



**National
Trust**

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Mid Sussex District Council
Planning Development Management
Katherine Williams
Oaklands, Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 1SS

Dear Katherine,

DM/26/1792 Installation of new structures and accessibility improvements to create a new Wild Play facility and associated works on Land South West Of Havelock Farm, Sesfield Road, Ardingly, Haywards Heath

With our staff, members, volunteers and supporters, the National Trust is the biggest conservation charity in Europe. We protect and care for places so people and nature can thrive. Many millions share the belief that nature, beauty and history are for everyone. So we look after the nation's coastline, historic sites, countryside and green spaces, ensuring everyone benefits. For everyone, for ever.

Wakehurst Place including the wider Estate is leased from the National Trust by Kew Botanical Gardens hence our interest in this planning application.

The application site lies within the northern boundary of the Grade II* Registered Park and Garden (*List entry: 1000189*) at Wakehurst Place and therefore requires great weight to be given to its conservation. The listing describes the Registered Park and Garden as '*An early to mid C20 plantman's and collector's garden laid out by Gerald Loder, which has subsequently been enlarged and developed since 1965 as part of the Living Collections of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew*'.

The application site also lies within the setting of Wakehurst Place (Mansion) a Grade I listed building (*List entry: 1025764*), as detailed, '*The property of the National Trust. Administered by Kew Gardens*' is a highly significant building of the late sixteenth century.

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Patron: His Majesty The King
Regional Chair: Bernard Donoghue OBE
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Having reviewed all the documents and supporting information for this planning application, we do have concerns around the removal of eight individual Category B trees (*moderate quality with an estimated life expectancy of at least 20 years*) to make way for the scheme but a number of these are dense screening conifers. As highlighted within the AIA their removal may represent a moderate impact on local visual amenity without mitigation. The proposal seeks to mitigate this loss with replacement trees that will be native and selected to be more climate resilient. The thinning of the non-native evergreen planting will take place over time helping to mitigate local visual impacts. We feel that there may be an opportunity to use the proposed removed trees in some way and this should be explored to improve the sustainability credentials of the project.

The proposal offers a way of connecting the ornamental gardens with the scientific side of the Royal Botanical Garden Kew's work, both visually and thematically, creating a space for nature-based play at the heart of the garden. This reflects Wakehurst's ambition to inspire the next generation of environmental stewards, and aligns with the National Trust's ambition to inspire and enable people to care and take action for nature and beauty. Given this the National Trust supports this planning application.

Yours sincerely

Katy Wiseman, Assistant Planning Delivery Partner

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