

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

To: All Members of the Planning Committee (Cllrs Jane Baker, Kristian Berggreen, Robert Brewer, Leslie Campbell, Bill Hatton and Nick Owens) with copies to all other Councillors for information.

A meeting of the **PLANNING COMMITTEE** will be held on **Monday 25 November 2019 at 7.30pm** in the **Parish Centre, Adastra Park, Hassocks**

Parish Clerk
20 November 2019

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Disclosure by Councillors of personal and/or pecuniary interests in matters on the agenda and whether the Councillors regard their interest as prejudicial/pecuniary under the terms of the Code of Conduct.

3. MINUTES

To accept Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 4 November 2019 (previously circulated)

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

5. APPLICATIONS (copies of each application can be viewed online via the Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) Website - <https://pa.midsussex.gov.uk/online-applications/>)

5.1 [DM/19/4175 Garage Rear Of 29A Keymer Road Hassocks West Sussex](#) *Change of use from B8 storage to C3 residential creating 1 x 1 bedroom dwelling. Proposed front, rear and side windows and 2 side dormers.*

5.2 [DM/19/4555 14 Wilmington Close Hassocks West Sussex BN6 8QB](#) *First floor extension with a Juliet balcony to the rear elevation.*

5.3 [DM/19/4496 Land West Of London Road London Road Hassocks West Sussex](#) *Variation of condition 2 of application DM/17/4307, replacing approved plans to change the location and provision of visitor parking spaces, amendment to the location of the northern footpath link to the adjacent recreation ground, move Plot 60s garage by 500mm, move Plot 21 due to the discrepancy between physical and legal line of the boundary.*

5.4 [DM/19/4616 Puffins Ockley Lane Hassocks West Sussex](#) *Demolition of existing conservatory. New roof extension and single-storey rear extension.*

5.5 [DM/19/4702 36 Dale Avenue Hassocks West Sussex BN6 8LP](#) *Atlantic Cedar - Remove 2 lowest branches back to trunk (growing over garage and school access pavement). Reduce branch above to first growth point before bend. Main branch over front pavement - remove 3 sub branches back to fork.*

5.6 [DM/19/4666 28 Dale Avenue Hassocks West Sussex BN6 8LP](#) *Conversion of roof space including hip to gable extension, rear dormer and Velux Roof windows.*

5.7 [DM/19/4757 6 Abbots Close Hassocks West Sussex BN6 8PH](#) *Front porch addition.*

5.8 [SDNP/19/05340/FUL Underhill Lane Clayton West Sussex](#) *Erection of holiday cabin.*

6. DECISION NOTICES

7. SOUTH DOWNS PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW – Members are invited to review the draft new South Downs Partnership Management Plan (PMP) 2020-25 (previously circulated as a background paper) and to note the Statutory Notification letter (Appendix 1) sent by the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) inviting observations on the proposed changes from Local Authorities and Statutory Consultees.

8. NEW STREET NAMES –. Members are invited to consider a request from MSDC regarding street names for the new development on the site of the former golf course. (Appendix 2)

9. CORRESPONDENCE.

9.1 DIDACIOUS DESIGNS. Land West Of The Drove, Ditchling. Members are invited to note the attached correspondence received from Didacious Designs regarding application SDNP/18/04155/FUL. (Appendix 3)

10. Urgent Matters at the discretion of the Chairman for noting and/or inclusion on a future agenda.

11. Date of Next Meeting: Monday 16 December 2019 at 7.30pm

Please Note

All members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Parish Council and its Committees.

Item 4– a period of 15 minutes will be set aside for the public statements and questions relating to the published non-confidential business of the Meeting.

It may be necessary to consider particular items in confidential session and where this arises, these items will be considered at the end of the agenda.

