

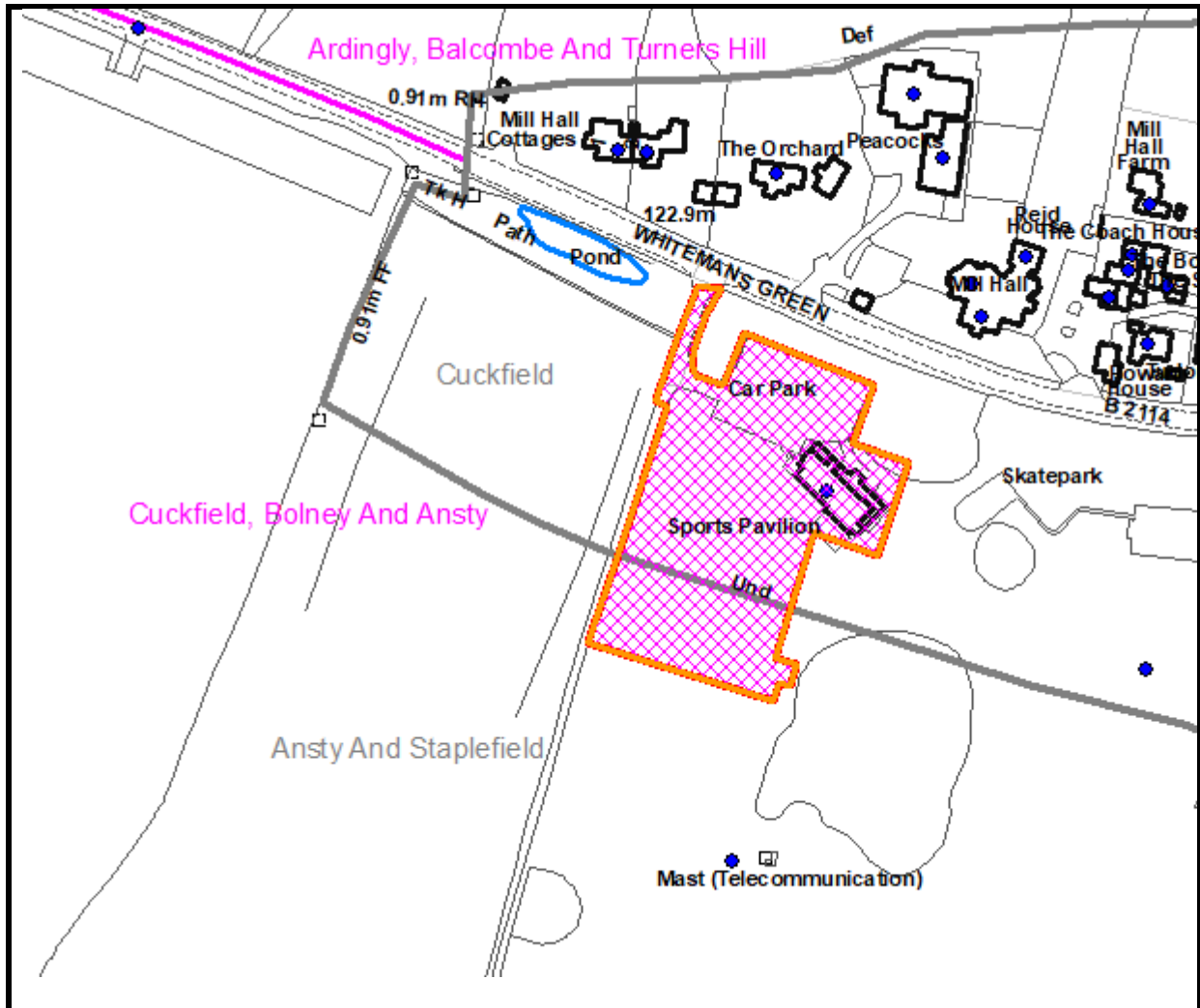
# Planning Committee



Recommended for Permission

7th September 2023

DM/23/1174



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<b>Site:</b>	Haywards Heath Rugby Football Club Sports Pavilion Whitemans Green Cuckfield Haywards Heath
<b>Proposal:</b>	Replacement clubhouse and new storage facility following the demolition of the existing premises. The proposal also includes amendments to the vehicular access via Whitemans Green (some of which have been carried out previously by West Sussex County Council), and additional car parking and servicing arrangements.
<b>Applicant:</b>	Mr Peter Mitchell
<b>Category:</b>	Smallscale Major Other

<b>Target Date:</b>	22nd August 2023
<b>Parish:</b>	Cuckfield
<b>Ward Members:</b>	Cllr Malcolm Avery / Cllr Jim Knight /
<b>Case Officer:</b>	Steven King

**Link to Planning Documents:**

<https://pa.midsussex.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=RU1E2MKT04L00>

**1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To consider the recommendation of the Assistant Director for Planning and Sustainable Economy on the application for planning permission as detailed above.

**2.0 Executive Summary**

2.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the replacement clubhouse and new storage facility following the demolition of the existing premises at Haywards Heath Rugby Football Club, Whitemans Green, Cuckfield. The proposal also includes amendments to the vehicular access via Whitemans Green (some of which have been carried out previously by West Sussex County Council), and additional car parking and servicing arrangements.

2.2 This application is before the planning committee because it is on land that is owned by Mid Sussex District Council.

2.3 Planning legislation requires the application to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It is therefore necessary for the planning application to be assessed against the policies in the development plan and then to take account of other material planning considerations including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

2.4 Regarding the principle of the development, the site is part of an established recreation ground with an existing sports clubhouse. Improvements to such facilities are supported at District Plan level and through the NPPF. The planning history of the site is also a material planning consideration, and it is therefore relevant that the District Council granted planning permission for a similar replacement clubhouse building at the site under the same development plan background in 2019. Consistency is important in the determination of planning applications, and it is not considered that there have been material changes to warrant a different decision now compared to the decision that was made in 2019 regarding the principle of the development.

2.5 The proposal will deliver positive social and economic benefits through the delivery of an enhanced leisure and community facility which reflects one of the key objectives of the NPPF. The development will also provide some economic benefit

through construction jobs and through the enhanced clubhouse that will include some commercial operations.

- 2.6 It is considered that the scale of the proposed building is acceptable in this location. Whilst the site is within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), it is part of a well established recreation area, with a number of sports pitches, buildings and car parking. As such, the overall scale of the development will conserve the character of the AONB.
- 2.7 The external materials of the building will feature cladding, which would give the building a more modern contemporary appearance. Given the form and function of the building it is considered that in principle this is acceptable. It is considered necessary to control the final details of the colour of the proposed cladding so that this will be appropriate to the rural context of the site. With such a condition in place it is felt, on balance, that the more contemporary design approach will be acceptable and that the setting of the Whitemans Green Conservation Area will be preserved.
- 2.8 The proposal will have a satisfactory access onto the highway network and will not result in a severe impact on the local highway network. There is no objection from the Local Highway Authority (LHA).
- 2.9 It is considered that the site can be satisfactorily drained. Whilst there would be some trees that would be removed, replacement planting can be secured by condition. As such the proposal will have a neutral impact in respect of these matters.
- 2.10 The proposal is therefore deemed to comply with the requirements of Policies DP12, DP13, DP16, DP21, DP24, DP25, DP26, DP28, DP35, DP37, DP39 and DP41 of the District Plan 2014-31 and Policies CNP1, CNP4, CNP5 and CNP16 of the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan, Policies AS2, AS3 and AS8 of the Ansty and Staplefield Neighbourhood Plan as well as the broader requirements of the NPPF and The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2014-2019. It is therefore recommended that planning permission should be granted.

### **3.0 Recommendation**

- 3.1 It is recommended that planning permission be approved subject to the suggested conditions in Appendix A.

### **4.0 Summary of Representations**

#### 4.1 380 letters of support

- Important sports facility for Mid Sussex and local clubs;
- will allow club to expand for girls and women's teams;
- community and social benefits;
- additional parking spaces will take pressure off main road;
- improvements long overdue;
- will benefit future generations;
- meets local need;
- design is sensitive and in keeping;
- important for health of children and will improve participation
- Will be a sustainable building

1 letter of objection

- the proposed design of the new rugby club is not remotely friendly to the character of the rural area it is located in.
- the proposed tall multi-storey design will completely overlook and block out views of surrounding countryside ruining the beauty of the area.
- the proposal to widen the access road destroying old trees that cannot be replaced, as well as concreting over a large green space to create over 100 car parking spaces is outrageous.
- will lead to a great unnecessary loss of natural habitat and biodiversity when there are already two suitable car parks which are empty the majority of the time.
- Extra parking spaces are only needed occasionally for rare larger sporting fixtures, whereas local residents use the green space on the site on a daily basis. This does not justify the loss of another precious green space.

## **5.0 Summary of Consultees**

### **Highway Authority**

No objection subject to condition

### **Landscape Consultant**

To be reported

### **Sport England**

No objection

### **Community Facilities Project Officer**

Support the application

### **Environmental Protection Officer**

No objection subject to condition

### **Drainage Engineer**

No objection subject to condition

### **Tree Officer**

I am willing to accept the lack of an updated tree survey, as removals seem to be mainly limited to fastigiate hornbeams. An updated plan, method statement, particularly in relation to incursions within RPAs is required, and a tree protection plan.

