

LVS Hassocks, Sayers Common Site Allocation

LVS Hassocks Site
London Road, Sayers Common, Hassocks, West Sussex BN6 8HT

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ABOUT ECA

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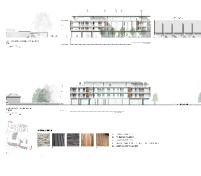
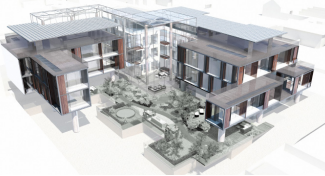
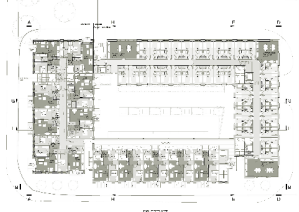
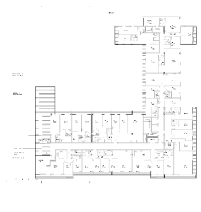
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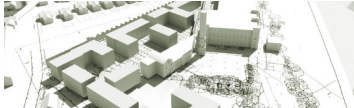
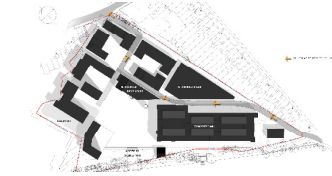
Planning appeals and expert witness

Development plan monitoring and attendance at Examinations in Public

Neighbourhood planning and community consultation



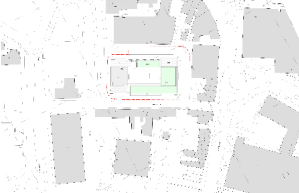
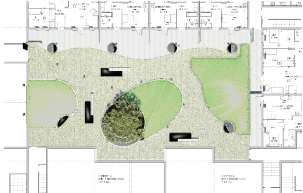
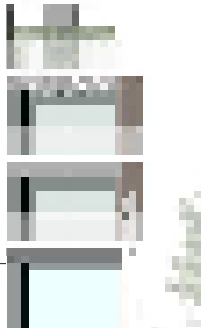
Project: West One
Location: Luton, London
Type: 6 & 10 storey mixed use development, containing 84 apartments, 180 student rooms
Status: The site achieved planning permission in 2015.
Notes: The site is located on the former headquarters of Whitebread (Whitebread house). The building will be demolished and replaced by this mixed use scheme. It is designed around a courtyard space which will create a tranquil area in this city centre development.
The scheme was presented for planning approval in 2014 and after successful negotiations achieved permission this year. The planning officer noted "the quality of the design and materials proposed is excellent and the mix of uses will bring more activity to this part of town."



Project: Pagfield Mill
Location: Wigan
Type: Mixed-use development including 241 apartments, 16,000 sqm commercial and retail
Status: third stage pre-application
Notes: Site of a 19th century cotton mill and weaving sheds in the centre of Wigan, adjacent to Mosses park. The mill is listed but in poor condition. We are proposing to renovate the mill and redevelop some of the weaving sheds. Wigan have been very supportive of the proposals and we are now at the third stage of submitting pre-application proposals.
A full planning submission will happen around January 2016.



Project: The Richmond
Location: Sunbury, London
Type: Housing development for 54 Apartments
Status: Planning permission achieved in 2014. Currently under construction.
Notes: The site was previously an IBM office building from the 1970s. The building's structure is in good condition, has large floor to ceiling heights and is entirely open plan. The facades are in poor condition. We designed apartments that would retain the existing structure but replace all facades and finishes. The planning officer has supported the scheme throughout and praised the design of the new building.
The proposals use natural materials but the facades are laid out in clear and open manner to create a very contemporary high quality building.



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1. Introduction

This report is prepared by ECA Architecture and Planning on behalf of LTC Charity in support of the allocation of the LVS Hassocks school in Sayers Common. The site has been through an initial round of scrutiny and has been taken forward as an allocation in the emerging Mid Sussex Local Plan.