FILMING, RECORDING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS AND USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

During this meeting members of the public may film or record the Committee and officers from the public area only providing it does not disrupt the meeting. The Confidential section of the meeting may not be filmed or recorded. If a member of the public objects to being recorded, the person(s) filming must stop doing so until that member of the public has finished speaking. The use of social media is permitted but members of the public are requested to switch their mobile devices to silent for the duration of the meeting.

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

To: Planning Committee

Date: 25 November 2019

Contact for this report: Deputy Clerk

Subject: Agenda Item 7 – **SOUTH DOWNS PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW**

1. Members are invited to review the draft new South Downs Partnership Management Plan (PMP) 2020-25 (previously circulated as a background paper) and to note the Statutory Notification letter below sent by the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA).
2. Members are requested to consider and agree any observations on the proposed changes for submission on behalf of Hassocks Parish Council.



By email only

18 October 2019

Dear Colleague

As required under Section 66(7)(a) of the Environment Act 1995, I am pleased to notify you of this Authority's intention to amend the Management Plan for the South Downs National Park area, which was published in 2014, following a process of review.

I enclose a copy of the existing 2014-2019 Management Plan, together with a separate document setting out the proposed amended wording of the Plan in full, incorporating all the proposed changes; the proposed amendments have been developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. For ease of comparison we have also produced a table that sets out the proposed amendments to outcomes and policies in the Plan; but not any of the changes relating to the proposed new priority areas as these do not currently feature in the Plan. In particular, you will note that the National Park Authority is proposing to amend the outcomes of the Management Plan.

I will be pleased to receive no later than 29 November 2019 any observations that your organisation wishes to make about the changes that are being proposed. Any such observations will be taken into consideration by the National Park Authority before it makes its decision regarding the review.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Lee

Director of Countryside and Policy Management

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

To: Planning Committee

Date: 25 November 2019

Contact for this report: Deputy Clerk

Subject: Agenda Item 8 – **NEW STREET NAMES**

1. The purpose of this report is to invite Members to consider a request from Mid Sussex District Council regarding the road names for the new development on the former golf club.
2. The Street Naming Officer at MSDC has been approached by the developer, Bellway Homes, suggesting a list of UK golf courses as the theme for the street naming scheme in keeping with the site's former use. A site plan showing the identified streets on the development is also included.
3. The names which have been put forward are:
 - St Andrews
 - Sunningdale
 - Wentworth
 - St Enodoc
 - Seacroft
 - Lindrick
 - Goswick
 - Perranporth
 - Blackmoor
 - Trevose
 - Belfry
 - St Mellion
 - Kingsbarns
 - Royal Berkshire
 - Carnoustie
 - Turnberry
 - Balgownie
 - Alwoodley
 - Lytham St Annes
 - Liphook
 - Castle Stuart
4. Members are invited to consider naming of this site and to either select 6 names from the above list, or propose 6 names of the Committee's own choice.

Land on the former Golf Club, Hassocks.
 Site Plan on the former golf club showing the identified streets



1 NOV 2019

Didacious Designs



7th November 2019

Hassocks Parish Council

Parish Centre,
Adastra Park,
Hassocks,
West Sussex,
BN6 8QH

Dear Hassocks Parish Council Members,

LAND TO THE WEST OF THE DROVE, BN6 8TR – PLANNING POLICY.

This letter concerns the matters surrounding application No SDNP/18/04155/FUL and interpretation of the relevant Local and National Planning Policy and in particular the views of the local community in respect of the above mentioned land and application.

This letter is written at length to highlight the degree to which the design process to include concept analysis and site and surrounding investigation fully appreciated and responded to the views of the local community, the sensitivity of the land in association with local landscape character assessments and conservation area appraisals and complies with the overall thrust (R vs. Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council – [2001] ENV.LR22) of the Neighbourhood Plan, Local plans and National Planning Policy Framework.

If there are matters within this letter that you do not fully understand or there are key assessments and/or policy considerations that I have misinterpreted or overlooked please could you advise me of such.