### **Conservation Officer**

If on balance, weighing the public benefits of the proposal against the low level of less than substantial harm identified, Members are minded to recommend approval, I would suggest that an appropriate condition is attached to the approval requiring further details of facing and roofing materials, including colour and finish, which might allow a more sympathetic palette to be agreed upon.

## **6.0 Parish Council Observations**

Cuckfield Parish Council: No objection

Ansty and Staplefield Parish Council: No objection

## **7.0 Introduction**

- 7.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the replacement clubhouse and new storage facility following the demolition of the existing premises at Haywards Heath Rugby Football Club, Whitemans Green, Cuckfield. The proposal also includes amendments to the vehicular access via Whitemans Green (some of which have been carried out previously by West Sussex County Council), and additional car parking and servicing arrangements.

## **8.0 Relevant Planning History**

- 8.1 Planning permission was granted on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2019 for a replacement clubhouse and new storage facility following the demolition of the existing premises. The proposal also included amendments to the vehicular access via Whitemans Green and additional car parking and servicing arrangements (reference DM/19/0670). This planning permission was not implemented and has now expired.

## **9.0 Site and Surroundings**

- 9.1 The application site is located on the south side of Whitemans Green (B2114), to the north west of the village of Cuckfield. The site forms part of the Whitemans Green Recreation Ground that is owned by Mid Sussex District Council and consists of sports pitches and ancillary facilities. In terms of total site area, the applicant states this measures 11.4 hectares.
- 9.2 There is an existing car park and clubhouse on site which is a single storey, pre-fab structure.
- 9.3 In terms of planning policy the site lies within the countryside as defined by the Mid Sussex District Plan. The site is also located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 9.4 To the east, some 235 metres from the nearest part of the existing clubhouse to be demolished, lies both the boundary of the built up area and the Whitemans Green Conservation Area. Across the road to the north lies more sporadic ribbon development along Whitemans Green that leads to the golf course. To the west of the site lies an overflow car park and further playing fields. To the south, and accessed via a track leading through the site, lie four residential properties and fields.

## **10.0 Application Details**

- 10.1 The application proposes the demolition of the existing Haywards Heath Rugby Football Clubhouse and its relocation to the south west adjacent to the access road that runs through the site.
- 10.2 The new clubhouse is orientated to front eastwards and is two storeys high. The dimensions are stated as being 30.6 6m in width, 15m in depth and the height being 7.4m on east elevation and 9.5m on the west elevation.

- 10.3 The clubhouse will include the main entrance, six dressing rooms, a physiotherapy room and a shop at ground floor level. At first floor level will be a bar and function room, a kitchen, toilets and office space as well as a full length balcony overlooking the pitches to the west. Proposed materials include composite panelling at ground floor level with different colour composite panel cladding at first floor. Windows and doors would be aluminium framed. The building would have an external staircase at the northern and southern ends of the building providing access to the first floor external balcony.
- 10.4 To the east of the clubhouse, and partly on the site of the existing (to be demolished) clubhouse there will be expanded car park facilities incorporating coach parking, disabled spaces. The plans show that the total number of spaces being provided is 111 with 8 of these being disabled and 6 being space with EV charging points. There would also be two coach parking spaces. This compares with the existing 40 car spaces.
- 10.5 Cycle parking and bin storage are also being provided next to the new clubhouse.
- 10.6 The new single storey storage facility building measures 10.4 m by 11 m and is located a little to the east of the new car parking facilities. This is a timber clad building with a roof 3.1m in height on the south elevation and 2.5m in height on the north elevation.
- 10.7 Internally, the access from the car park will accord with Part M of the Building Regulations - with a level 'landing' outside the entrance doors and a maximum threshold of 15mm. Within the new clubhouse all doors and corridors will be of a size suitable for wheelchair users, and there is a lift to the first floor shown. In addition, there are dedicated disabled toilets on both floors and changing facilities on the ground floor.
- 10.8 The applicants have stated that the building will incorporate a solar panel array on the roof to generate electricity and renewable heat for space heating from either ground or air sourced heat pumps. Energy efficient lighting will be incorporated, both internally and externally.
- 10.9 The applicants supporting information explains the reason for the current application as follows:

*'Although planning was granted in 2019 subsequent events outside the Club's control - including the pandemic and hyper inflationary pressures in the construction industry - coupled with original plans that were resulting in significantly higher than projected build costs, impacted the ability to break ground at Whitemans Green. Nonetheless the Club continued to fund raise through corporate and individual philanthropic donations as well as Club events and has been determined to find a way forward in the post-pandemic environment to deliver a sustainable, once in a lifetime multi-sport facility for Mid Sussex.*

*Mitchell Design and Construct Ltd were invited to carry out a value engineering exercise which has resulted in a scheme that is far more realistic in cost terms yet maintains the important criteria of sustainable construction, thermally efficient*

*cladding components and the economy of modular prefabricated structural elements. The external glazing and cladding provide a robust finish with the ability to select from a wide range of textures and colours. HHRFC have also worked extremely hard in their fund-raising activities, which has enabled the scheme to progress to the construction phase.*

*Access to the site has been enlarged by West Sussex Highways to permit access to the site for coaches and emergency vehicles.'*

## **11.0 Legal Framework and List of Policies**

11.1 Planning legislation holds that the determination of a planning application shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

11.2 Specifically Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states:

*'In dealing with such an application the authority shall have regard to:*

- a) The provisions of the development plan, so far as material to application,*
- b) And local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and*
- c) Any other material considerations.'*

11.3 Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides:

*'If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.'*

11.4 The requirement to determine applications "in accordance with the plan" does not mean applications must comply with each and every policy, but is to be approached on the basis of the plan taken as a whole. This reflects the fact, acknowledged by the Courts, that development plans can have broad statements of policy, many of which may be mutually irreconcilable so that in a particular case one must give way to another.

11.5 Under section 38(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 if a policy contained in a development plan for an area conflicts with another policy in the development plan, the conflict must be resolved in favour of the policy which is contained in the last document to be adopted, approved or published.

11.6 Using this as the starting point the development plan for this part of Mid Sussex consists of the District Plan, Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD), Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan and the Ansty and Staplefield Neighbourhood Plan. The development itself is within the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan area but the red line of the whole application site is drawn so that it includes the recreation field to the south, which lies within the Ansty and Staplefield Neighbourhood Plan area.

11.7 National policy (which is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance) does not form part of the development plan, but is an important material consideration.

### **11.8 Mid Sussex District Plan**

District Plan (DP) was adopted at Full Council on 28th March 2018.

Relevant policies:

DP12 - Protection of Countryside

DP13 - Preventing coalescence

DP16 - High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

DP21 - Transport

DP24 - Leisure and Cultural Facilities and Activities

DP25 - Community Facilities and Local Services

DP26 - Character and Design

DP28 - Accessibility

DP35 - Conservation Areas

DP37 - Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

DP39 - Sustainable Design and Construction

DP41 - Flood Risk and Drainage

### **11.9 Site Allocations DPD**

The SADPD was adopted on 29th June 2022. It allocates sufficient housing and employment land to meet identified needs to 2031.

There are no relevant policies.

### **11.10 Neighbourhood Plan**

The Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan (CNP) has been made so forms part of the development plan with full weight.

Relevant policies:

CNP 1 - Design of New Development and Conservation

CNP 5 - Protect and Enhance the Countryside

CNP 16 - Transport Impact of Development



The Ansty and Staplefield Neighbourhood Plan (ASNP) has been made so forms part of the development plan with full weight.

Relevant policies:

AS2 Preventing Coalescence

AS3 High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

AS8 Improvement of Community Facilities

#### **11.11 Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 Consultation Draft**

The District Council is now in the process of reviewing and updating the District Plan. The new District Plan 2021 - 2039 will replace the current adopted District Plan. The draft District Plan 2021-2039 was published for public consultation on 7th November and the Regulation 18 Consultation period runs to 19th December 2022. No weight can currently be given to the plan due to the very early stage that it is at in the consultation process.

#### **11.12 *Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)***

The Council has adopted a 'Mid Sussex Design Guide' SPD that aims to help deliver high quality development across the district that responds appropriately to its context and is inclusive and sustainable. The Design Guide was adopted by Council on 4th November 2020 as an SPD for use in the consideration and determination of planning applications. The SPD is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

#### **11.13 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2021)**

11.14 The NPPF sets out the government's policy in order to ensure that the planning system contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 sets out the three objectives to sustainable development, such that the planning system needs to perform an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective. This means ensuring sufficient land of the right type to support growth; providing a supply of housing and creating a high quality environment with accessible local services; and using natural resources prudently.

