

From: planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk <planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 06 December 2025 19:24:16 UTC+00:00
To: "Stefan Galyas" <stefan.galyas@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: Mid Sussex DC - Online Register - Comments for Planning Application
DM/25/1185

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

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

Comments were submitted at 06/12/2025 7:24 PM.

Application Summary

Address:	Tennis Courts At St Francis Sports And Social Club Colwell Road Haywards Heath West Sussex RH16 4EZ
Proposal:	Temporary (36 months) permission for change of use of existing tennis courts to padel courts and associated works (Further acoustic and lighting information received 04.11.2025 and plans 07.11.2025 and 11.11.2025)
Case Officer:	Stefan Galyas

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Customer Details

Address: East Tower 21 Cavendish House Southdowns Park Haywards Heath West Sussex

Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour or general public
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	
Comments:	As a resident of Southdowns Park, I would like to reiterate my strong objection to this application on the following grounds: 1. Noise Nuisance - the repetitive "gunshot" noise events generated as ball hits racket will severely impact both the residents of Southdowns Park and users of the nearby Bowls Club.

2. Lighting - flood lighting, particularly lighting reflected off the courts, will impact the Southdowns Park residents' enjoyment their properties

3. Access and Parking - inadequate parking provision will inevitably result in Padel court users parking in the private car parks reserved for Southdowns Park residents.

4. Inadequate Facilities - inadequate provision for toilets within the padel courts.

In particular, I would like to pass further comment on some of the more recent submissions provided by the applicant:

Noise Impact Assessment Issue 2 (Submitted 04/11/25)

There are a number of significant shortcomings in the Noise Impact Assessment:

1. The report does not sufficiently consider the excess noise levels likely to be experienced in the south facing gardens, claiming "From numerous visits to site, these [three bandstands] were never observed to have any individuals sat on them and it is questionable if these are to be considered as external amenity areas". This is a completely misleading statement; the gardens are used frequently throughout the warmer months by the residents of Southdowns Park who enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the surroundings. This is our only outdoor space and is a highly valued asset. Indeed, one of the main reasons I chose to live at Southdowns Park was because of these wonderful gardens.

According to Acoustic South East's response to EHO (19-09-25), the modelled LAeq at the central bandstand was 48.3dB. Presumably this corresponds to a LMax of 60dB (as the LMax predictions tend to be around 16dB greater than LAeq). This compares to ambient measurements taken which were generally in the region of 43-46dB. So, the modelling indicates the impact noise generated by ball hitting racket will be around 15dB greater than the current background level in the gardens. This constant, high level of impact noise will undoubtedly impact our enjoyment of our gardens.

2. Regarding Section 7.3 Sport England - LMax. The report states "For the Southdown Park long term survey, the predicted worst case LMax level is lower than all of the 1-hour LMax values, with the exception of 2 out of the 87 measured 1-hour periods". The implication here is that the predicted LMax levels are within tolerable limits. This is a completely misleading statement and displays a fundamental lack of understanding of statistical behaviour. If the nature of the disturbance giving rise to the predicted LMax levels is different to that of the disturbance giving rise to the "background" LMax then the predicted

disturbance will still be heard. It could be that just one event within each one-hour window gave rise to each LA_{max} measurement (for example, the occasional person walking on the gravel path in the vicinity of the sensor) whereas the predicted LA_{max} is caused by the constant impact noise of racket against ball; there will be many (hundreds or thousands) of such impact events within a given one-hour period - this cannot be compared to the measured LA_{max} levels without an understanding of what caused those peak excursions.

The reality is that the predictions have confirmed the constant repetitive impact sounds caused by ball hitting racket will be heard at a level of 16dB above the background noise from 7:00 to 22:00. Clearly an intolerable situation for the residents of Southdowns Park

3. Section 7.5 of the Noise Assessment (BS8233:2014 - Guidance on Sound Insulation and Noise Reduction for Buildings) assumes 13dB attenuation when deriving the internal noise levels. This is based on the attenuation level through a partially open window given in Acoustics, Ventilation and Overheating Guidance, 2020. However, that assumption is not representative of the multiple large sash windows within Southdowns Park. For example, I have three large (approx. 3ft x 8ft) south facing sash windows in one room of my property and that is representative of many of the south facing apartments. With these windows open in the warmer months, the attenuation will be far less than the "standard" 13dB. This will result in LA_{eq} levels exceeding the 30dB Reduced Internal Criterion of Figure 17 and potentially even exceeding the BS8233:2014 table 4 value of 35dB.