Hassocks Parish Council

As a Councillor, there is a responsibility to be well informed, especially about diverse local views. Councillors cannot assume that they represent the interests of electors without having a full and in-depth understanding of relevant assessments.

It is the relevant policy considerations and the views of the community that this letter aims to address and in so doing respectfully requests a full and coherent understanding of the views of the Parish Council in this regard.

Considering the amount of speculation surrounding this matter in particular surrounding the 'Sensitivity of The Gap' and Neighbourhood Plans it is necessary to clarify the actual policy considerations to ensure that the local community are not misinformed and/or misdirected in the future.

1. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT – SET A PRECEDENT

There is concern that there is risk of this proposal setting a precedent for housing in this location.

As I am sure you are aware the conclusions at paragraph 15 of the appeal inspectors decision - **APP/Y9507/W/15/3004242** - states that '*there would be no precedent for such housing in the gap between Ditchling and Keymer*'.

Plumpton Pit Stop, Ditchling Rd, Plumpton, East Sussex, BN7 3AF Mob 07776 287498

e-mail: info@ddarchitects.co.uk

Company registration No. 03594012 RIBA Reg No 20014631 VAT No. 233 9259 95

Directors C. A. B Howard BA(Hons)Dip Arch R.I.B.A. C.A. I.H.B.C. F.R.S.A

This application for a dwelling to the east of the appeal site is for an isolated home in the countryside; of exceptional quality, that is truly outstanding or innovative under the auspices of paragraph 79 of the National Planning Policy Framework and, similarly to the application for an essential need for a rural worker, would NOT set a precedent for such housing in the gap between Ditchling and Keymer.

2. STRATEGIC GAP

As I am sure you are aware there are Local policies in place to guide development proposals in 'The Strategic Gap' and to Safeguard Views. - **CT1** of the Lewes District Local Plan, **SD4** of the South Downs Local Plan and **CONS 7** the Neighbourhood Plan.

CT1 confirms that *'The retention of the open character of the countryside is of heightened importance where it separates settlements and prevents their coalescence. New residential development in the countryside may not be acceptable where its scale would SIGNIFICANTLY erode the gap between settlements and detract from their separate identities.'*

Therefore, **CT1** requires that **the scale of a new develop should not SIGNIFICANTLY erode the gap between settlements and detract from their separate identities.**

Further to this, James Garside of Lewes District Council advised on page 24 in his comments of the 25th April 2016 that "*CT1 is only partially compliant with The National Planning Policy Framework, which, in some cases such as paragraph 55 (Now paragraph 79), sets out a slightly more relaxed approach to residential development in the countryside*" and further *'that some residential development is appropriate to a countryside location'*

Strategic Policy SD4: Landscape Character at page 53 of South Downs Local Plan advises that *'The individual identity of settlements and the integrity of predominantly open and undeveloped land between settlements will not be undermined.'*

Paragraph 5.7 of the South Downs Local Plan goes on to say *'The ability of proposals to meet the requirements to enhance landscape character in Policy SD4 will be considered in proportion to the size, scale and likely impacts of the proposals.'*

And at 5.8 *'It is important that proposals are based on a meaningful understanding of the context and character of an area and those positive characteristics which define local distinctiveness. The use of standard design solutions and features can erode local distinctiveness in urban and rural areas. Therefore, this policy is closely linked to Policy SD5: Design, and they need to be read together.'*

And further at 5.9 *'Proposals should be informed by the South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment, community-led/local landscape character assessments and appropriate site-based investigations. Local landscape character assessments may include community, parish or Village Design Statements and other community planning documents...'*

CONS 7 of the Neighbourhood Plan at page 57 confirms that *'Proposals for new development in the gap separating Ditchling and Hassocks/Keymer and Burgess Hill, either individually or cumulatively, will only be supported where they conserve and where possible enhance the open landscape character of the*

gap, and do not reduce the physical gap between settlements. This will be informed by the South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment and relevant local landscape character assessments.'