11.15 Paragraph 12 of the NPPF states '*The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.*'

11.16 Paragraph 38 of the NPPF states '*Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use*

*the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.'*

- 11.17 With specific reference to decision-taking paragraph 47 states that planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 11.18 National Planning Policy Guidance
- 11.19 National Design Guide
- 11.20 Ministerial Statement and Design Guide
- 11.21 On 1 October 2019 the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government made a statement relating to design. The thrust of the statement was that the Government was seeking to improve the quality of design and drive up the quality of new homes. The Government also published a National Design Guide, which is a material planning consideration.
- 11.22 The National Design Guide provides guidance on what the Government considers to be good design and provides examples of good practice. It notes that social, economic and environmental change will influence the planning, design and construction of new homes and places.
- 11.23 The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2014-2019
- 11.24 Listed Building and Conservation Area (LBCA) Act 1990

## **12.0 Assessment**

- 12.1 It is considered that the main issues needing consideration in the determination of this application are as follows;
- The principle of development
  - Heritage Asset impact
  - Design and Impact on visual amenity including AONB and coalescence
  - Residential amenity
  - Highways, access and car parking
  - Drainage
  - Trees
  - Ashdown Forest
  - Planning balance and conclusion

## 12.2 The principle of development

12.3 As the site lies within the countryside as defined in the DP, the starting point for assessing the application is policy DP12. This states in part that development will be permitted *'provided it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District, and:*

- *it is necessary for the purposes of agriculture; or*
- *it is supported by a specific policy reference either elsewhere in the Plan, a Development Plan Document or relevant Neighbourhood Plan.'*

12.4 Given the leisure use aspect of the proposal, Policy DP24 provides a *'specific policy reference'*. This states, in part, that:

*'Development that provides new and/or enhanced leisure and cultural activities and facilities, including allotments, in accordance with the strategic aims of the Leisure and Cultural Strategy for Mid Sussex will be supported.'*

12.5 Policy DP25, which lists sports pavilions as falling under the definition of *'community facilities and local services'* also provides a *'specific policy reference'*. This states in part that:

*'The provision or improvement of community facilities and local services that contribute to creating sustainable communities will be supported.'*

There is a similar policy to DP12 in the CNP, in that development in the countryside is allowed for certain exceptions. Policy CNP5 states that:

*'Outside of the Built up Area Boundary, priority will be given to protecting and enhancing the countryside from inappropriate development. A proposal for development will only be permitted where:*

- a) It is allocated for development in Policy CNP 6 (a) and (b) or would be in accordance with Policies CNP 10, CNP 14 and CNP 17 in the Neighbourhood Plan or other relevant planning policies applying to the area, and*
- b) It would not have a detrimental impact on, and would enhance, areas identified in the Cuckfield Landscape Character Assessment (summarised in Table 1) as having major or substantial landscape value or sensitivity, and*
- c) It would not have an adverse impact on the landscape setting of Cuckfield and*
- d) It would maintain the distinctive views of the surrounding countryside from public vantage points within, and adjacent to, the built up area, in particular those defined on Map 5, and*
- e) Within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty it would conserve and enhance landscape and scenic beauty and would have regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan.'*

12.6 At national level, the NPPF offers support at paragraph 92, which states in part:

*‘Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:*

*c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.’*

- 12.7 Given this policy background and the identified need, the principle of the development on this site is therefore acceptable. It is also relevant that a very similar proposal was found to be acceptable and granted planning permission in 2019 under the same planning policy background in respect of the development plan.

## **12.8 Heritage Asset impact**

- 12.9 The Whitemans Green conservation area is located to the east of the recreation ground, around 230 metres from the nearest part of the new development. The site is therefore considered to be within the setting of the Whitemans Green Conservation area (the heritage asset). Policy DP35 in the DP states in part that *‘Development will also protect the setting of the conservation area and in particular views into and out of the area.’*
- 12.10 Paragraph 199 of the NPPF states that *‘When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.’*
- 12.11 Paragraph 202 of the NPPF states that *‘Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.’*
- 12.12 On the previously submitted application, the Councils Conservation Office concluded that subject to detail, the proposal would preserve the setting of the Whitemans Green Conservation Area.
- 12.13 The current application differs from the previously approved application in respect of the proposed external materials for the building. As previously approved, the plans showed the external elevations would be brick at ground floor level with timber boarding at first floor level. The current application shows that the external walls would be clad with Kingspan Quadcore louvred panels at ground floor level with the first floor being clad with Kingspan Quadcore micro rib composite panels. The elevations indicate that the ground floor would be dark grey with the first floor being metallic silver. The roof is shown as being Kingspan Quadcore roof panel, light grey in colour.
- 12.14 The Councils Conservation Officer has made the following comments on the application:

*'The current proposal relates to the club house of the Haywards Heath Rugby Club which sits to the south of Whitemans Green, a short distance to the west of the Conservation Area boundary. The club house is set within an extensive area of playing fields, which with the surrounding trees and plantings make a positive contribution to the generally green and open character of the setting of the Conservation Area. The club house itself, however, is a poor quality building and detracts from this setting. Planning permission was granted in 2019 for its replacement with a larger building set slightly further away from the road. The current proposal is similar, but shows alterations to the detailed design of the building including in particular the facing and roofing materials.*

*As approved, the building is shown with facing brick to the ground floor and timber cladding to the first floor, and a monopitch roof. The current proposal amends the facing materials to composite louvred panels in a dark grey colour at ground floor with composite micro rib panels in a metallic silver at first floor. The roof is shown in prefabricated panels with a light grey finish, with a deep red fascia.*

*In my opinion, the revision to the facing and roofing materials is unfortunately a retrograde step in terms of the quality of the building and the impact that it will have on the setting of the Conservation Area. The revised materials are less sympathetic to the generally rural character of that setting and may result in an unduly visually prominent building, particularly due to the inclusion of light grey/metallic finishes and a prominent red fascia detail.*

*Therefore, whilst I appreciate the financial considerations behind the revisions to the approved scheme, and would not necessarily object to a revised material palette which could include cladding in a more appropriate colour scheme, as it stands I consider that the proposal will detract from the setting of the Whitemans Green Conservation Area, contrary to District Plan Policy DP35 and causing a low level of less than substantial harm, through impact on setting, to the character and appearance of the Area. The balancing exercise set out in paragraph 202 will therefore apply.*

*If on balance, weighing the public benefits of the proposal against the low level of less than substantial harm identified, Members are minded to recommend approval, I would suggest that an appropriate condition is attached to the approval requiring further details of facing and roofing materials, including colour and finish, which might allow a more sympathetic palette to be agreed upon.'*

- 12.15 Your Planning Officer agrees with the comments that have been made. However, whilst the proposed materials may be considered to be a retrograde step compared to the previously approved scheme, an assessment must be made as to whether what is now proposed is acceptable.
- 12.16 The proposed palette of materials will have a more modern contemporary appearance, compared to the previously approved scheme. In respect of the setting of the Conservation Area, it is acknowledged that the recreation ground is a managed landscape, with various sports pitches, areas of car parking, various

buildings and some flood lighting. The proposed building will be the same scale as the previously approved scheme.

- 12.17 It is considered by your Planning Officer that as a matter of principle, the proposed type of revised materials would have a neutral impact on the setting of the Conservation Area. However, it is considered that the currently proposed colour of materials does raise some concerns about the prominence of the proposed building. This is the concern of the Conservation Officer with the currently proposed materials, rather than the type of material proposed. Therefore, it is felt that a planning condition should be used to control the detail of the proposed materials to require a colour pallet that is more subdued and would preserve the setting of the Conservation Area.
- 12.18 It is therefore considered that subject to a condition to require details of the proposed colour of the external materials, the setting of the Conservation Area would be preserved, in accordance with policy DP35 in the DP.

### **12.19 Design and Impact on visual amenity including AONB and coalescence**

- 12.20 One of the key issues is the visual impact on the character of the area. This is particularly important in this case given the site is within the countryside and the AONB. Potential coalescence issues also need to be considered.
- 12.21 Policy DP12 states that the countryside will be protected in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty. Paragraph 174 of the NPPF states in part that *'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

*b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside'.*

The objectives of the district plan policies are consistent with the principles of the NPPF.

- 12.22 Policy DP13 refers to coalescence and states that:

*'The individual towns and villages in the District each have their own unique characteristics. It is important that their separate identity is maintained. When travelling between settlements people should have a sense that they have left one before arriving at the next.'*

*Provided it is not in conflict with Policy DP12: Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside, development will be permitted if it does not result in the coalescence of settlements which harms the separate identity and amenity of settlements, and would not have an unacceptably urbanising effect on the area between settlements.'*

- 12.23 Policy DP26 states in part that *'all development and surrounding spaces, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings and replacement dwellings, will be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside.'*

- 12.24 As indicated, the site is within the High Weald AONB. The legal framework for AONBs in England and Wales is provided by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act

(CRoW) 2000 which at Section 82 reaffirms the primary purpose of AONBs: to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Section 84 of the CRoW requires Local Planning Authorities to *'take all such action as appears to them expedient for accomplishment of the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB'*.

12.24 The most relevant part of Policy DP16 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states that:

*'Development within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as shown on the Policies Maps, will only be permitted where it conserves or enhances natural beauty and has regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan, in particular;*

- *the identified landscape features or components of natural beauty and to their setting;*
- *the traditional interaction of people with nature, and appropriate land management;*
- *character and local distinctiveness, settlement pattern, sense of place and setting of the AONB; and*
- *the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage.'*

Policies AS3 in the ASNP and CNP5 in the CNP have similar aims.