The site has initially been considered suitable for allocation for a number of reasons, which include the use of the land as a brownfield site and its proximity to facilities to the village. For the site to continue to be viewed favourably for allocation by Mid Sussex Council, the Regulation 18 comments need addressing as part of the evidence gathering. The comments made are listed overleaf.

This report addresses the key issues and actions to take the site forward under the local plan. The following pages summarise, statutory consultees responses, policy position and the findings from the reports commissioned to date on the project.

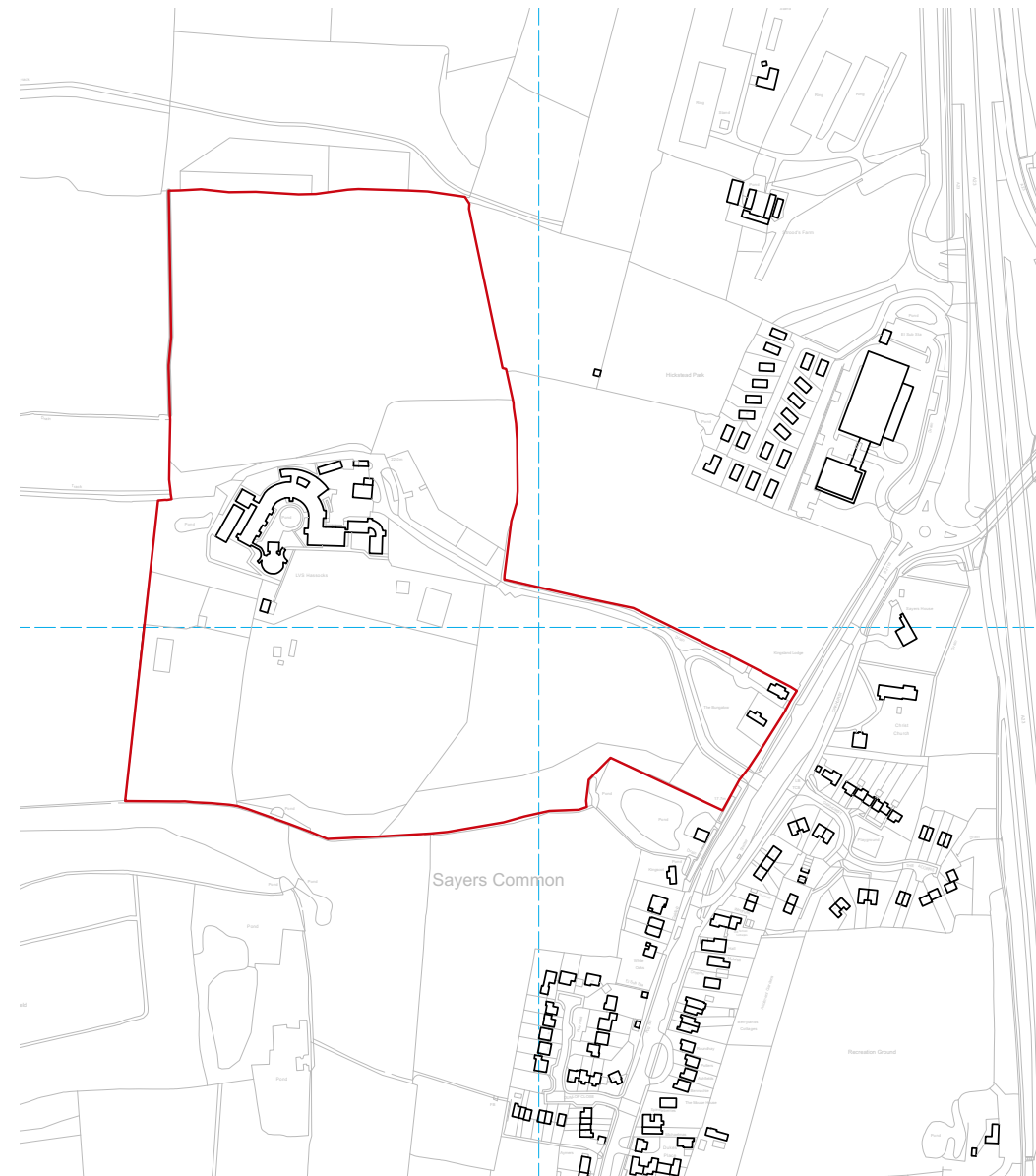


Figure 1: Site Location Plan and Ownership boundary with a red line as registered on HM land Registry

2. Regulation 18 Consultation Responses

Statutory Consultees:

2.1 Environment Agency

- Amend wording to avoid developing in flood risk areas; consistent with other allocations, and to include reference to integrate of SuDS.

