to the suppressive effects of the existing trees.

6. Side Boundary Planting and Screening

Continuous planting beds approximately **1 metre wide** are proposed along each side boundary.

Boundary Hedging

- *Prunus lusitanica* (Portuguese laurel) planted at 550–600mm centres, approximately 16–18 plants per side over an 8-metre run, terminating near the side gates with fencing.

This species provides year-round structure, responds well to clipping, and is appropriate for residential boundaries.

Underplanting

- *Geranium Macrorrhizum* will be used beneath boundary hedges to provide ground cover, suppress weeds and support pollinators.

7. Materials, Drainage and Establishment

- Hard surfaces will use **10–20mm angular gravel** laid in cellular grids to maintain permeability and avoid rutting.
- Steel or aluminium edging will define planting beds.
- Generous planting pits will be formed through any membranes and backfilled with native soil and compost.
- Mulching (50–70mm depth) will be applied to improve moisture retention.

Removal of the existing Lawson cypress trees will significantly improve:

- rainfall infiltration;
- soil moisture balance;
- effectiveness of soakaways;
- long-term plant health.

8. Long-Term Management

- New planting will be subject to a **5 Year Maintenance Plan**. Any plants that fail to thrive or survive will be replaced. Watering, when required, will be supported by the rainwater harvesting system.
- *Cornus alba* will be coppiced in early spring to renew colourful stems.
- Hydrangeas will be lightly reduced in late winter to promote flowering.
- Boundary and front hedges will be trimmed lightly 2–3 times per year.

This ensures the planting scheme establishes successfully and continues to contribute positively to the street scene.

Conclusion

The proposed removal of two Lawson cypress trees and their replacement with a carefully designed planting scheme has been fully assessed in arboricultural and planning terms. The replacement strategy delivers a **net improvement** in biodiversity, drainage performance, renewable energy efficiency and visual amenity, while providing a landscape solution better suited to a residential frontage.

The proposals accord with **Policies DP26 and DP37** of the Mid Sussex District Plan and represent a balanced, proportionate and sustainable response to site constraints.