12.25 Paragraph 176 of the NPPF states that *'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.'*

12.26 The Council's landscape consultant has been consulted and at the time of writing this report, their comments were awaited. On the previous application, however, they raised no objection to the proposal.

12.27 It should be highlighted that the applicant has submitted a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment which is available to view on the planning file. The LVIA sets out in detail a professional assessment of the landscape impacts of the proposal. It is the case that an assessment of the impact of the proposal on the character of the landscape is ultimately a subjective one for the decision maker to make.

12.28 The LVIA states that as a recreation ground the landscape is already in a high managed state which reduces landscape quality. The report concludes that the development would:

*'Be acceptable as a small scale development without damaging local character and distinctiveness*

*Have a positive impact on vegetation, conservation and biodiversity in the creation of additional native planting and new habitats*

- *Retain and protect the majority of tree and hedgerow planting*

*Have minimal impacts on short and medium distance views with some beneficial change with landscape improvements around the clubhouse.'*

- 12.29 With regards to the design of the building, officers are content that the replacement buildings are appropriate to their context in respect of the siting, size and scale. The site is in the AONB but it is recognised that the recreation ground is a managed landscape, with various sports pitches, areas of car parking, various buildings and some flood lighting. The proposed scale of the building is considered to be appropriate in relation to the use of the surrounding land and in this respect, the proposal would conserve the character of the AONB. It should also be noted that this scale of building at this location has previously been found to be acceptable in 2019 under the same development plan policy background. The planning history of the site is a material planning consideration and consistency is important in the determination of planning applications. Whilst the LPA does not have to come to the same view on this point as it did in 2019, were a different decision to be made now, there would need to be a sound justification for this.
- 12.30 As set out in the previous section of the report, the main difference between the previously approved scheme and the current scheme concerns the proposed external materials. It is accepted that the proposed materials would not be natural (brick and timber) and this would not be wholly in accordance with the aim of using local materials, which is set out in the High Weald Management Plan objectives. As annotated on the plans, it is also felt that the metallic silver that is proposed for the external elevations at first floor level is likely to result in a prominent building in the landscape. As set out in the previous section of the report, it is therefore recommended that a condition is used to control the details of the external materials so that an alternative colour of cladding can be used that would be reflective of the High Weald Colour Study.
- 12.31 In terms of the overall impact on the landscape, it is considered that in respect of the scale of the building, this will be the same as the previously approved scheme. The proposed revision to the external materials will result in a building that has a more modern contemporary appearance. However, as before, the building will clearly appear to be what it is, a large community building set within a well established sports/recreation ground. Therefore, it is your Planning Officers view, that subject to conditions regarding the colour of the proposed cladding, on balance, the proposal will conserve the High Weald AONB and therefore comply with policy DP16 in the DP, policy AS3 in the ASNP and policy CNP5 in the CNP.
- 12.32 With regards to the design of the building itself, it is considered that it will have the architectural integrity that is sought by Principle 38 in the Design Guide SPD. The building will be of an appropriate scale for its intended function as a sporting facility for the community. The use of PV panels in a modern well insulated building would accord with the aims of Principle 37 in the Design Guide SPD. The building will be accessible to all users and will feature a lift to allow easy access to the first floor. It is therefore considered that the design of the building is acceptable and accords with policies DP26, DP28 and DP39 of the DP and policy CNP1 of the CNP.
- 12.33 In respect of the issue about coalescence, the development is outside the built up area but this does not automatically mean it will result in the coalescence of individual settlements.



12.34 The new clubhouse is replacing an existing, albeit smaller building, and together with the new storage building and extended parking area are relatively minor developments when compared to the size of Cuckfield. It is also worth noting that the development does not extend further west along Whitemans Green than the existing built development does on the northern side of the road.

12.34 In light of these points and given the need for the development, the proposal is deemed acceptable in this regard. This is because it will not have a significant effect on the coalescence of Cuckfield with any other settlements as the proposal will not lead to a lessening of the distinctiveness of the village.

### **12.35 Residential amenity**

12.36 One of the key issues to assess under this application is the potential impact on neighbouring residential amenity. Policy DP26 in the DP seeks to ensure that development '*does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution (see Policy DP27).*' In residential amenity terms, the test of development here is therefore whether it causes 'significant harm' to neighbouring amenity.

12.36 Policy DP29 in the DP states in relation to noise and light pollution:

*'The environment, including nationally designated environmental sites, nationally protected landscapes, areas of nature conservation or geological interest, wildlife habitats, and the quality of people's life will be protected from unacceptable levels of noise, light and air pollution by only permitting development where:*

*Noise pollution:*

- It is designed, located and controlled to minimise the impact of noise on health and quality of life, neighbouring properties and the surrounding area;*
- If it is likely to generate significant levels of noise it incorporates appropriate noise attenuation measures;*

*Noise sensitive development, such as residential, will not be permitted in close proximity to existing or proposed development generating high levels of noise unless adequate sound insulation measures, as supported by a noise assessment are incorporated within the development.*

*In appropriate circumstances, the applicant will be required to provide:*

- an assessment of the impact of noise generated by a proposed development; or*
- an assessment of the effect of noise by an existing noise source upon a proposed development;*

*Light pollution:*

- *The impact on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation areas of artificial lighting proposals (including floodlighting) is minimised, in terms of intensity and number of fittings;*
- *The applicant can demonstrate good design including fittings to restrict emissions from proposed lighting schemes;*

*The degree of the impact of noise and light pollution from new development or change of use is likely to be greater in rural locations, especially where it is in or close to specially designated areas and sites.'*

- 12.37 In this case there are existing neighbouring residential properties that have the potential to be affected across the road to the north and to the immediate south where the residents use the access road through the site.
- 12.38 It is considered the new buildings are far away enough from the nearest residential properties to ensure that there is no significant harm in respect of overlooking or loss of light. For example, the nearest properties to the north are located some 100 metres from the nearest part of the new clubhouse. Those to the south are located approximately 190 metres from the nearest part of the new clubhouse.
- 12.39 It is, however, the potential for noise and disturbance through activities at the improved clubhouse, which includes an outdoor terrace on the western side serving a 200m<sup>2</sup> function room, that is of most concern in respect of the residential amenity impact.
- 12.40 The Councils Environmental Protection Officers full comments are set out in the appendix. They raise no objection to the application, commenting that:
- 'The new clubhouse is situated at a greater distance from properties to the north of Whitemans Green compared to the existing clubhouse, and it is also at a considerable distance from properties to the south. Based on this information, I do not anticipate noise to be a significant issue, as looking at our records for the last 10 years, we have received no noise complaints about the venue. However, it is important to note that the first floor includes a large social area. While I acknowledge that the clubhouse is situated at a distance from residential properties, there may still be potential for noise generation during regulated entertainment activities.'*
- 12.41 *To ensure the protection and well-being of existing residents, I would strongly recommend attaching a condition to the planning permission. This condition would require that all external windows and doors of the clubhouse remain closed, except for necessary access or egress, whenever regulated entertainment activities are taking place on the premises. This condition would help mitigate any potential noise transmission and disturbance to nearby residents during events or gatherings in the social area.'*
- 12.42 It is considered that such a condition would be reasonable and should ensure that the residential, amenities of neighbouring properties are protected from significant harm. The Noise Management Plan condition should ensure that the clubhouse is

managed in a way that minimises the impact on neighbouring residential amenity. Such a document should set out what measures the applicant will be putting in place to minimise noise and this will be subject of scrutiny by both planning and environmental protection officers. It is worth noting that the now expired 2019 planning permission had a condition regarding a Noise Management Plan.

12.43 It is also considered to be necessary to impose conditions regarding lighting, and delivery hours post construction. Again, these would be the same conditions as were imposed on the 2019 planning permission.

