

# Wilbury Planning

## Full Planning Application

Provision of 4no. padel courts (Class F2) with ancillary office unit and casual seating area, plus associated infrastructure including court lighting with automatic timers. Provision of vehicle parking area, bicycle storage, drainage scheme, with additional soft landscaping and ecological enhancements.

Land at Mid Sussex Golf Club, Spatham Lane, Westmeston, East Sussex BN6 8XJ



Planning Statement (Sustainability & Social Impact Assessment incorporated),  
prepared by Wilbury Planning Ltd

Applicant: Mid Sussex Padel

08 May 2024

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## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement (Sustainability & Social Impact Assessment incorporated) accompanies a full planning application (known as “*the application*” from hereon) for the following description of development:

- *“Provision of 4no. padel courts (Class F2) with ancillary office unit and casual seating area, plus associated infrastructure including court lighting with automated timers. Provision of vehicle parking area, bicycle storage, drainage scheme, with additional soft landscaping and ecological enhancements.”*

1.2 The site is Land at Mid Sussex Golf Club, Spatham Lane, Westmeston, East Sussex BN6 8XJ. The application is made on behalf of the applicant, Mid Sussex Padel.

1.3 The padel court facility will be operated by “*Mid Sussex Padel*”. The chief objective of Mid Sussex Padel is to provide a unique padel experience with a key emphasis on socialising and community, and improved health and well-being for participants.

1.4 Padel is typically played in doubles on an enclosed court, approximately a third the size of a tennis court, surrounded by walls of glass and metallic mesh. Padel is one of the fastest growing sports within the UK with significant demand as demonstrated within the detailed Business Plan that accompanied this application.

1.5 The application is accompanied by the following documents:

Document	Author	Reference
Full Planning Application Form	Wilbury Planning Ltd	PP-12796169
CIL Form 1: Additional CIL Questions	Wilbury Planning Ltd	01/03/2024
Planning Statement (Sustainability & Social Impact Assessment incorporated)	Wilbury Planning Ltd	08 May 2024
Design & Access Statement	Hampson Architects Ltd	HA018
Business Plan (including financial plan and financial forecasting)	Mid Sussex Padel	Mid Sussex Padel

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Transport Technical Note	Reeves Transport Planning Ltd	TN_SGR_MSG_040124_V4
Surface Water Drainage Strategy	Aegaea Limited	AEG3983_BN1_Brighton_03
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal	CT Ecology Limited	23084 Rev 0
Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment	CT Ecology Limited	23 April 2024
Biodiversity Metric 4.0	CT Ecology Limited	Calculation Tool
Landscape & Visual Appraisal	Furse Landscape Architects Ltd	February 2024
Noise Assessment	Phlorum Limited	12750C V1
Pistas Padel Lighting Details	FITENERGY SL	Pistas Padel
LED Floodlight 200W Datasheet	Filux	FT-21200
Site Location and Block Plan	Hampson Architects Ltd	001 E
Existing Site Plan	Hampson Architects Ltd	010 E
Existing Elevations	Hampson Architects Ltd	070 E
Proposed Site Plan	Hampson Architects Ltd	119 F
Proposed Plan	Hampson Architects Ltd	120 F
Proposed Site Elevations and Sections	Hampson Architects Ltd	200 E
Proposed Office Building Elevations	Hampson Architects Ltd	201 E
Visuals	Hampson Architects Ltd	Various