2.2 Southern Water

- Amend wording to ensure occupation is phased with delivery of wastewater infrastructure
- Reinforcement of network to be funded through New Infrastructure charge; site promoters and Southern Water will need to work together to understand development program.
- Remove policy requirement referring to wastewater treatment upgrades; not needed for this site specifically

2.3 West Sussex County Council

- Amend wording to reference brick clay safeguarding area
- Sustainable transport provision; coordinated approach across Sayers Common sites needed

2.4 MP/Local Authorities

- None

2.5 Sussex Wildlife Trust

- No ecological surveys provided; unable to provide comments at this stage.
- Site should be considered in conjunction with other sites in Sayers Common

Other Comments:

2.6 Landscape/Character

- Concerns raised by responders of over development.
- Concerns that there is too much development for a Category 3 settlement.
- Concerns of poor public transport.

2.7 Infrastructure/Sustainability

- Traffic issues and Cowfold is already has an Air Quality Control area.
- Flooding issues already in the area
- The wastewater and sewerage system need reinforcements or improvements made.
- Lack of infrastructure in area.
- Healthcare system already struggling with the number of people

2.8 Biodiversity

- Damage to habitat of Roe deer and large mature oak trees.
- Impacts on ecosystem

2.9 General

- Government policy is changing; housing number could change.

3. Emerging Local Plan Allocation Policy

Policy DPH22 of the emerging District Plan seeks to allocate LVS Hassocks school and grounds for 200 dwellings. The policy raised issues that need addressing for the LVS site. This included prioritising pedestrian and cycle access throughout the development and upgrade and integrate the existing rights of way which crosses the south eastern portion of the site. It seeks necessary upgrades to the existing access onto B2118.

The policy requires the retention, protection and enhancement of mature trees and hedgerows across the site. It ensures development provides a positive edge to these features and the wider countryside. It further seeks to avoid developing areas of existing flood risk, particularly along the southern boundary and mitigate impacts through integration of SuDS and undertake an archaeological assessment and provide any appropriate mitigation arising from the results.

In addition, the site needs to comply with Policy DPH4 which highlights issues of urban design principles, landscape, trees, heritage and archaeology, biodiversity, access and highways, flood risk and drainage, and utilities that need addressing as part of any future application.



Figure 2: Existing Site Pictures

4. Sustainable Development and Design

The LVS design seeks to enhance the 20-minute neighbourhoods' model and seeks to prioritise sustainable links that supports walking, cycling and public transport. The location of the site is conducive to a coordinated approach to travel that is needed in Sayers Common (due to number of allocations). Linking the site to improved bus services would be simple with this allocation as it is located off the main B2118 road that transects the village meaning that the site would be able to easily integrate with infrastructure links in the future.

The entirety of the site lies outside of the existing built-up area of the village; however, it is within walking and cycling distance of the essential day-to-day services and facilities that the village provides. Within the site walking and cycling links are provided and will seek to be well linked with the existing network in a way that encourages walking as part of any final design.

A series of linked green spaces will be accessible throughout the site providing places to connect with neighbours, space for a healthy quality of life and to provide important natural connections for wildlife. The site will also seek to provide a mix of housing that fits in with and enhances the local identity of the village of Sayers Common as well as contribute to affordable housing in line with policy recommendations and requirements. The site will seek to provide a legacy of housing that compliments the needs and growth of the village for future generations. Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. The development design will support the expansion of electronic communications networks throughout the site.