#### **12.44 Highways, Access and Parking**

12.45 Policy DP21 in the District Plan states:

*'Development will be required to support the objectives of the West Sussex Transport Plan 2011 - 2026, which are:*

- *A high quality transport network that promotes a competitive and prosperous economy;*
- *A resilient transport network that complements the built and natural environment whilst reducing carbon emissions over time;*
- *Access to services, employment and housing; and*
- *A transport network that feels, and is, safer and healthier to use.*

*To meet these objectives, decisions on development proposals will take account of whether:*

- *The scheme is sustainably located to minimise the need for travel noting there might be circumstances where development needs to be located in the countryside, such as rural economic uses (see policy DP14: Sustainable Rural Development and the Rural Economy);*
- *Appropriate opportunities to facilitate and promote the increased use of alternative means of transport to the private car, such as the provision of, and access to, safe and convenient routes for walking, cycling and public transport, including suitable facilities for secure and safe cycle parking, have been fully explored and taken up;*
- *The scheme is designed to adoptable standards, or other standards as agreed by the Local Planning Authority, including road widths and size of garages;*
- *The scheme provides adequate car parking for the proposed development taking into account the accessibility of the development, the type, mix and use of the development and the availability and opportunities for public transport; and with the relevant Neighbourhood Plan where applicable;*
- *Development which generates significant amounts of movement is supported by a Transport Assessment/ Statement and a Travel Plan that is effective and demonstrably deliverable including setting out how schemes will be funded;*
- *The scheme provides appropriate mitigation to support new development on the local and strategic road network, including the transport network outside of the district, secured where necessary through appropriate legal agreements;*

- *The scheme avoids severe additional traffic congestion, individually or cumulatively, taking account of any proposed mitigation;*
- *The scheme protects the safety of road users and pedestrians; and*
- *The scheme does not harm the special qualities of the South Downs National Park or the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty through its transport impacts.*

*Where practical and viable, developments should be located and designed to incorporate facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.*

*Neighbourhood Plans can set local standards for car parking provision provided that it is based upon evidence that provides clear and compelling justification for doing so.'*

12.46 Policy CNP16 also applies and this states that:

*'Proposals will be permitted where they meet the following criteria:*

*a) Safely located vehicular and pedestrian access with adequate visibility exists or could be created; and*

*b) Development proposals would ensure sustainable transport links to the principal village facilities including the village centre, the primary and secondary schools and recreation open space are provided; and*

*c) Where adequate transport infrastructure is not available to serve the development, the development would provide, or contribute towards, appropriate measures which will address the identified inadequacy and assist walking, cycling, public transport and other highway improvements; and*

*d) Where development would add to traffic congestion in the village or inappropriate traffic on rural lanes, proposals should be brought forward to mitigate any traffic impact or contribute funding towards local transport schemes*

*e) Development proposals for new developments should include secure cycle storage and ideally storage for children's buggies and mobility scooters where appropriate*

*f) Development proposals would maintain or enhance the existing routes of the twittens (public rights of way).'*

12.47 Paragraph 110 of the NPPF states that *'In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:*

*a) appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location;*

*b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;*

*c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code; and*

*d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.'*

- 12.48 The NPPF states in paragraph 111 that *'Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.'*
- 12.49 The Local Highway Authority (LHA) has been consulted on the application and their full comments are set out in the appendix. In summary they advise that the proposal is not dissimilar from the previously approved scheme and they consider that car parking and cycle parking are sufficient, concluding that *'The LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 111), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.'*
- 12.50 Your Planning Officer has no reason to disagree with the comments of the LHA. As the statutory body responsible for the highways network within the District, it is considered that the comments of the LHA should be afforded significant weight. In light of all the above the proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in relation highways matters. With regards to cycle parking, the plans show parking for cycles to the north of the proposed building. The details of this can be secured by a planning condition in accordance with the recommendation of the LHA.

### **12.51 Drainage**

- 12.52 Policy DP41 seeks to ensure that development is satisfactorily drained and does not cause a risk of flooding off site.
- 12.53 The site is in flood zone 1 and is at low fluvial flood risk (risk of flooding from Main Rivers). The site is shown to be at very low surface water flood risk (comparable to flood zone 1).
- 12.54 It is proposed that the development will use Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) attenuation for the two main structures and parking areas. This will include permeable paving for the car parking areas.
- 12.55 The Council's Drainage Engineer has discussed the proposed surface water drainage with the applicants, and this has been revised during the course of the application. The Council's Drainage Engineer is now satisfied that the principle of this method of drainage the site is satisfactory and that the final details of the drainage can be secured by a planning condition. Your Planning Officer has no reason to disagree with the comments of the Drainage Engineer and therefore the proposal is considered to comply with policy DP41 of the DP in respect of surface water drainage.

12.56 With regards to foul drainage, the proposal will utilise the existing foul water arrangement to the mains sewer, and again, the Council's Drainage Engineer has raised no objection to this.

### **12.57 Trees**

12.58 Policy DP37 in the DP states in part that *'Development that will damage or lead to the loss of trees, woodland or hedgerows that contribute, either individually or as part of a group, to the visual amenity value or character of an area, and/ or that have landscape, historic or wildlife importance, will not normally be permitted.'*

12.58 The proposed plans show that 12 fastigate hornbeams to the west of the proposed building would be removed. This is the same proposal as for the previously approved scheme in 2019. These trees are categorised in the applicant's supporting information as being category C trees. These are smaller trees or ones considered to be of low quality. They may have a limited life expectancy or contribute very little to the amenity of the locality. Such trees should not be considered as a constraint against development and their removal will generally be acceptable.

12.59 The full comments of the Council's Tree Officer are set out in the appendix. In summary the Tree Officer requires an updated plan, method statement, particularly in relation to incursions within RPAs and a tree protection plan. These matters can be secured by a planning condition. With regards to the loss of the trees, it is not considered that circumstances have changed since the previous consent was granted and whilst the loss of any tree is regrettable, replacement planting can be secured by condition. The overall character of the area would not be affected by these works and therefore the application is considered to comply with policy DP37 in the DP and policy CNP4 in the CNP.

### **12.60 Ashdown Forest**

12.61 Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the 'Habitats Regulations'), the competent authority – in this case, Mid Sussex District Council – has a duty to ensure that any plans or projects that they regulate (including plan making and determining planning applications) will have no adverse effect on the integrity of a European site of nature conservation importance. The European site of focus is the Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

12.62 The potential effects of development on Ashdown Forest were assessed during the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) process for the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031. This process identified likely significant effects on the Ashdown Forest SPA from recreational disturbance and on the Ashdown Forest SAC from atmospheric pollution.

12.63 A Habitats Regulations Assessment has been undertaken for the proposed development.

### Recreational disturbance

- 12.64 Increased recreational activity arising from new residential development and related population growth is likely to disturb the protected near-ground and ground nesting birds on Ashdown Forest.
- 12.65 In accordance with advice from Natural England, the HRA for the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031, and as detailed in District Plan Policy DP17, mitigation measures are necessary to counteract the effects of a potential increase in recreational pressure and are required for developments resulting in a net increase in dwellings within a 7km zone of influence around the Ashdown Forest SPA. A Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) mitigation approach has been developed. This mitigation approach has been agreed with Natural England.
- 12.66 The proposed development is outside the 7km zone of influence and as such, mitigation is not required.

### Atmospheric pollution

- 12.67 Increased traffic emissions as a consequence of new development may result in atmospheric pollution on Ashdown Forest. The main pollutant effects of interest are acid deposition and eutrophication by nitrogen deposition. High levels of nitrogen may detrimentally affect the composition of an ecosystem and lead to loss of species.
- 12.68 The proposed development is replacing an existing facility. Given this fact and the location of the site in relation to the Ashdown Forest, it is not considered that the proposal would result in an increase in vehicular movements to impact the Ashdown Forest SAC. This means that there is not considered to be a significant in combination effect on the Ashdown Forest SAC by this development proposal.

### Conclusion of the Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 12.69 The Habitats Regulations Assessment concludes that there would be no likely significant effects, alone or in combination, on the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC from the proposed development.
- 12.70 No mitigation is required in relation to the Ashdown Forest SPA or SAC.
- 12.71 A full HRA (that is, the appropriate assessment stage that ascertains the effect on the integrity of the European site) of the proposed development is not required.

## **13.0 CONCLUSION**

- 13.1 Planning legislation requires the application to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It is therefore necessary for the planning application to be assessed against the policies in the development plan and then to take account of other material planning considerations including the NPPF.
- 13.2 Regarding the principle of the development, the site is part of an established recreation ground with an existing sports clubhouse. Improvements to such facilities

are supported at District Plan level and through the NPPF. The planning history of the site is also a material planning consideration, and it is therefore relevant that the District Council granted planning permission for a similar replacement clubhouse building at the site under the same development plan background in 2019. Consistency is important in the determination of planning applications, and it is not considered that there have been material changes to warrant a different decision now compared to the decision that was made in 2019 regarding the principle of the development.

- 13.3 The proposal will deliver positive social and economic benefits through the delivery of an enhanced leisure and community facility which reflects one of the key objectives of the NPPF. The development will also provide some economic benefit through construction jobs and through the enhanced clubhouse that will include some commercial operations.
- 13.4 It is considered that the scale of the proposed building is acceptable in this location. Whilst the site is within the High Weald AONB, it is part of a well-established recreation area, with a number of sports pitches, buildings and car parking. As such, the overall scale of the development will conserve the character of the AONB.
- 13.5 The external materials of the building will feature cladding, which would give the building a more modern contemporary appearance. Given the form and function of the building it is considered that in principle this is acceptable. It is considered necessary to control the final details of the colour of the proposed cladding so that this will be appropriate to the rural context of the site. With such a condition in place it is felt, on balance, that the more contemporary design approach will be acceptable and that the setting of the Whitemans Green Conservation Area will be preserved.
- 13.6 The proposal will have a satisfactory access onto the highway network and will not result in a severe impact on the local highway network. There is no objection from the LHA.
- 13.7 It is considered that the site can be satisfactorily drained. Whilst there would be some trees that would be removed, replacement planting can be secured by condition. As such the proposal will have a neutral impact in respect of these matters.
- 13.8 The proposal is therefore deemed to comply with the requirements of Policies DP12, DP13, DP16, DP21, DP24, DP25, DP26, DP28, DP35, DP37, DP39 and DP41 of the District Plan 2014-31 and Policies CNP1, CNP4, CNP5 and CNP16 of the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan, Policies AS2, AS3 and AS8 of the Ansty and Staplefield Neighbourhood Plan as well as the broader requirements of the NPPF and The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2014-2019. It is therefore recommended that planning permission should be granted.