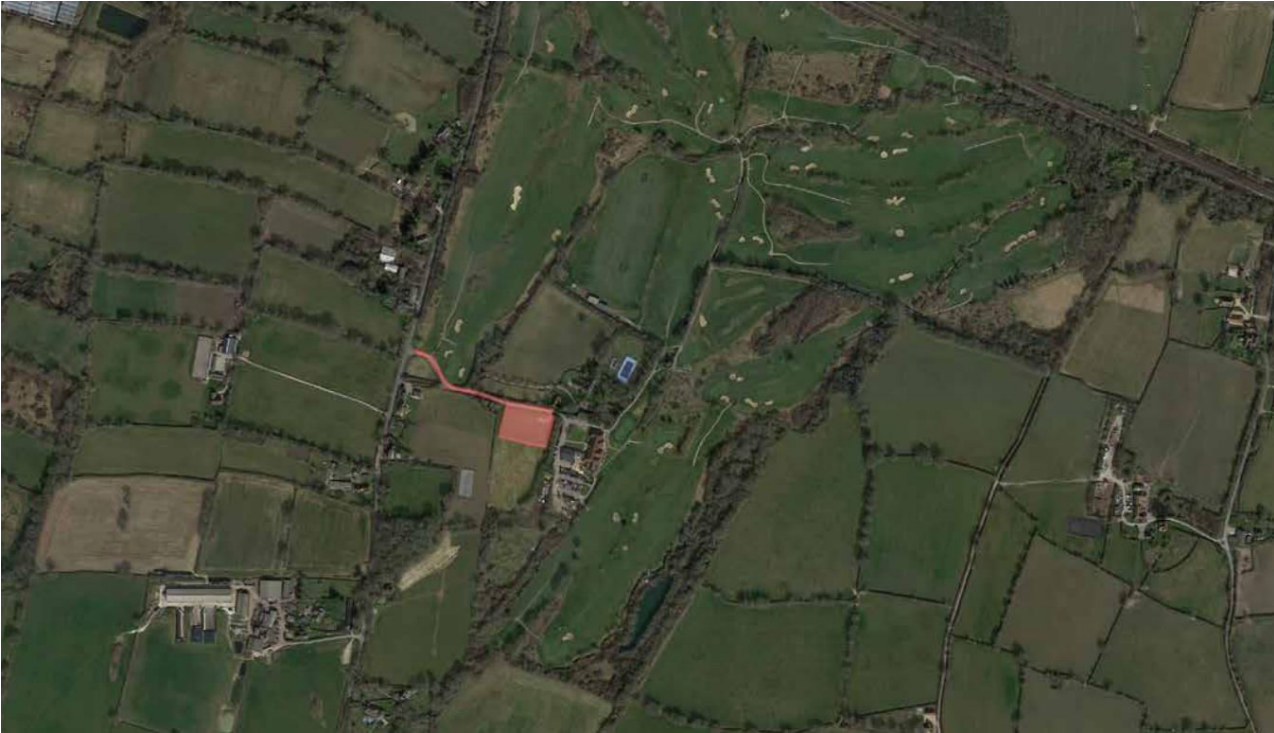
1.6 The drawings package and visuals that accompanies this application has been prepared by Hampson Architects Ltd, an established architectural firm based in Brighton.

## **2.0 Site Description**

- 2.1 Located within the Westmeston Parish of Lewes District, Land at Mid Sussex Golf Club comprises a rectangular plot of land that is under the ownership of Mid Sussex Golf Club. The golf club comprises an 18-hole golf course with a main clubhouse plus ancillary buildings, and adjacent car park.
- 2.2 The site itself comprises an area of scrub land that is located to the west of the main golf club buildings. Access to the site is provided via the existing driveway that links the golf club to Spatham Lane to the west. 2no. bus stops are located adjacent to the vehicular access into the golf club from Spatham Lane.
- 2.3 Whilst the golf club is designated as a Safeguarded and Enhanced Green Infrastructure area as defined by the Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) 2017 - 2032 (April 2018), the site itself is not located within this land designation.
- 2.4 To the east and west of the site is existing vegetation, and to the south of the site are 2no. rows of solar panels that have recently been installed following the granting of planning permission (LW/23/0558 refers). The solar panel scheme is separate from the proposed padel court facility development presented within this current application.
- 2.5 The South Downs National Park (SDNP) boundary is located approximately 117m to the south of the site. A modest area of ancient woodland is located to the south-west of the site within the wider locality. A public right of way (PROW) in the form of a public footpath runs along the golf club driveway directly to the north of the site.
- 2.6 Blackbrook Farm to the north-west of the site comprises a Grade II Listed Building. Blackbrook Farm is not visible from within the site or immediate locality.
- 2.7 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 as designated by the Environment Agency. Flood Zone 1 comprises the lowest flood risk zone.



