

# Urban Design Observations

**To:** Development Management, Rachel Richardson

**From:** Anna Kramarczyk-Dillon, Architect/Urban Designer, Mid Sussex DC

**Application ref:** DM/25/1467

**Date:** 02/10/2025

**Address:** Land At Old Vicarage Field And The Old Estate Yard, Church Road, Turners Hill, West Sussex

**Description:** Demolition of existing buildings and the development of 40 dwellings (including affordable housing) with open space, access, parking, drainage, landscaping and other associated works as well as the creation of a new community car park and replacement parking for Lion Lane residents. Amended transport plans, technical note and travel plan received on 15.08.2025..

**Stage:** Planning

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I have reviewed the layout and other information provided, and I am satisfied that the development has been significantly improved since the last consultation. The new proposal has clearly taken on board the suggestions made, and it demonstrates a suitable and thoughtful response to the site and its setting.

The scheme sufficiently addresses the principles set out in the Council's Design Guides and accords with policy DP26 of the District Plan; I therefore raise no objection to this planning application. To secure the quality of the design, I would nevertheless recommend some small changes and conditions.

- **Connectivity and legibility:** Establishing a connection to the northeast of the site is important, but its significance appears underrepresented in the current road, parking, and landscape layout. The northeast tip, marked in red, would benefit from enhancements—particularly through better-aligned parking and a more robust landscape response to the desire line indicated in blue. Additionally, the northern elevation of Plot 28 could be improved. Introducing fenestration and a gable wall to the northern side would provide greater visual interest and help with the overall legibility of the NE site entry.
- **Landscape and legibility:** Furthermore, the entire zone marked in Red could be better landscaped and should resemble a shared surface, where pedestrian priority is clearly legible.



- **Landscape and legibility:** Overall layout would benefit from incorporating more trees (marked in Blue dots) to enhance identity and legibility.
- **Landscape:** The car park to the southeast is acceptable but its relationship with the listed building needs to be improved. Enhance screening through additional vegetation and introduce further landscaping to reduce its visual impact.
- **Landscape:** any lighting strategy should be presented now for an approval.
- **Landscape:** Boundary treatment plan should be provided for an approval at this stage.
- **Facing Material plan** should be provided for an approval at this stage.
- **Roof plan** showing chimney's location should be provided.
- **Elevations issues:**
- Lack of Local Character:  
Many of the proposed elevations appear bland and do not respond meaningfully to the established architectural language of the village. They lack the depth, detail, and articulation typical of the local vernacular.
- Unconvincing Pseudo-Vernacular Style:  
Some units attempt to mimic traditional styles through a pseudo-vernacular approach is not particularly successful. Materials are inconsistently applied and, in places, appear to be 'peeling off'—for example, at building corners or returns—suggesting superficial application rather than integrated design.

- Chimney Provision:  
More units would benefit from the inclusion of functioning, convincingly detailed chimneys (that includes southern elevation of the Apartment block 1-6). These are a characteristic feature of village architecture and would help improve rooflines and visual interest.
- Materials:  
A more thoughtful and context-driven approach to materials, detailing, and elevation design is needed to better reflect the identity and heritage of the village. I am particularly not convinced by the use of standard white uPVC windows, as they detract from the quality of the elevations and contribute to an unconvincing pastiche appearance. Flush casement uPVC windows in off-white or cream would likely be more appropriate. I recommend that window spec to be submitted at this stage and choice of windows and colours marked on the 'facing materials plan'.
- There are too many blank side elevations. Introduce more fenestration to the following plots: 14, 15, 16, 28 (!), 35 (!), 38.
- All upper-level apartments should include at least Juliet balconies directly accessible from the main living area., while ground floor units are expected to have private outdoor spaces also directly accessible from the main living area.

#### Suggested conditions:

- Detailed landscape drawings: hard and soft landscaping details including boundary treatments.
- Details and samples of the facing materials.
- 1:20 sections and front elevations of the typical features (shown in context) including windows, doors and balcony detail and surrounding.