Evidently the relevant 'Policies' do not preclude development altogether providing the scale of the intervention does not SIGNIFICANTLY erode or reduce the physical gap.

The Strategic Gap covers an area of 260 hectares. The proposal Site covers an area of approximately 1 Hectare. The proposed building (including access requirements) covers an area of 456sqm (0.046hectares). This equates to 0.018% of the land designated as The Strategic Gap. It would be difficult to argue that the proposed intervention 'SIGNIFICANTLY' erodes or reduces the physical gap.

The Strategic Gap as defined by Policies CT1, SD4 and CONS 7 is to:

- **Prevent the coalescence of villages; and**
- **Preserve the separate identities of the villages; and**
- **Conserve and where possible enhance the open landscape of the gap.**

To inform the design, in accordance with the requirements of **CONS 7** and **SD4** it is necessary to Appraise and implement the requirements of:

- **The South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment.**
- **East Sussex County Landscape Character Assessment**
- **The Statement of Local Landscape Character;**
- **The Neighbourhood Plan; and**
- **Ditchling Conservation Area Character Appraisal.**
- **Other relevant assessments.**

and therefore take on board the overriding views of the community in accordance with NPPF requirements (paragraphs 39 and 40). For instance:

- Page 9 of The East Sussex County Landscape Assessment confirms that the Western Low Weald has *'A strong landscape structure, which can accommodate pressure for change and development without detracting from the historic character.'*
- **The land is not considered by the local community (page 64 - 67 of the Neighbourhood Plan) to be either demonstrably special, hold a particular significance because of its beauty, recreational value, tranquillity, richness of wildlife or being local in character – Contrary to your repeated statements that the site is sensitive.**
- Whilst The EVALUATION of the landscape section of the **'South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment 2005 - Adur to Ouse Scarp Foothills'** concludes in paragraph I.18 by stating that *"The intact hedgerow network and presence of woodland limits visual sensitivity of the landscape as changes could be screened by these existing elements. There is also opportunity to mitigate potential visual impacts through new planting which would not significantly alter the character of the area. However the scarp foothills are highly visible from the adjacent scarp and downs to the south and this inter-visibility increases visual sensitivity."*
- Whilst paragraph 12 of the Inspectors report in Appeal Decision APP/Y9507/W/15/3004242 advises that *"The dwelling would be seen from an elevated point and would be largely*

subsumed within the backdrop of the ground or the covered yards; distance also reduces the impact.”

- And The South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment confirms that the land to the South of Keymer Road has a **MODERATE** Susceptibility (page 18 – Statement of Local Landscape Character).
- At page 30 of ‘The Statement of Local Landscape Character’ it confirms that the Distinctive landscape features of The Beacon Parishes are predominantly rural in their character, with farming and woodland the dominant land cover and scattered **very low DENSITY DEVELOPMENT present throughout**. The three settlements are nestled within this rural landscape, with Ditchling the largest and thus most dominant in the landscape. However, despite its size it fits very well into its surrounding landscape, *helped by the surprising amount of woodland in and around the village.*
- Page 8 of the ‘The Statement of Local Landscape Character’ describes the characteristics of the Western Low Weald as *‘abundant trees and hedges, combined with undulating landform, create a sheltered, secluded countryside with a strong landscape structure.’*
- Page 24 of the ‘The Statement of Local Landscape Character’ continues this assessment by stating that ‘The views to the north are of the mosaic of woodland, fields and settlements....’ And ‘.....The land use mosaic is a dominant feature of this view – the landscape matrix is agricultural land (Mosaic of Fields) and woodland with settlements and **INDIVIDUAL HOUSES** dotted between and amongst these.’
- At 3.2.1 on page 30 it states ‘The Beacon Parishes are predominantly rural in their character, with farming and woodland the dominant land cover and scattered **very low density development present throughout**, but mostly along the rural lanes and the Lewes road.