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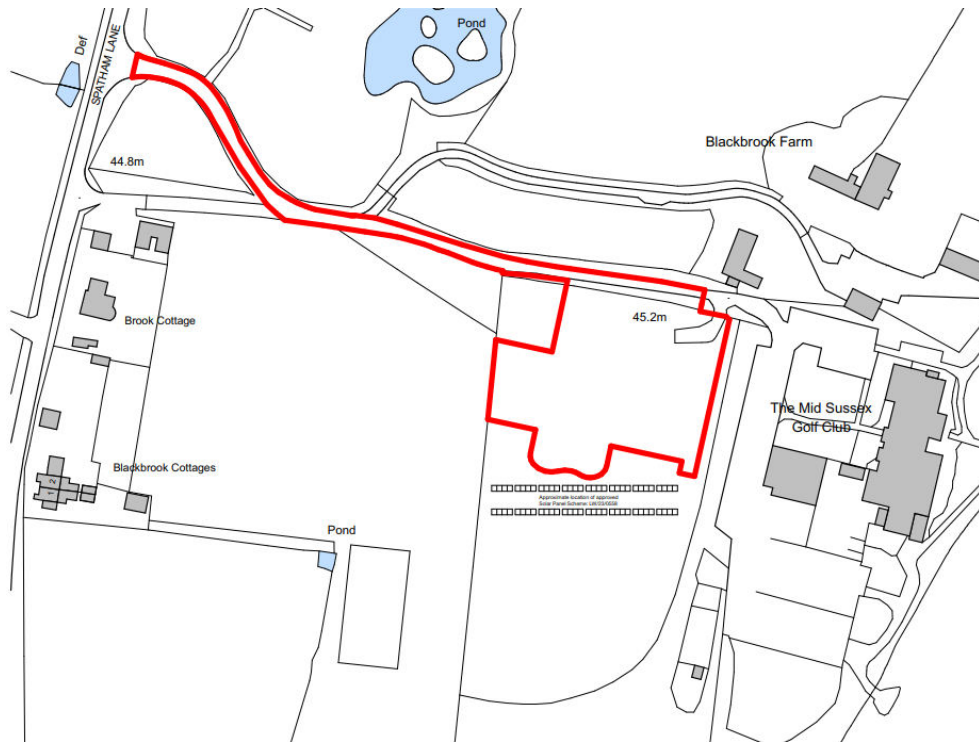