Brownfield Site

The site has initially been considered suitable for allocation for a number of reasons, which include the use of the land as a brownfield site. LVS Hassocks school site is currently used for a mix of uses, namely for education purposes as well as existing dwellings.

The Neighbourhood plan specifies that LVS school is an amenity in the village. This is agreed with; however, the school is no longer fit for purpose due to a number of redundant buildings and underutilized floor space. Furthermore, the surrounding land is not required for the school to function and is not used for education purposes nor is it required in terms of the community cafe. There would be no overall policy concerns in relation to the loss of some land nor the reuse of the land on which redundant buildings are site, which are not directly used as a school facility.

Neighbouring Amenities

To the east of the site are Kingsland Bungalow and Kingsland Lodge which are located at the entrance to the site. In addition, there are properties located along London Rd starting with Kingscot which is a Grade II Listed Building and those on Dunlop Close.

The impact on the occupiers of these properties would be negligible in terms of direct impact with an appropriately designed scheme.

To the north are a number of buildings including some used for employment use and a few other specialist shops. In addition, those at Hickstead Park. It is considered that these properties are also sufficiently distanced so as to avoid any permanent direct impact in terms of noise or overlooking etc.



Figure 3: Existing Transport Link



Figure 4: Local Shops



Figure 5: Grade II Listed Building - Kingscot

School Use & Design

LVS Hassocks is a school that believes in making a difference. The students have a diagnosis on the autism spectrum and have difficulties with communication and interaction. Many are unable to manage a mainstream school environment due to the anxiety arising from their sensory, social and communication difficulties. The school's aim is for all of the students to become happy, healthy, empowered and included adults, who participate in, and contribute towards society.

LVS Hassocks school was opened in 2009 as a boarding school. The boarding function on site was a good fit due to the nature of the priory with built-in accommodation and communal areas. In recent years, however, it has become a day-school due to the needs of the students. Areas of the accommodation on site, especially around the cloisters, are therefore now not in use, making some of the buildings redundant. Consequently the school and grounds need to be rethought.

There is a certain amount of embodied energy in the school and further work is needed in order to understand if the building's fabric and MEP upgrades are a sustainable option for the building or if it simply needs to be demolished. Due to the specialist needs of the pupils, a purpose built SEN school building will need to be provided on site, for the purposes of continuity and safety of the pupils. A replacement school will be partly funded by the sale of the land for housing and would have the added benefit of providing a functional purpose built school that functions efficiently for the benefit of the pupils and staff.

The school currently has 63 students; however, it has had up to 89 in the last few years. The vast majority of these students are Local Authority

funded places. The charity is of the opinion that 72 students is the optimum number and the intention is to provide a replacement school that can cater for up to 80 students. The fluctuating number is due to the demand as well as the different specific needs that the students have. The school has previously had boarding facilities on site however this model of school care is not something that the charity intends to provide again.

The numbers are very similar and essentially the provision will be like for like, however, without the boarding facilities that the school currently has. The intention is to provide a high-quality designed school that is economically and environmentally friendly as well as meeting the social and every day needs of pupils, staff and parents. The design will prioritise their well-being and add to their quality of life. The school life will be enhanced through the outside provision of a forest school, orchard, MUGA, etc. Teaching children to grow their own food and enjoy nature outside can have numerous benefits to health, education and overall well-being. Gardening can develop a greater appreciation for food and for learning about sustainable practices as well as gain valuable life skills having a positive impact on their growth and development. Gardening and being in nature is a physical and emotional outlet promoting active lifestyles as well as being an opportunity to learn about science.

The needs of the pupils will mean that the construction of the school and surrounding site will need to be well thought out in the future. The safety and care of the pupils is of the utmost importance and a construction management plan will be needed to ensure their ongoing well-being during construction. The policy allows for the school being provided on site, however due to the sensitive nature of the pupils and their sensory needs during construction, it may mean that a school may need to be provided off site, within the district.



Figure 6: Yarrells School Early Years Centre Designed by ECA



Figure 7: Yarrells School Early Years Centre Designed by ECA

5. Constraints Map

This constraints map illustrates areas within the site that are to be retained and protected from development. It also illustrates the position of existing highways entrances & exits, pedestrian routes through the site, important ecologically rich areas, existing wildlife routes and existing trees positions.



