

43-1039

NORTH COLWELL FARM

Tree Officer's consultation on Mid-Sussex District Council application ref. DM/25/0445 –

Response on behalf of the Applicant

FLAC is advising Miller Homes Ltd with regards to arboricultural matters in connection with the planning application referenced above. We are in receipt of consultation comments provided by the Tree Officer on 03 June 2025, to which we provide the following response:

1. We note that the Tree Officer raises no issues in relation to any of the following:
 - i) Accuracy of the FLAC tree survey;
 - ii) FLAC's assessment of tree retention and removal;
 - iii) Effect of proposed development on ancient woodland;
 - iv) Effect of proposed development on veteran trees.
2. As such, we proceed on the basis that these appear to be agreed matters.
3. In relation to 1(ii), our Arboricultural Impact Assessment identifies for retention 100% of the high quality trees (A category) within our survey, and 87% of the moderate quality (B category) trees. We would characterize this as a highly favourable outcome in relation to the cohort typically prioritised for retention.
4. Despite this highly favourable outcome, the Tree Officer takes issue with the proposed loss of 43 moderate quality trees, and she notes, correctly, that not all of these are casualties to the site access. Losses to the two drivers for removal of B category trees are:

Access	9
Site interior	34
5. The Tree Officer states that:

The loss of these mature trees (some of which are oak trees) could not be compensated by replanting, as the ecological value of mature oak trees would take years to develop from newly planted specimens.

It is apparent that the Tree Officer has assumed that all 43 B-category losses are of mature trees, however this is not the case: only 31 are mature (6 individual trees, 25 trees from TG7018)
6. Turning to the question of species, three mature oaks are identified for removal to facilitate the access (7053, 7064, 7068). These are the only mature oak trees identified for removal, as losses from among TG7018 do not include oak.

7. In conclusion, it is disappointing that the Tree Officer has focused on the relatively small number of losses (88% of A and B grade trees would be retained), none of which are of high quality trees, and almost all of which lack public amenity value. Equally, the Tree Officer makes no reference to the substantial opportunities for replanting, instead merely dismissing its ability to replace mature oaks (of which, as noted, there are only three identified for removal).
8. Overall, we consider that the Tree Officer's comments and objection lack balance, whilst our view remains that the proposals' impact on existing trees is minor and more than adequately compensated for.

Forbes-Laird Arboricultural Consultancy