**Figure 1:** The approximate site area is denoted by the red shading.

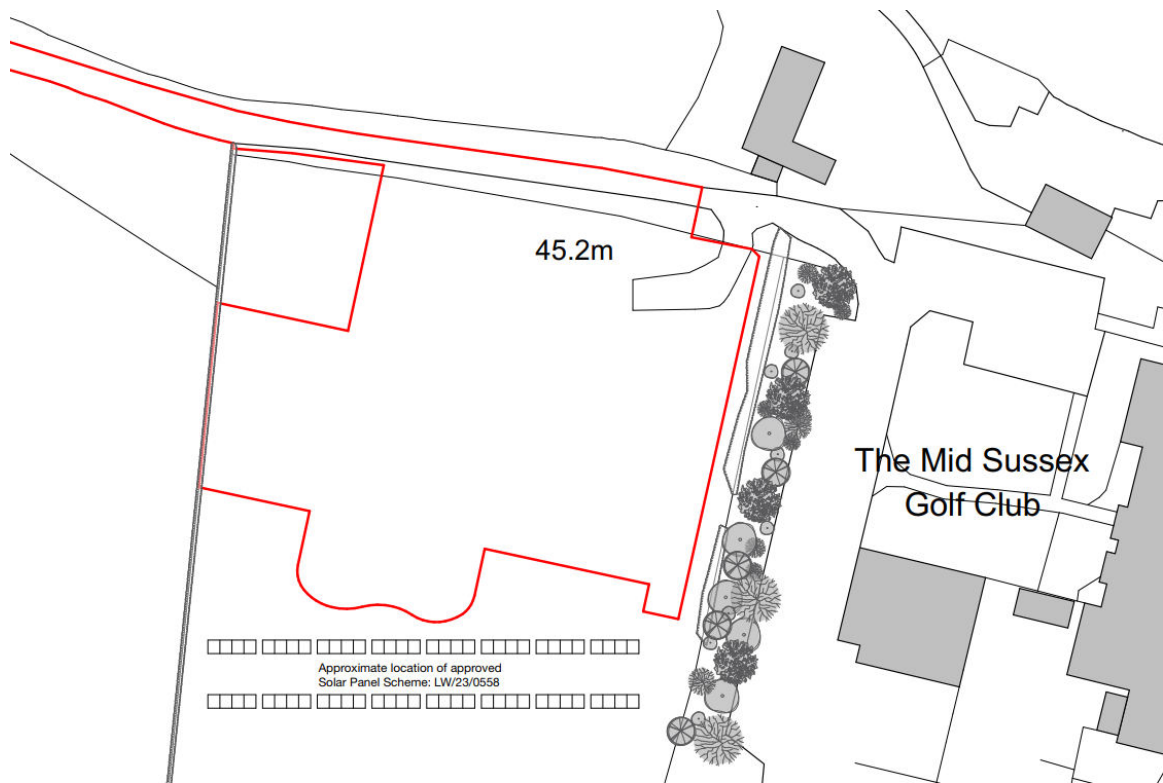


**Figure 2:** View of the site looking south from the existing driveway.

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**Figure 3: Location Plan (001 E).**



**Figure 4: Existing Site Plan (010 E).**

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### 3.0 Relevant Planning History

3.1 The relevant planning history associated with Mid Sussex Golf Club is referred to within the table below:

Reference	Description	Decision
LW/23/0558	Installation of solar panels.	Granted 24.11.2023
LW/02/0549	Alterations to landscaping to holes 6, 10, 12, 17 & 18 to existing golf course.	Granted 26.06.2002
LW/01/1652	Alterations to landscaping to holes 6, 10, 12, 17 and 18 on existing golf course. Transferred to ESCC to deal with as County matter.	Withdrawn 19.09.2001
LW/01/0493	Variation of Condition 14 attached to planning permission LW/93/1292 to allow the premises to be used beyond 11pm on nine occasions per year.	Refused 30.04.2001
LW/01/1406	Variation of Condition 14 attached to planning permission LW/93/1292 to allow premises to be used up to 12 midnight on seven occasions per year.	Granted 05.10.2001
LW/98/0451	Application to vary Condition No.14 attached to planning permission LW/93/1292 to allow use of the premises after 11pm on eight specified occasions each year.	Refused 16.06.1998
LW/97/0612	Renewal of Advertisement Consent LW/96/0402 for externally illuminated club name and logo cut into slate and mounted within brick wall.	Granted 03.07.1997
LW/96/0401	Extension to existing car park, regrading of practice area and associated landscaping.	Granted 14.06.1996
LW/96/0402	Advertisement Consent for externally illuminated club name and logo cut into slate and mounted within brick wall.	Granted 21.05.1996
LW/95/1081	Application to vary condition 4 & 4 of planning permission LW/93/0542 to allow phase two landscaping to be carried out in Nov 1995.	Granted 08.01.1996
LW/95/0097	Renewal of planning permission LW/89/2105 for	Refused