Figure 8: Constraints map

6. Proposed Masterplan Design

The proposed masterplan seeks to provide a new neighbourhood to the Sayers Common area making use of land adjacent to the existing Independent SEN School for Autism in Hassocks.

The existing school and ancillary buildings will be demolished and replaced with 200-250 new homes for the area. These comprise a mix of terrace, semi-detached, detached and flatted developments.

Higher density housing is provided in the centre of the development with low density housing positioned on the edges of the village. The proposed DPH for the entire development with the school is: 22.6 DPH

One option is to retain the SEN school on the site but in a new location.

An alternative option is to relocate the school off of the site but within the local area. A mix of playing fields, forest school provision and a school orchard is also proposed.

Adjacent to this is a new open space for local residents to use at their leisure. New woodland walks and wetland areas are proposed to help improve biodiversity. All development has been kept away from the surveyed habitats known to be found on site. Care has been taken to provide, enhance and maintain green links through the site for existing wildlife whilst retaining all surveyed trees of importance.

New tree plantings and treed avenues have been proposed to help to maintain and enhance these green links which separate the two housing districts.

The sylvan character of the entrance to the new housing development has been enhanced with new plantings, where development set back to provide

a green sylvan entrance and departure from the conurbation both, maintaining and enhancing existing street scenes.

Housing Design

Care has been taken to minimise bulk, scale and massing, proposing only 2 storey houses with flatted developments being 2.5 storeys.

All proposed dwellings will have access to private amenity space via balconies in flatted developments and generous garden spaces for all housing types.

Materials would be of a similar brick to that found in the neighbouring village with traditional pitched roofs and tiles.

Landscape

An initial Topographic survey was undertaken to inform a number of the reports that have been commissioned, namely the Landscape impact. The Landscape and Visual Appraisal found that the site is not within any protected landscape designations, it has no ancient woodlands and no Tree Preservation Orders (TPO). However, there is a Public Right of Way through the site that shall be retained. The appraisal found that any Listed buildings are set away from the development site and unlikely to be impacted by the development due to their position and proximity.

The report found that the construction phase effects are predicted to be adverse, however they will be temporary. These effects can be controlled and mitigated through normal planning mechanisms. The operational effects of developing the site for residential development and school would impact

on local landscape resources such as topography and vegetation, but these impacts would be relatively minor. The settlement pattern of Sayers Common would be permanently changed as a result of the development at this allocation, but this would be in the context of new development under way immediately to the south. The settings of key heritage features, protected trees and ancient woodland, would not be adversely impacted.

The proposed development would introduce a change in views from a restricted number of publicly accessible locations. For the most part the site, and buildings on it, would not be visible from many of these locations, largely due to the strong landscape structure of the site and its surroundings. This is evidenced by the fact that very little of the existing complex of buildings is seen from outside the site, except the upper part of the chapel 'spire' which is proposed to be removed thereby reducing its impact on the wider views.

Close up views, specifically from the Public Right of Way HSC/9Hu/4 which passes through the site, will inevitably change, and adverse impacts are predicted for these views. This impact would not be harmful, provided the changes are mitigated through design and management. This could include improved landscaping and green spaces.

In summary, impacts on landscape resources and views that would be brought about by the allocation of the site are predicted to be generally neutral, any adverse effects would be minor and capable of being satisfactorily mitigated through design and long-term management.

Trees

No ancient woodlands and no TPOs are located within the site. The trees are mainly located to the edges or line the existing roads. These trees will be retained and enhanced, whilst also retaining a significant area for development surrounding this. This should provide for an attractive entrance and route through the site as well as contribute to wildlife.

The indicative plans of the site seek to preserve and protect the wildlife corridors. The population of older/veteran oak trees within the site require a high level of protection that will aid these trees futures in the new development. Protecting the wildlife corridors and trees reduces the environmental impact of the site once completed and maintains and enhances the biodiversity of the species that live in and around the site. The result for the development is that the site will be attractive to future occupiers and those enjoying the green routes through the site.

