

Joseph Swift

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 07 November 2025 17:11
To: Joseph Swift; DAVIES, Mims
Cc: Dick Sweatman (Cllr)
Subject: 9 Morton Road - Discharge Condition 14 relating to planning reference DM/23/0925.

I am raising the following serious objections to the revised condition for 9 Morton Road. These changes represent a complete disregard for previously agreed standards and planning conditions. They are not minor adjustments—they are deliberate cost-cutting measures that compromise safety, sustainability, and the quality of life for future residents.

First, the landscaping proposals are unacceptable. At least ten mature trees have been removed, and the replacements are token immature specimens, contrary to what was agreed. Mature trees were a critical part of the original design for biodiversity, visual amenity, and surface water management. Their removal increases flood risk and undermines the ecological integrity of the site.

Hedging has been reduced to the bare minimum—five plants per meter at only one meter high—despite clear guidance that the three-meter hedge on the southern boundary, which was irresponsibly removed, should be reinstated as agreed with Planning investigation team – Andrew Clarke. These decisions are not improvements; they are cost-saving shortcuts that ignore planning guidance and environmental obligations.

Attempting to change the approved road surface without revisiting drainage approval is completely unacceptable. Road surface specification was a major point of discussion during the original drainage assessment because it directly impacts flow rates, attenuation, and flood risk for both the development and surrounding areas. Altering this now undermines the integrity of the agreed drainage strategy and could create significant compliance and safety issues. The drainage officer must review and approve any revised surface water drainage proposals before such changes are considered. This includes updated calculations, attenuation measures, and maintenance plans. Skipping this process is not just cutting corners—it disregards regulatory requirements and exposes the project to enforcement action and reputational damage. Beyond compliance, these changes will make future maintenance costly and unsightly due to mismatched asphalt patches. All similar small-scale developments in the area have adhered to the herringbone design, which has proven effective and visually consistent. Even the site near Dunnings—previously a flood hotspot—has been a massive success using the agreed design. Deviating from this standard now is not only risky but sets a poor precedent for quality and sustainability.

These failures directly conflict with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requirements:

- Paragraph 182 (2024 update) mandates that applications affecting drainage must incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) proportionate to the scale of development, with advice from the Lead Local Flood Authority and maintenance arrangements for the lifetime of the development. Ignoring this is a breach of national policy.
- Chapter 14 of the NPPF requires developments to manage flood risk and climate resilience, ensuring drainage strategies are robust and future-proofed.

Local guidance reinforces this:

- West Sussex Local Design Guide and Manual for Streets require safe pedestrian access and footways for residential developments, or shared-surface designs that meet safety standards. The absence of a footpath along the access road is a clear violation of these principles.

- Drainage Regulations (SuDS National Standards 2025) require detailed hydraulic modelling, runoff hierarchy compliance, and maintenance plans. Any change to road surfacing without drainage recalculation breaches these standards.

Finally, the revised plans fail on fundamental design and safety principles. The gardens for plots 3 and 4 have been drastically reduced in usable space due to only now acknowledging the gradient to the site, despite this being highlighted multiple times to the planning officer and the committee. This was one of the main reasons of previous refusals citing inadequate outdoor space. These gardens are north-facing, meaning they will receive little to no sunlight as they are completely in the shadow of the house, and the steep gradient leaves the lawn almost a full meter above the house entrance level. Privacy is compromised due to severe level differences between plot 4 and plot 5 - height difference of around one meter. this leaves fences at an ineffective height of only 0.8m. Critical details such as garden the surrounding levels in relation to perimeter fencing, retaining walls, and associated drainage solutions are missing entirely from the plans, which raises serious compliance and safety concerns. Furthermore, storage for wheelie bins and bicycles—features that were part of the original approval—has been removed ignoring basic functional needs for residents, possible as they no longer are possible due to the gradient of the garden entrances. The plans still fail to provide a safe pedestrian footpath along the long access road, a fundamental requirement for resident safety and accessibility. West Sussex County Council’s Local Design Guide, which interprets Manual for Streets, makes clear that developments of more than four dwellings must provide either a dedicated footway or a shared-surface design that meets strict safety standards. The absence of any such provision is a direct breach of these guidelines and poses a serious risk to residents and visitors—especially given the narrow entrance, which further restricts visibility and safe passage for pedestrians.

These revisions are not in line with the original approval and fail to meet planning conditions. They prioritize developer profit over community benefit, environmental responsibility, and resident safety. I urge the planning authority to reject these changes and require full compliance with previously agreed standards. Anything less would set a dangerous precedent for future developments. May I also suggest that swift intervention stops all corners undermining national thresholds.

I’m intrigued to see your response.

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