It follows that the community considered that the defining Landscape characteristics (also at Page 8 of the ‘The Statement of Local Landscape Character’ of particular significance are:

- **A strong landscape structure, which can accommodate pressure for change and development without detracting from the historic character;**
- **Low-density development present throughout;**
- **Abundant Trees, small woods and hedges;**
- **Frequent uninterrupted views of the bold scarp of the Downs just to the south; and**
- **A Mosaic of Fields**

At page 8 of the ‘The Statement of Local Landscape Character’ the community listed the landscape action priorities relevant to this application as:

- **New tree planting**
- **Conserve (and enhance) the essential landscape character of hedges, trees and small woods.**

The conclusion reached by reviewing the assessments is that the *‘strong landscape’* can accommodate further *‘low density’* development without detracting from the historic character providing there is increased planting of hedges, trees and small woods.

Policy SD5 of the emerging South Downs Local Plan advises that The Authority will seek the highest quality design for development proposals in line with the first purpose of the National Park. *This includes truly outstanding or innovative design and contemporary design*, which reinforces *local distinctiveness*,

taking reference and visual cues from the landscape and local settlement identity and character. The Authority will encourage the use of locally sourced materials to support local character and distinctiveness, and to reduce the cost both financially and environmentally of transporting materials long distances.

Paragraph 79 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises that any development should significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the *defining characteristics* of the local area.

In the first instance it is necessary to truly understand the meaning of '*defining characteristics*' and '*local distinctiveness*'.

DEFINING means - '*to explain or identify the nature or essential qualities of*'

CHARACTERISTICS means - '*a feature or quality belonging typically to a person, place, or thing and serving to identify them*'

DISTINCTIVENESS means - '*The quality of being individual or easily distinguishable*'

So to comply with policy requirements it is necessary to '*identify the nature or essential quality of a place that identifies the place as individual from other places.*'

In essence and in accordance with Historic England advice and guidance it is necessary to determine '*Cultural Significance*'

"Cultural significance means the aesthetic, historic, scientific or spiritual value for the past, present and future generations." Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter 1999 - This definition has been adopted by Historic England

OR more simply '*What sets Ditchling apart from other villages nationally or locally.*'

It is therefore necessary to further inspect the relevant assessments as set out on page 3 of this letter to inform the design, taking on board the overriding views of the community as set out in paragraph 128 of the NPPF18 and determine the **DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LOCAL AREA - *What sets Ditchling apart from other villages nationally or locally***

- At Page 6 of **The Ditchling Conservation Area Character Appraisal** it states 'Ditchling is Located at the *foot of the South Downs below Ditchling Beacon* There are fine views out of the village to *the South Downs*. The village is famous for its association with Eric Gill, calligrapher and stone carver, and other artists and craftspeople, who came to live in Ditchling in the early 20th century'.
- And at page 12 of **The Neighbourhood Plan** it confirms that '*The South Downs provide an exceptional backdrop*' .
- And further to this the neighbourhood plan confirms that Ditchling in particular is the focus of a *nationally important Arts and Crafts movement that emerged in the late 19th century*. (Page 15 – Draft Neighbourhood Plan).
- This is also iterated on page 4 of the East Sussex County Landscape Character Assessment, which states '*The village of Ditchling and surrounding areas have a long history of arts and crafts*'