Flooding and Drainage

The site is designated by the EA flood map as being located in Flood Zone 1, with a likelihood of flooding less than 0.1% each year. The proposed development does add an impermeable area to the existing site, but the discharge rate will be limited to the 1in1 year Greenfield runoff rate with an allowance for climate change, in line with the West Sussex LLFA policy for Management of Surface Water.

There are no historical records showing the site to be at risk from groundwater flooding. The proposed surface system will discharge at an attenuated rate to the existing watercourse along the southern site boundary. The proposed foul system will drain via a pumped system to the existing public system within

London Road. This will be the same method as the existing foul system, and the same brake chamber locations.

Overall, the development is appropriate in line with the latest government guidance as it does not increase the risk of flooding to the site or the surrounding properties.

Highways and Access

The site offers a sustainable location for future residential development, with potential for journeys to be undertaken on foot, by cycle or by public transport. This was confirmed through the recent Appeal Decisions for the development to the south.

The development offers an opportunity to fully embed sustainable travel patterns and reduced car ownership amongst new residents through the provision of a Travel Plan, encompassing both infrastructural and promotional measures. A package of measures would be introduced to reduce car dependency at the development, which would help offset any residual highway impacts from the proposed scheme. Vehicular access that is needed to the site can be achieved from the B2118, in the location of the existing access to LVS Hassocks. There is additionally potential for an emergency and active modes access to be provided along the existing PROW.

There is good potential for trips to local amenities within Sayers Common to be undertaken on foot, whilst there are bus services in the vicinity which could be used for journeys further afield. These modes can be enhanced through improved pedestrian crossing facilities on the B2118. Cycle trips can be made from the site to destinations

including Hurstpierpoint, Burgess Hill and Hassocks. Burgess Hill and Hassocks both benefit from railway stations. The stations have cycle parking, and can also be accessed by bus.

Based on the conclusions of this transport strategy, adequate and safe access can be achieved to the site, which would represent a suitable location for future residential led development from a transport perspective.

The school intends to have appropriate drop off and pick up facilities for students, parents and teachers on site. 70 parking spaces have been provided. A management plan will be provided in order to appropriately manage the impact of the drop off and pick up times for the school.

Ecology

The preliminary Ecological Appraisal highlights that further surveys are needed in the form of an Ecological Impact Assessment. The document did not raise any significant concerns or specific ecological requirements that would hinder development however precautionary surveys were recommended due to the rural location of the site.

The document sought various surveys including a Badger survey, Emergent and reentry bat surveys, a habitat suitability index, environmental DNA testing survey for the great crested newt, Hazel dormouse survey, and reptile survey. All species would be able to be mitigated in some way and would not hinder development. However, they should be identified and appropriately planned for at the outset.

The document recommended retaining all trees and hedgerows which can be achieved as per

the indicative plans. It further recommended a Construction strategy and Lighting strategy to ensure that all wildlife is protected from the development.

The document further recommended that Biodiversity Net Gain calculations are undertaken in order to demonstrate that the development proposals for site will result in a positive net gain for biodiversity of at least 10%. The appraisal recommends that this can be achieved through margin wildflower enhancements, log and brushwood piles, bat boxes, bird boxes and bee bricks.



Figure 9: Masterplan with indicative housing densities

7. Summary

The site is an opportunity to provide an extension to Sayers Common that has sustainable travel links that supports walking, cycling and public transport.

It would be easily integrated with infrastructure links in the future allowing access to essential day-to-day services and facilities that the village provides.

Existing trees and ecology would be enhanced and mitigated where necessary with appropriate levels of access to green spaces throughout the development.

This would provide places to connect with neighbours, space for a healthy quality of life and to provide important natural connections for wildlife.

The site would also seek to provide a mix of housing that fits in with and enhances the local identity of the village of Sayers Common as well as contribute to affordable housing in line with policy recommendations and requirements. The site allocation seeks to provide a legacy of housing that compliments the needs and growth of the village for future generations.