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## APPENDIX A – RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

### 1. Time Limit

The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

### Pre-commencement

2. The development hereby permitted shall not commence unless and until samples of materials and finishes to be used for all facing materials, including the external walls / roof / fenestration of the proposed buildings and structures, has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed with the Local Planning Authority in writing.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to accord with Policies DP16 and DP26 of the District Plan and Policy CNP1 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

3. Prior to the commencement of construction of any building subject of this permission, including construction of foundations, full details of a hard and soft landscaping scheme shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land, and details of those to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of development. These works shall be carried out as approved. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with the programme agreed by the Local Planning Authority. Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years from the completion of development, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to accord with Policies DP16 and DP26 of the District Plan and Policy CNP1 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

4. No development shall be carried out unless and until details of the following matters have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority:
- i) Detailed drawings at an appropriate large scale including sections and annotated to show materials and finishes of typical examples of windows and external doors. Drawings to show as appropriate depth of reveal.
  - ii) Details of any external lighting. The lighting scheme installation shall comply with the recommendations of the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) "Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light" (GN01:2011) for zone E1. Thereafter the approved installation shall be maintained and operated in accordance with zone E1 requirements unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to a variation

Works shall only proceed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect the character of the area of outstanding natural beauty, the setting of the conservation area and to protect neighbouring residential amenity and to accord with Policies DP16, DP26 and DP35 of the District Plan, Policy CNP 1 of the Neighbourhood Plan and the NPPF.

5. No development shall commence unless and until details of the proposed foul and surface water drainage and means of disposal have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. No building shall be occupied until all the approved drainage works have been carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the proposal is satisfactorily drained and to accord with Policy DP41 of the District Plan

6. No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the approved Plan shall be implemented and adhered to throughout the entire construction period. The Plan shall provide details as appropriate but not necessarily be restricted to the following matters;
- the anticipated number, frequency and types of vehicles used during construction,
  - the method of access and routing of vehicles during construction,
  - the parking of vehicles by site operatives and visitors,
  - the loading and unloading of plant, materials and waste,
  - the storage of plant and materials used in construction of the development,
  - the erection and maintenance of security hoarding,
  - the provision of wheel washing facilities and other works required to mitigate the impact of construction upon the public highway (including the provision of temporary Traffic Regulation Orders),
  - details of public engagement both prior to and during construction works and details of a neighbour notification procedure for particularly noisy construction works.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and the amenities of the area and to accord with Policy DP21 of the District Plan and Policy CNP16 of the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan.

### **Construction**

7. Works of construction or demolition, as well as deliveries or collection, and the use of plant and machinery necessary for implementation of this consent shall be limited to the following times:
- Monday to Friday: 08:00 - 18:00 Hours
  - Saturday: 09:00 - 13:00 Hours
  - Sundays and Bank/Public Holidays: no work permitted

Reason: To protect the amenity of local residents and to comply with Policy DP26 of the District Plan.

8. The development shall only proceed in accordance with the sustainability details contained within Section 5 of the Design and Access Statement v2 June 2023 submitted with the application.

Reason: In the interests of sustainability and to accord with Policies DP39 and DP41 of the District Plan.

### **Pre-occupation**

9. No part of the development shall be first occupied until such time as the vehicular access serving the development has been constructed in accordance with the approved site plan.

Reason: In the interests of road safety and to accord with Policy DP21 of the District Plan and Policy CNP16 of the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan.

10. Prior to the development hereby permitted being occupied and used, a Noise Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Noise Management Plan shall then be implemented as approved. The Noise Management Plan should require that all external windows and doors of the premises must remain closed, except for necessary access or egress, whenever regulated entertainment activities are taking place on the premises.

Reason: To protect the amenity of local residents and to comply with Policies DP26 and DP29 of the District Plan.

11. No part of the development shall be first occupied until covered and secure cycle parking spaces have been provided in accordance with plans and details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To provide alternative travel options to the use of the car in accordance with current sustainable transport policies and to accord with Policy DP21 of the District Plan and Policy CNP16 of the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan.

12. No part of the development shall be first occupied until the vehicle parking and turning spaces have been constructed in accordance with the approved plan. These spaces shall thereafter be retained for their designated use.

Reason: To provide adequate on-site car parking and turning space for the development and to accord with Policy DP21 of the District Plan and Policy CNP16 of the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan.

13. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until provision for bin and recycling storage has been made within the site in accordance with plans to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and thereafter retained permanently.

Reason: In the interests of sustainability and visual amenity and to accord with Policy DP26 of the District Plan and Policy CNP1 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

### **Post-occupation and management conditions**

14. No commercial goods or commercial waste shall be loaded or unloaded onto or from a delivery or collection vehicle except between the hours of:

Monday to Friday 08:00 - 18:00 Hours

Saturdays 09:00 - 13:00 Hours

Sundays and Bank holidays, none permitted.

Reason: To protect the amenity of local residents and to comply with Policy DP26 of the District Plan.

15. The noise rating level of any operational ventilation, refrigeration, kitchen extract, air conditioning plant or machinery hereby permitted shall be at least 5dB below the existing background noise level at the nearest residential facade. All measurements shall be defined and derived in accordance with BS4142: 2014. The results of any assessment and details of any mitigation measures shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority upon request.

Reason: To protect the amenity of local residents and to comply with Policies DP26 and DP29 of the District Plan.

16. Within three months of the substantial completion of the new clubhouse building hereby permitted, the existing clubhouse shall be demolished and the debris removed from the site.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to accord with Policies DP16 and DP26 of the District Plan and Policy CNP1 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

17. **Approved Plans**

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the plans listed below under the heading "Plans Referred to in Consideration of this Application".

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning.

#### INFORMATIVES

1. Works within the Highway - Implementation Team The applicant is required to obtain all appropriate consents from West Sussex County Council, as Highway Authority, to cover the off-site highway works. The applicant is requested to contact The Implementation Team Leader (01243 642105) to commence this process. The applicant is advised that it is an offence to undertake any works within the highway prior to the agreement being in place.
2. In respect of the materials and landscaping conditions, your attention is specifically drawn to the requirements set out in the consultee responses from the landscape consultant, the tree officer, the conservation officer and the High Weald AONB Unit.
3. Prior to the commencement of the works hereby permitted, checks shall be made for the presence of nesting birds and other wildlife protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

## Plans Referred to in Consideration of this Application

The following plans and documents were considered when making the above decision:

Plan Type	Reference	Version	Submitted Date
Location Plan			03.05.2023
Site Plan	E1195 104	P3	23.05.2023
Proposed Floor and Elevations Plan	1825/PL.10	Rev A	10.05.2023
Drainage Details	7507-HJCE-00-XX- DR-D-30	PO1	17.08.2023
Proposed Floor Plans	E1195 101	Rev A	02.05.2023
Proposed Floor Plans	E1195 102	Rev A	02.05.2023
Sections	E1195 103	Rev A	02.05.2023
Proposed Roof Plan	E1195 105	Rev A	02.05.2023

## APPENDIX B – CONSULTATIONS

### Highway Authority

#### Summary and Context

This application seeks the demolition of existing premises and erection of a replacement clubhouse and storage facility, with amendments to access, car park and servicing arrangements. The site is located on Whitemans Green, a B-classified road subject to a speed restriction of 50 mph in this location.

This application was flagged as Amber in the MSDC RAGs report and subsequently, a site visit was undertaken on the morning of 15/06/2023. Traffic along Whitemans Green was observed as moderate and steady, with approximate traffic speeds of 40-50 mph in this location. Following an inspection of the application documents and observations made on site, WSCC in its role as Local Highway Authority (LHA) raises no highway safety concerns for this application.

The LHA was previously consulted regarding highway matters for this site for similar application DM/19/0670, raising no objections. This application was approved by the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

#### Content

From inspection of the application documents, the proposals are not too dissimilar from what was previously approved under application DM/19/0670, from a highways point of view. Vehicular visibility has been demonstrated in accordance with DMRB guidelines for a 50 mph speed restriction, and the proposed development is not anticipated to give rise to a significant material intensification of use of the existing access point. Improvements to the internal access roads will allow for two cars to pass one another within the site.

A revised parking layout is proposed, with 101 parking bays, 8 disabled parking bays and 2 coach parking bays. As per previous comments, the proposed parking provision is considered suitable for the proposed use. In addition, the revised layout appears acceptable and on-site turning appears achievable. Provision for cycles has also been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the LHA.

## Conclusion

The LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 111), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

If the LPA are minded to approve the application, the following conditions and informative should be applied:

### Conditions

#### *Access (Access to be provided prior to first occupation)*

No part of the development shall be first occupied until such time as the vehicular access serving the development has been constructed in accordance with the approved site plan.

Reason: In the interests of road safety.