- Ditchling became a vibrant centre for sculptors and muralists, printers and calligraphers, “*the place in England that had the greatest vitality of thought and action in craftsmanship*”, according to the godfather of studio pottery, Bernard Leach.
- *Views to the wider landscape* of pasture and *Downs* testify to the conservation area’s setting in the landscape and *make a significant contribution to overall character* (Page 14 – **The Ditchling Conservation Area Character Appraisal**)
- And ‘*The north face of the Downs escarpment is a dominant landscape feature from the villages and surrounds, sitting directly to the south and running in a continuous east-west direction. It rises steeply from the flatter land to the south and at Ditchling Beacon, directly to the south of the village, the Downs reach their greatest height (245m above sea level). The Beacon and the escarpment either side are the characteristic ‘WHALE BACK’ shape that has been celebrated in art and literature and are considered by many to be an iconic English landscape image.*’ (Page 26 – **The Statement of Local Landscape Character**)
- Rudyard Kipling poem: “*Our blunt, bow-headed, ‘whale-backed’ Downs.*”
- Whilst at Page 11 the **Statement of Local Landscape Character** defines the specific characteristics of the scarce slope as ‘*A dramatic steep north-facing chalk escarpment with a distinctive concave-convex slope profile*’
- And on page 27 ‘*The three villages of Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston sit just to the north of the scarp and views out of all of the villages are thus dominated by the steep north facing slopes of the Downs escarpment. These views very much characterise the villages.*’ And further ‘.....In Ditching, views are not available in some places due to topography, woodland or development that obscure views in places. However, once in the village centre or when travelling east-west along Lewes Road/ Keymer Road the views are once again available.....*The sudden ‘appearance’ of the Downs* above the High Street accompanies arrival in the village centre and from this viewpoint *the Downs provide the dramatic backdrop to the village so valued by residents and visitors alike.*

We must therefore conclude from the relevant ‘sources of information’ that the ‘local community’ consider that the overriding ‘**DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS**’ of Ditchling that sets it apart from other villages resides in:

- *The close Historical Association with the Arts and Crafts Movement; and*
- *The close Aesthetic Association with the Downs escarpment that dominates the landscape.*

An Arts and Crafts House does not have a standard layout or form, but is a building built using the local style, in harmony with their surrounds and using nature as an important source of inspiration, seeming to grow out of the landscape; but essentially built from local materials using local craftsmanship.

A Vernacular building is built in the local style, from local materials. - Strategic Policy SD5 of the South Downs Local Plan advises that ‘Design requires that Development proposals Utilise architectural design which is appropriate and sympathetic to its setting in terms of height, massing, density, roof form, materials, night and day visibility, elevational and, where relevant, **VERNACULAR** detailing;

3. PUBLIC BENEFIT

As set out in the government guidance (paragraph 8) Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large. Benefits do not always have to be accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits.

The Enhancements to the proposed site will provide a considerable public benefit to include:

- Addition of bat and bird boxes to the trees at the site's perimeter
- Continued persecution of Himalayan Balsam.
- New hedgerow planting will be with native species, of local provenance, grown in peat-free compost, planted in winter as whips and protected by spiral guards supported by canes. Species will be Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*), Guelder Rose (*Viburnum opulus*), Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), Dog-rose (*Rosa canina*), Privet (*Ligustrum ovalifolium*), Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Box (*Buxus sempervirens*) and Yew (*Taxus baccata*). Evergreen or marquessant species (the last 5) will make up at least 40% of the mix.
- The proposals also include tree planting, the creation of a traditional orchard, reedbeds and ponds as part of the landscaping plan
- Enhancement to connectivity to areas off site will improve the ecological network. The aforementioned planting of native species will further this network.

4. DISCUSSION

It is understood that a team of residents appointed by The Parish Councils and advised by the SDNPA prepared the Adopted Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston Neighbourhood Development plan.

This Strategic Gap and land designation as required under National Policy is defined in the neighbourhood Plan. The neighbourhood plan enables the local community to guide development - see page 10 of the Neighbourhood Plan and is considered as the overall views of the local community.

On this basis the land associated with the application is not considered by the local community (page 64 - 67) to be either demonstrably special, hold a particular significance because of its beauty, recreational value, tranquillity, richness of wildlife or being local in character. In effect the Neighbourhood plan ignored this piece of land in its entirety.

The strategic gap in particular has development restraint but SUPPORTS development providing that the proposed development conserves and where possible enhances the open landscape character of the gap and does not reduce the physical gap between settlements. Local landscape character assessments and further Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments and criteria for assessment are used to inform the design.