	golf course and recreational facilities.	28.05.1995
LW/93/1292	Construction of clubhouse, parking, re-use of two redundant agricultural buildings, night watchman's accommodation and pro shop.	Granted 14.06.1994
LW/93/0542	Minor amendment to golf course layout allowed on appeal (LW/91/0671) and previously granted conditional permission (LW/89/2105LB(II). Restrictive Planning Condition No.8.	Granted 03.09.1993
LW/91/0671	18-hole golf-course with ancillary clubhouse facilities including re-building of barn, ancillary turf and tree nursery, reservoir, parking area and formation of new access onto Spatham Lane.	Refused 08.10.1991 Appeal Allowed
LW/91/0412	Formation of 18-hole golf course with 1500m2 of recreational golf club facilities (inc. Steward's flat) and parking for 120 cars.	Withdrawn 01.05.1991
LW/89/0280	Eighteen hole golf course. (Creation of ten acre fishing lake) and conversion of farm buildings to (recreational use) club house, greenkeepers accommodation and ancillary facilities.	Refused 12.08.1989
LW/89/2105	Golf course and recreational facilities.	Granted 29.01.1990

***Planning history context***

- 3.2 Planning permission was originally granted on 29 January 1990 for the creation of a golf course and recreational facilities (LW/89/2105 refers).
- 3.3 In 1991 a fresh consent was granted planning permission via appeal for the creation of an 18-hole golf course with ancillary clubhouse facilities, and formation of a new access onto Spatham Lane (LW/91/0671 refers). The access granted under this appeal is presently still in use.
- 3.4 Several applications have been submitted and determined since 1991, including the installation of 2no. rows of solar panels (LW/23/0558 refers) with the Decision Notice issued on 24 November 2023. The applicant for the solar panel scheme was Mid Sussex Golf Club. The solar panels have been implemented with the solar arrays located to the south of the proposed padel court facility.



#### 4.0 Description of Development

4.1 This application proposes the provision of 4no. padel courts (Class F2) with ancillary office unit and casual seating area, plus associated infrastructure including court lighting with automated timers. Provision of vehicle parking area, bicycle storage, drainage scheme, with additional soft landscaping and ecological enhancements.

##### ***Padel court facility***

4.2 4no. padel courts will be provided within the southern part of the site and set parallel to one another. Each padel court will be 20 metres in length and 10 metres in width. The walls of each padel court will comprise glass that will measure 4.2 metres and 3.0 metres high.

4.3 Court lighting with automatic timers will serve each padel court. The court lighting will only be in use during dark hours and will not be in operation when the padel courts are not in use.

4.4 A seating area and modest single-storey office unit will be set within the eastern part of the site. A decking will be provided to the front of the unit, with refuse storage set adjacent.

4.5 The seating area and areas around each padel court will comprise a permeable material.

4.6 The padel court facility will be operated during the following times throughout the week:

	<b>Opening Times</b>	<b>No. of Hours</b>
<b>Monday to Friday</b>	7am to 10pm	15
<b>Weekend</b>	7am to 10pm	15

4.7 Based on extensive research undertaken by Mid Sussex Padel, it is expected that 72% of the court bookings will be made from within 27-54 age bracket, with an almost equal male-to-female ratio.

4.8 The padel court facility will be in operation in association with Mid Sussex Golf Club, with the golf club and padel court facility in operation parallel with cross-marketing and events with existing golf club members and new padel members.

4.9 The padel court facility will result in the employment of the following 10no. staff:

- 3no. operating managers;
- 1no. head padel coach;
- 1no. assistant padel coach; and
- 5no. part time staff employed from within the local area.

***Vehicle parking area and bicycle storage***

4.10 The vehicle parking area to include bicycle storage will be located within the northern part of the site, with 2no. vehicular accesses provided onto the existing golf club driveway.

4.11 A total of 47no. parking spaces will be provided, including 4no. accessible parking spaces and a bicycle storage area for 7no. bikes. This area will comprise a permeable surface.