#### *Construction Management Plan*

No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the approved Plan shall be implemented and adhered to throughout the entire construction period. The Plan shall provide details as appropriate but not necessarily be restricted to the following matters,

- the anticipated number, frequency and types of vehicles used during construction,
- the method of access and routing of vehicles during construction,
- the parking of vehicles by site operatives and visitors,
- the loading and unloading of plant, materials and waste,
- the storage of plant and materials used in construction of the development,
- the erection and maintenance of security hoarding,
- the provision of wheel washing facilities and other works required to mitigate the impact of construction upon the public highway (including the provision of temporary Traffic Regulation Orders),
- details of public engagement both prior to and during construction works.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and the amenities of the area.

#### *Cycle parking*

No part of the development shall be first occupied until covered and secure cycle parking spaces have been provided in accordance with plans and details submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To provide alternative travel options to the use of the car in accordance with current sustainable transport policies.

#### *Vehicle parking and turning*

No part of the development shall be first occupied until the vehicle parking and turning spaces have been constructed in accordance with the approved plan. These spaces shall thereafter be retained for their designated use.

Reason: To provide adequate on-site car parking and turning space for the development.

### Informative

#### *Works within the Highway – Implementation Team*

The applicant is required to obtain all appropriate consents from West Sussex County Council, as Highway Authority, to cover the off-site highway works. The applicant is

requested to contact The Implementation Team Leader (01243 642105) to commence this process. The applicant is advised that it is an offence to undertake any works within the highway prior to the agreement being in place.

### **Landscape Consultant**

To be reported

### **Sport England**

#### **Sport England – Statutory Role and Policy**

It is understood that the proposal prejudices the use, or leads to the loss of use, of land being used as a playing field or has been used as a playing field in the last five years, as defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (Statutory Instrument 2015 No. 595). The consultation with Sport England is therefore a statutory requirement.

Sport England has considered the application in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (in particular Para. 99), and against its own playing fields policy, which states:

'Sport England will oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of:

- all or any part of a playing field, or
- land which has been used as a playing field and remains undeveloped, or
- land allocated for use as a playing field

unless, in the judgement of Sport England, the development as a whole meets with one or more of five specific exceptions.

Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and Guidance document can be viewed via the below link:

[www.sportengland.org/playingfieldspolicy](http://www.sportengland.org/playingfieldspolicy)

#### **Assessment against Sport England Policy/NPPF**

The proposal involves a revised scheme for replacement clubhouse and new storage facility for Haywards Heath Rugby Football Club following the demolition of the club's existing clubhouse. A similar scheme was granted planning permission in 2019 (Ref: DM//19/0670). The scheme permitted in 2019 is understood to be no longer affordable for the club to deliver and therefore the current scheme has been progressed following a value engineering exercise. The rationale for the replacement clubhouse is set out in detail in the application documents and has not changed since the 2019 application. I have consulted the RFU (the governing body for rugby union) for their current advice and they have confirmed that the need for the replacement clubhouse and extended car parking was well demonstrated and accepted as part of the 2019 planning application and that the need for the replacement clubhouse has been highlighted within the Sussex RFU Facility plan for at least 10 years and re-affirmed within the recent (December 2022) Sussex RFU facility need audit. The RFU has also advised that the club has been pro-actively working with the RFU to deliver the project and has successfully applied to the RFU Winter Sports Asset Loan scheme for funding part of the project. In relation to the design of the facility, while the current scheme would result in a reduction in floor area across all of the changing rooms compared to the 2019 approved

scheme, the RFU has advised that it would still deliver six en-suite changing rooms (that may actually provide more effective, usable space over the previous design due to the layout and orientation of the bench seating) compared to the existing three changing rooms, an additional official's changing room, the ability to cater for mixed gender concurrent activity and improved social space facilities.

In view of the above considerations, it is considered that the proposed replacement clubhouse, storage facility and additional car parking would respond to an identified facility need and would be clearly ancillary to the principal use of the site as a playing field. In terms of the impact on the playing field, like the previously approved application, the siting of the development would not affect any existing playing pitches on the playing field.

## **Conclusion**

Further to the above assessment, Sport England is therefore satisfied that the proposal meets the following Sport England Policy exception:

*2 - The proposed development is ancillary to the principal use of the site as a playing field or playing fields, and does not affect the quantity or quality of pitches or adversely affect their use.*

Sport England therefore **does not wish to raise an objection** to this application as a statutory consultee, nor do we wish to recommend any conditions should planning consent be granted.

## **COMMENTS MADE AS A NON-STATUTORY CONSULTEE**

As a non-statutory consultee, without prejudice to our position as a statutory consultee set out above, Sport England would wish to make advisory comments on the following matters:

### *Principle of the Development*

Sport England assesses this type of application in line with its planning objectives and with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Sport England's planning objectives are to PROTECT existing facilities, ENHANCE the quality, accessibility and management of existing facilities, and to PROVIDE new facilities to meet demand. Sport England's Planning for Sport guidance can be found here: <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-for-sport-guidance/> . Principle 6 of the guidance relates to the 'Enhance' objective and in summary supports improvements to the existing sport provision where they are needed. As set out above the rationale for the project is to substantially improve the ancillary facilities offered at Haywards Heath RFC's site especially in relation to improving the capacity and quality of the club's ancillary facilities for players, coaches and spectators. The proposals are therefore considered to meet principle 6 of the guidance therefore. Sport England would therefore wish to confirm its **support** for the principle of the proposed development as a non-statutory consultee. The RFU has also confirmed their support for the proposal.

The absence of an objection to this application, in the context of the Town and Country Planning Act, cannot be taken as formal support or consent from Sport England or any National Governing Body of Sport to any related funding application, or as may be required by virtue of any pre-existing funding agreement.



We would be grateful if you would advise us of the outcome of the application by sending us a copy of the decision notice.

If you would like any further information or advice please contact me.

### **Community Facilities Project Officer**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the planning application for a replacement clubhouse, new storage facility, car parking, servicing and vehicular access at the Haywards Heath Rugby Football Club Sports Pavilion at Whitemans Green, Cuckfield RH17 5HX following the demolition of the existing premises. Whitemans Green is the biggest multi-pitch site in the district and it is intensively used for match play and training. The new building will provide improved facilities for a number of Cuckfield based football and athletic clubs, as well as the rugby club, and it is identified as a priority in the Council's Playing Pitch Study. The clubhouse will deliver six Sports England level changing rooms, which will enable the club to offer girls and ladies rugby and a multi-sport programme, plus other on site facilities which will allow the club to run a sustainable community sports programme. The proposed plans are fully supported and will be a welcome investment in high quality sports infrastructure in the District.

### **Environmental Protection Officer**

Comments: I am writing to provide comments on behalf of Environmental Protection regarding the proposed replacement clubhouse for Haywards Heath Rugby Club. I have assessed the potential impact of the new clubhouse on the surrounding residents and would like to highlight the following points.

The new clubhouse is situated at a greater distance from properties to the north of Whitemans Green compared to the existing clubhouse, and it is also at a considerable distance from properties to the south. Based on this information, I do not anticipate noise to be a significant issue, as looking at our records for the last 10 years, we have received no noise complaints about the venue. However, it is important to note that the first floor includes a large social area. While I acknowledge that the clubhouse is situated at a distance from residential properties, there may still be potential for noise generation during regulated entertainment activities.

To ensure the protection and well-being of existing residents, I would strongly recommend attaching a condition to the planning permission. This condition would require that all external windows and doors of the clubhouse remain closed, except for necessary access or egress, whenever regulated entertainment activities are taking place on the premises. This condition would help mitigate any potential noise transmission and disturbance to nearby residents during events or gatherings in the social area.

Recommendation: approve with the following condition:

1. All external windows and doors of the premises must remain closed, except for necessary access or egress, whenever regulated entertainment activities are taking place on the premises.

## Drainage Engineer

### APPLICATION DETAILS

<b>Application Number</b>	DM/23/1174 (2)
<b>Response Date</b>	21.08.2023
<b>Site Location</b>	Whitemans Green
<b>Development Description</b>	New Rugby Club House
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>No objection Condition</b>

### FLOOD RISK

#### INFORMATION

[The Planning Practice Guidance for Flood Risk and Coastal Change](#) requires all sources of flood risk to be considered consistently with how fluvial and tidal flood risk is considered within the [National Planning Policy Framework](#). This means that surface water flood risk extents should be considered comparable to flood zones when assessing a development's vulnerability to flooding and the need for a site-specific flood risk assessment.

For clarity Mid Sussex District Council's Flood Risk and Drainage Team (in line with advice from West Sussex Lead Local Flood Authority) utilise the below table when considering flood risk.

<b>Annual exceedance</b>	<b>Flood Zone</b>	<b>Surface Water Flood Risk</b>
Greater than 3.3% (>1:30-year)	3b	High
Between 1% and 3.3% (1:100-year and 1:30-year)	3a	Medium
Between 0.1% and 1% (1:1,000-year and 1:100-year)	2	Low
Less than 0.1% (<1:1,000-year)	1	Very Low

#### APPLICATION SPECIFIC COMMENT

The site is in flood zone 1 and is at low fluvial flood risk (risk of flooding from Main Rivers). The site is shown to be at very low surface water flood risk (comparable to flood zone 1).