Criticism of the scheme was also made in sequential terms. In essence, it was suggested that a house of this size, of this architectural quality, with this approach to energy use, could be built in an urban, suburban or other countryside location and there is no need to build it here.

However, paragraph 79 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes no reference to a requirement for a sequential test to show that other sites have been examined and ruled out before a site in the countryside is considered. Neither is there any suggestion in the NPPF that the exception to the normal policy approach to new houses in the countryside, set out in paragraph 79 of the NPPF should not apply to sites such as this. Against this background it is not necessary to justify the choice of the site.

Linked to this, the scheme was also criticised in terms of its location at the edge of the separation between Keymer and Ditchling. It is suggested that the house would perform better in sustainability terms if it were located in an urban area. That misses the point. Paragraph 79 of the NPPF does not impose restrictions on the location of the isolated houses it envisages. The proposal could meet the requirements of paragraph 79 even if it was located in a more remote location, with no access to public transport. The site allows easy access to train routes and as a consequence, it is more sustainable in terms of its location than it might be.

It is also further suggested that the applicant or his family are hardly likely to use the train, and neither are his guests. However, even if the applicant built such a house in an urban area, there would be no compunction on him, or his family, or his guests, to use public transport. What matters, is that with this scheme, there is the opportunity to use it. Far from being a failing, accessibility to public transport is an advantage in sustainability terms.

Similarly, criticisms were advanced of the size of the house and the facilities it would contain. The accommodation and facilities proposed and the size of the property could be termed opulent. However, paragraph 79 of the NPPF18 does not suggest that for a house to qualify for the exception it sets out, it has to be of a certain size or contain limited facilities. Indeed, the other examples of dwellings permitted under the aegis of paragraph 79 (and its predecessors in paragraph 55, PPG7 and PPS7) can hardly be termed spartan in terms of the accommodation they offer.

However, in terms of the Landscape-led approach; the energy conservation and the link between them the proposal would meet the requirements of paragraph 79 of the NPPF and enhance the South Downs National Park. The proposal would be visible from 'The Drove' without interrupting Strategic Views and would therefore be accessible to the public, and as such, it would act as an exemplar of regional and national and possibly international importance. These factors represent further significant benefits.

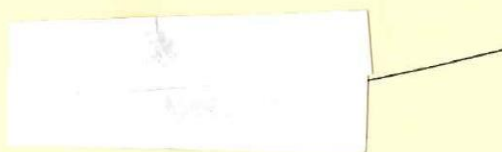
To this end, the proposed dwelling takes a contemporary Arts and Crafts sculptural form of a house using vernacular materials, set into the landscape such that it is imperceptible in long and middle distance views of the site. In proposing a low-level part sunken house, the visual gap between Keymer and Ditchling would be maintained. The objective has been, through careful design consideration, to produce a scheme that reflects the local landscape characteristics and Significance of the local area.

It must be acknowledged that opportunities to secure a design of this architectural and landscape quality, and potentially far-reaching importance in environmental terms, from a patron who is clearly committed to it, are very few and far between and considering the history of creative endeavour within this community I suggest that this proposal should be considered in the same spirit.

The significant benefits that would flow from the proposal clearly outweigh the harm. As such, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposal exist.

I trust that the above points have been fully appreciated and look forward to receiving your response at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

A rectangular area of the document has been redacted with a white box. A thin black line extends from the right side of the box, pointing towards the text below.

Conrad A B Howard

Ba (Hons) Dip Arch RIBA CA IHBC FRSA

Parish Council Members:

Robert BREWER, Kate BAILEY, Jane BAKER, Leslie CAMPBELL, Georgia CHESHIRE, Frances GAUDENCIO, Peter GIBBONS, David HAMMOND, Sue HATTON, Bill HATTON, Nick OWENS, Frank RYLANCE, Ian WEIR