

From: planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk <planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 23 May 2025 17:25:07 UTC+01:00
To: "Andy Watt" <andy.watt@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: Mid Sussex DC - Online Register - Comments for Planning Application
DM/25/0484

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 23/05/2025 5:25 PM.

Application Summary

Address:	Site Of 60 Keymer Road Hassocks West Sussex BN6 8AR
Proposal:	Mixed use redevelopment of the site comprising of ground floor commercial/community use and 26 No. new residential units on upper floors alongside associated parking and public realm improvements.
Case Officer:	Andrew Watt

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Customer Details

Address:	24 Woodsland Road Hassocks
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Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour or general public
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

Comments:	The proposals do not meet the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan, 2020, Policy 9: Character and Design, this states a proposal should "Respects the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape", and "Does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight, sunlight and security".
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The Design and Access Statement 2025 appears keen to emphasise the construction of three-storey buildings throughout Hassocks, however, in the immediate area of 60 Keymer Road all of the surrounding buildings are two-storey and they are all terraced. The planned "roof" is pitched at such a high angle that it is, in fact, a wall containing 1.5 storeys. Given the roof pitch and lack of gable end, it would be wrong to call this structure anything other than a four-storey block of flats. The proposal dwarves all surrounding buildings, and is not in keeping with the height, terraced nature, or pitched roofs found at all of the surrounding properties.

Opposite the site on Keymer Road north side, the terrace is 2 storeys with a roof. To the west on Keymer Road, the terrace is also two storeys with a roof. To the east on Keymer Road/Orion Parade, the terraces are two storeys plus a habitable roof. To the east on Dale Avenue the terraces are two storeys with a roof. To the south on Dale Avenue, the terraces are two storeys with a roof. And finally, to the south west on John Saxby Place the terraces are two storeys plus habitable roof and a single storey with a flat roof. Therefore, in the immediate surrounding area, there are 4x two-storey terraces with pitched roofs and 2x two-storey terraces with habitable pitched roofs and a single-storey home with a flat roof. A four-storey building does not belong amongst two-storey buildings.

It will be impossible to maintain the privacy of neighbours when the building is so tall with windows on all sides, as well as balconies and outdoor terraces.

This is not in keeping with local buildings. For instance, the adjacent 1-4 John Saxby Place was built most recently, and does not have balconies or terraces or windows overlooking neighbours. There are also only a handful of windows on the east and west sides, which are small and placed at such heights and positions that overlooking is impossible. A single storey was used at the end of the terrace to preserve light for neighbours. No similar measures address this in the plans.

Privacy to properties on the west side, such as those on the rear of Keymer Road, Parklands Road and John Saxby Place, are especially affected. The third and fourth storeys will have full vision into the rear of people's properties and gardens, and no measures have been taken to resolve this. The problem is compounded by large terraces and balconies, which will impose themselves on the significantly lower levels of the surrounding area.

The starting point for this development should be a two-storey terraced building, fronted onto Keymer Road, with a staggered roof line in line with the elevation. This would be in keeping with the character and scale of the surrounding area and not impose on the privacy, outlook, daylight, or sunlight of neighbours.

Commercial / Community Space

The site area is 1,607m², and the total floor area is 3,572.4m². Yet the commercial area is just 190.2m², which is 5.3% of the total floor area. The surrounding areas on Keymer Road, Dale Avenue and Orion Parade are all commercialised with commercial spaces on the ground and even upper levels. Given that the properties on the high street are 2 or 3 storeys, giving a decent % to commercial (~30%). This is critical for the surrounding community. Allotting just 5.3% of the total floor area to commercial space is an under utilisation compared to other high street properties.

There are currently 43 businesses operating in central Hassocks, but only two commercial properties (36 Keymer Road) have been added in the past 20 years, despite the Hassocks population having grown by 25% during the period 2001 to 2021 (Census 2001, 2021). There should have been 9 additional spaces added during this period to keep up with population growth.

There is a shortage of commercial space, and the offering of just two commercial units that do not span the full length of the site is inadequate to the village's needs. We should ensure the high street remains continuous and the commercial spaces span the breadth of the development, and possibly even onto Dale Avenue to expand the existing shopping area there. There should also be adequate onsite short-stay parking for customers as found at other commercial spaces in the vicinity to reduce the strain on local roads.

An alternative could be for additional space to be allocated for community groups rather than commercial space.

Green Infrastructure

The plans should meet the Parish's requirements for Green Infrastructure, which aims to conserve and enhance existing green infrastructure. This, amongst other things, includes the preservation of hedges and aged or veteran trees (Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan, 2020). The plans include the removal of several mature hedges and trees, as well as a significant reduction of the largest tree on the site.

The loss of the mature tree on John Saxby Place to make space for parking was a net loss for nature in the area. We are in danger of creating a situation where the cluster of mature trees on John Saxby Place/Rear of Keymer Road west side is lost completely. We should ensure that all these mature trees and hedges on the property are both retained and not reduced, so they may continue to be used by breeding birds and other wildlife, as well as maintaining Hassock's character as a semi-rural village on the edge of the South Downs.

Disrepair of Existing Site

Planning permission to demolish the site has been agreed since

28 April 2023, not long before National Tyres and Autocare closed, and since then, little notable work seems to have happened, except the removal of signs and partial removal of the roof. This has left the site looking even more dilapidated than before. Keeping the site in disrepair for such a long time is an unfortunate endorsement of the developer's indifference to the needs of the local area. We should not let the disrepair of the site compromise our values, especially when the condition has been exacerbated by the neglect of those now seeking our approval.

Parking

The provision of only 28 parking spaces is inadequate for 26 housing units and 2 commercial units. As per Guidance on Parking at New Developments by West Sussex County Council (September 2020) and The Transport Report (November 2024), there should be 45 parking spaces for this many units, unless the location is not regarded as typical of the Parking Behaviour Zone. There is also no provision for parking spaces for the commercial units, which, if they remain at 190.2m² floor space, would likely require parking consideration for at least 4 personnel as well as space for deliveries. It is easy to see the issues caused along the high street at Sainsbury's where often delivery vehicles are parked across the roundabout. We should not be accepting another potentially dangerous delivery / parking situation especially so close to the schools.

The report also tries to justify the limited number of spaces based on the approval of a scheme at 68 & 70 Keymer Road, which had a ratio of 0.5 parking spaces. This is a false equivalent at best, and dishonest at worst. The number of parking spaces for 68 & 70 was agreed because the properties are retirement homes, and therefore, the residents are less likely to have cars. In this case, evidence was provided of other retirement residences in the area and their parking usage, which demonstrated that a ratio of 0.5 spaces would be appropriate without overspill parking onto surrounding roads (see appeal AP/24/0030). This planning application has provided no such evidence.

The plans need to increase the number of parking spaces, reduce the number of units on the property, or provide sufficient evidence that the proposed number of parking spaces is adequate for the site.

The plans have not given due consideration to the needs of the local area and community, the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan, or Guidance on Parking at New Developments. Therefore, I object to the current proposals and request that the council refuse planning permission until the design is brought in line with surrounding properties and the other issues are addressed

Kind regards