Mid Sussex District Council's records do not contain records of the site flooding. Our records also contain no records of flooding within the area immediately surrounding the site.

Mid Sussex District Council's records are not complete, and flooding may have occurred which is not recorded. A site having never flooded in the past does not mean it won't flood in the future.

#### SEWERS ON SITE

The Southern Water public sewer map does not show any public sewers located within the redline boundary of the site.

## **SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE**

### ***INFORMATION***

Surface water drainage will ultimately need to be designed to meet the latest national and local drainage policies. The drainage system will need to consider climate change, the allowances for which should be based on the [latest climate change guidance](#) from the Environment Agency.

### ***APPLICATION SPECIFIC COMMENT***

It is proposed that the development will use SuDS attenuation for the two main structures and parking areas

Information into our general requirements for detailed surface water drainage design is included within the 'General Drainage Requirement Guidance' section. This level of information will be required to address the recommended drainage condition.

To ensure the final drainage design meets with the latest design requirements we would advise the applicant to confirm the design parameters required in relation to climate change etc prior to undertaking detailed design.

## **FOUL WATER DRAINAGE**

It is proposed that the development will utilise existing foul water arrangement used by the existing structure, to be demolished.

Information into our general requirements for detailed foul water drainage design is included within the 'General Drainage Requirement Guidance' section.

To ensure the final drainage design meets with the latest design requirements we would advise the applicant to confirm the design parameters required prior to undertaking detailed design.

## **CONDITION RECOMMENDATION**

### ***C18D - SINGLE DWELLING/UNIT***

The development hereby permitted shall not commence unless and until details of the proposed foul and surface water drainage and means of disposal have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The **building** shall not be occupied or brought into use, until all the approved drainage works have been carried out in accordance with the agreed details.

**Reason:** To ensure that the proposal is satisfactorily drained and to accord with the NPPF requirements, Policy CS13 of the Mid Sussex Local Plan, Policy DP41 of the Pre-Submission District Plan (2014 - 2031) and Policy ...'z'... of the Neighbourhood Plan.

## **GENERAL DRAINAGE REQUIREMENT GUIDANCE**

Mid Sussex District Council's flood risk and drainage requirements are based on relevant national and local policies and guidance.

## **SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE**

Finalised detailed surface water drainage design is required to be submitted and approved prior to construction starting on site. The design should be based on the [Environment Agency's latest climate change allowances](#) and follow the latest [West Sussex Lead Local Flood Authority Policy for the Management of Surface Water](#).

The use of pumped surface water drainage is not considered to be sustainable and therefore would not be considered an appropriate means of managing surface water as part of a development.

The locating of attenuation, detention, or infiltration devices (including permeable surfacing) within flood extents is not acceptable, this includes areas of increased surface water flood risk.

Table 1 overleaf sets out a list of information the detailed surface water drainage design should include. Developers are encouraged to complete the table and provide as a cover page to future drainage design submissions.

## **FOUL WATER DRAINAGE**

Finalised detailed foul water drainage design is required to be submitted and approved prior to construction starting on site. The use of public foul sewer connection should always be prioritised over non-mains drainage options.

The use of non-mains foul drainage should consider the latest [Environment Agency's General Binding Rules](#).

The Environment Agency have advised that any existing septic tank foul drainage systems that are found to not comply with the latest Binding Rules will need to be replaced or upgraded.

Table 2 overleaf sets out a list of information the detailed foul water drainage design should include. Developers are encouraged to complete the table and provide as a cover page to future drainage design submissions.

Table 1: Detailed drainage design requirements – surface water

Requirement	Information	Location of information / drawing number
<b><i>For all designs</i></b>		
Greenfield runoff rate details for the area to be drained (using FEH or a similar approved method)		
On-site infiltration test results		
Plans / details of areas to be drained based on finalised development plans		
Calculations showing the system has been designed to cater for the 1 in 30 with climate change and 1 in 100 with climate change storm events		
Detailed drainage plans, including invert levels and pipe diameters, showing entire drainage system		
Maintenance and management plan <sup>1</sup>		
<b><i>For soakaways</i></b>		
Sizing calculations (to cater for 6-hour, 1 in 100-year plus climate change event)		
Half drain time (<24 hours)		
Construction details		
<b><i>For discharge to watercourse</i></b>		
Discharge rate (1 in 1 or QBar Greenfield rate for drained area) <sup>2</sup>		
Outfall location and construction details		
Attenuation sizing calculations (to cater for 1 in 100-year plus climate change event <sup>3</sup> )		
<b><i>For discharge to sewer</i></b>		
Discharge rates (restricted to 1 in 1 or QBar Greenfield rate for drained area unless otherwise agreed with sewerage provider)		
Discharge location and manhole number		
Outline approval from sewerage provider in relation to connection, discharge rate and connection location <sup>4</sup>		
Attenuation sizing calculations (to cater for 1 in 100-year plus climate change event <sup>5</sup> )		

<sup>1</sup> The scale of this document should reflect the scale of the development and the complexity of the drainage system.

<sup>2</sup> If the 1 in 1 or QBar Greenfield runoff rate cannot be achieved, then evidence into why a higher discharge rate has been proposed should be provided as part of the detailed design. Due to improvements in drainage systems the 2l/s minimum will not be accepted without justification.

<sup>3</sup> If system does not attenuate up to the 1 in 100-year with climate change event, then evidence that the system shall not increase flood risk on or off site shall be required.

<sup>4</sup> Formal approval via S106 etc is not required.

<sup>5</sup> If system does not attenuate up to the 1 in 100-year with climate change event, then evidence that the system shall not increase flood risk on or off site shall be required.

<sup>1</sup> The scale of this document should reflect the scale of the development and the complexity of the drainage system.

Table 2: Detailed drainage design requirements – foul water

Requirement	Summary	Location of information / drawing number
<b><i>For all designs</i></b>		
Plans showing entire drainage system, including invert levels, pipe diameters, falls and outfall/connection location		
Foul flow calculations and confirmation proposed system is sized appropriately		
<b><i>For connection to main foul sewer</i></b>		
Discharge location and manhole number		
Evidence of communication with Water Authority regarding connection <sup>6</sup>		
<b><i>For non-mains system with drainage field</i></b>		
Evidence of permeability (infiltration) test results specific to treated effluent drainage fields		
Evidence that either: a) The system meets latest General Binding Rules, or b) An Environmental Permit application is to be submitted		
<b><i>For non-mains system with discharge to open water</i></b>		
Evidence that either: a) The system meets latest General Binding Rules, or b) An Environmental Permit application is to be submitted		
Outfall location and construction details		

<sup>1</sup> Formal approval via S106 etc is not required.

### **Tree Officer**

The AIA is dated 5/2/19 and shows the original, approved scheme (DM/19/0670), rather than what is currently proposed. I note, I did not object to the previous proposal.

Whilst I am willing to accept the lack of an updated tree survey, as removals seem to be mainly limited to fastigate hornbeams, however, an updated plan, method statement, particularly in relation to incursions within RPAs is required, and a tree protection plan.

Replacement trees are indicated on the original plan and I would expect to see replacement trees with the new scheme. Policy DP37 favours native trees and I would expect trees to

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have longevity and be appropriate to the area. Fastigate forms and double forms are unlikely to be acceptable.

### **Conservation Officer**

The current proposal relates to the club house of the Haywards Heath Rugby Club which sits to the south of Whitemans Green, a short distance to the west of the Conservation Area boundary. The club house is set within an extensive area of playing fields, which with the surrounding trees and plantings make a positive contribution to the generally green and open character of the setting of the Conservation Area. The club house itself, however, is a poor quality building and detracts from this setting. Planning permission was granted in 2019 for its replacement with a larger building set slightly further away from the road. The current proposal is similar, but shows alterations to the detailed design of the building including in particular the facing and roofing materials.

As approved, the building is shown with facing brick to the ground floor and timber cladding to the first floor, and a monopitch roof. The current proposal amends the facing materials to composite louvred panels in a dark grey colour at ground floor with composite micro rib panels in a metallic silver at first floor. The roof is shown in prefabricated panels with a light great finish, with a deep red fascia.

In my opinion, the revision to the facing and roofing materials is unfortunately a retrograde step in terms of the quality of the building and the impact that it will have on the setting of the Conservation Area. The revised materials are less sympathetic to the generally rural character of that setting and may result in an unduly visually prominent building, particularly due to the inclusion of light grey/metallic finishes and a prominent red fascia detail.

Therefore, whilst I appreciate the financial considerations behind the revisions to the approved scheme, and would not necessarily object to a revised material palette which could include cladding in a more appropriate colour scheme, as it stands I consider that the proposal will detract from the setting of the Whitemans Green Conservation Area, contrary to District Plan Policy DP35 and causing a low level of less than substantial harm, through impact on setting, to the character and appearance of the Area. The balancing exercise set out in paragraph 202 will therefore apply.

If on balance, weighing the public benefits of the proposal against the low level of less than substantial harm identified, Members are minded to recommend approval, I would suggest that an appropriate condition is attached to the approval requiring further details of facing and roofing materials, including colour and finish, which might allow a more sympathetic palette to be agreed upon.