4. Section 7.6 of the Noise Assessment (Approved Document O - Overheating (LA_{max} Assessment)) states the ADO uses an open window for thermal comfort to provide 10dB of attenuation. Again, this is unlikely to be representative of the large sash windows in Southdowns Park. Furthermore, the standard states with regards to LA_{max} events, these should not be more than 10 events above 55dB LA_{max} per night. Given that the impact noise coming from the Padel courts will be frequent, there are likely to be far more events at, or very close to, 55dB. No consideration has been given to the frequency of these impact events.

5. Regarding Section 8 (Attended Data (9/10/2025) - Smash Padel - Cuckfield), it is noted that the arrangement of the Cuckfield courts are such that the 35m measurement (intended to be representative of Southdown Park's central "bandstand") was aligned with the ends of the court where the glass wall would provide acoustic attenuation whereas two of the three proposed courts are aligned such that the open middle section of the court is in the direction of Southdowns Park. Therefore, the Cuckfield measurements should be regarded as optimistic rather than representative.

I personally paid several visits to the Cuckfield padel courts and on every occasion I could certainly hear the repeated impact noise from the courts at a distance of 35 metres and beyond - confirming that the noise would significantly impact the residents' enjoyment of the gardens at Southdowns Park if this application were to be granted.

Lighting Technical Report (04-11-25)

1. I would question why the site has been designated as an E3 (Suburban) Environmental Zone. Considering the current lighting levels, I suggest E2 would be more appropriate.

2. The report does not make it clear if reflected light levels have been considered.

Agent letter (submitted 04/11/25)

I would also like to highlight a number of misleading comparisons made in the Agent letter (submitted 04/11/25).

In this letter, the agent references two appeals:

APP/Y9507/D/24/3339242 (Freshfields, Sandy Lane, East Ashling, West Sussex) and APP/Y9507/W/24/3351257 (Fernden Grange, Fernden Lane, Fernhurst, West Sussex GU27 3LA). It should be pointed out noise was not a contentious issue in either of these appeals. In these cases, the main issue was stated to be "the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area taking particular account of the location in the SDNP" and "the effect of the development proposed on the landscape character of the South Downs National Park (SDNP)" respectively. In the first case, the appellant may well have provided information that compares the likely noise arising from the use of a padel court to that of a tennis court but this was likely not challenged simply because it was irrelevant to the main issue. Likewise, in the second case, the appellants assertions regarding noise impact were irrelevant to the main issue. It is also worth noting that appeal APP/Y9507/W/24/3351257 was dismissed.

However, appeal decisions such as APP/F0114/W/25/3358907 (Lansdown Lawn Tennis & Squash Racquets Club Northfields Lansdown Bath BA1 5TN) concludes "it is likely that compared to the existing lawn tennis 'centre' court, there would be a significant increase in the number of ball strikes within any given period due to the containment by, and rebound off, the enclosing screens also that the level of activity would increase significantly due to the number of participants in the two courts combined with the popularity of the sport"

Representations submitted by others have provided further relevant examples of planning refusals on the grounds of excessive noise.

Regarding the Heritage aspects, the agent makes reference to the recent Costs decision relating to Brighton gasworks. It is completely inappropriate to compare a major redevelopment with 495 dwellings to this particular case although it is worth noting that the appeal finding (APP/Q1445/W/24/3353409) stated "Weighing

against the proposal is the less than substantial harm to the significance of the FCH [French Convalescent Home] which carries great weight".

Conclusions

Clearly this application is completely unsuitable and must be rejected on numerous grounds.

Kind regards