***Soft landscape and ecological enhancements***

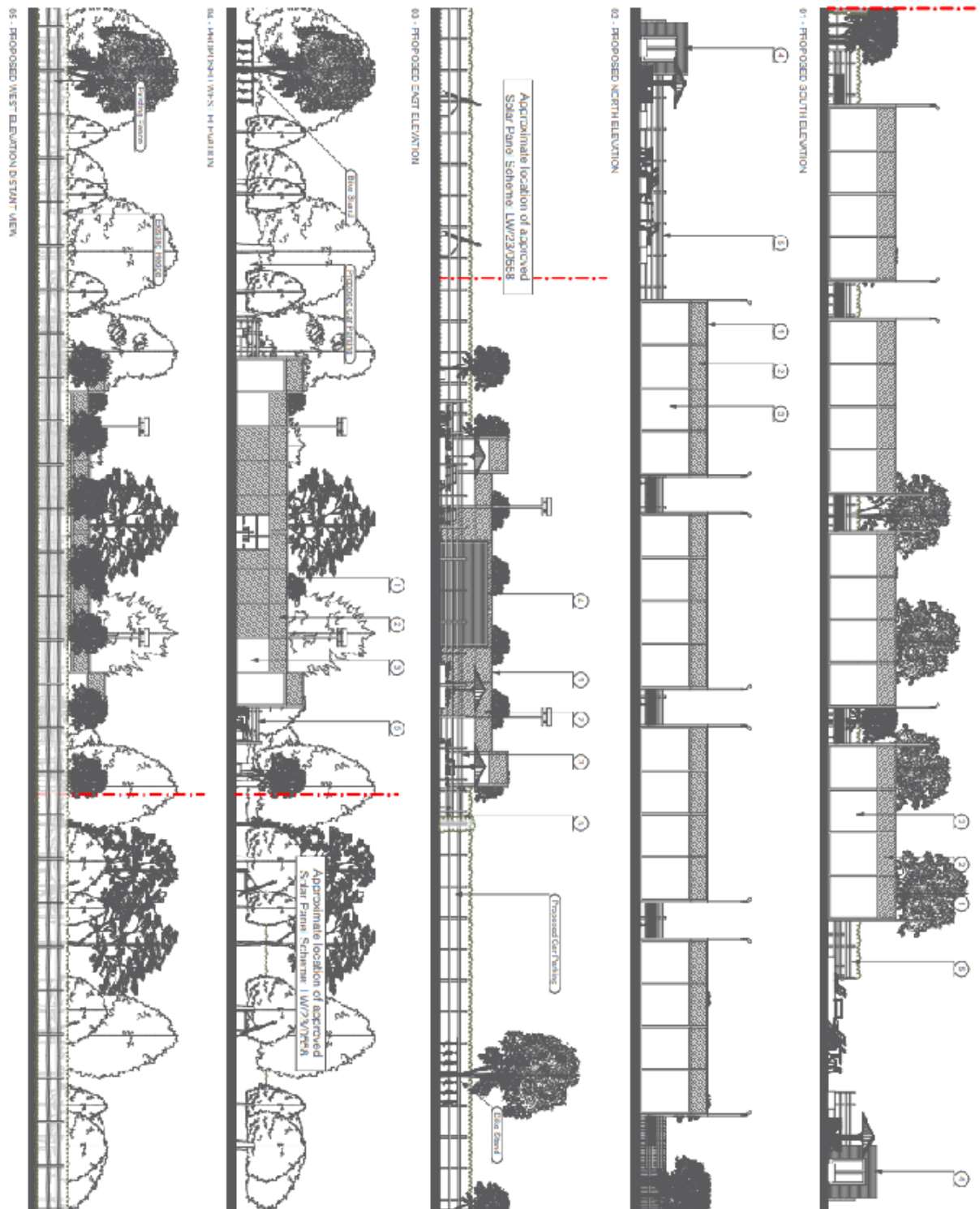
4.12 Soft landscaping and ecological enhancements will be provided throughout the site. This will include additional soft planting adjacent the parking area and golf club driveway, additional soft landscaping within the parking area and seating area and to the west of the padel courts and parking area.

4.13 Several bat and bird boxes will also be provided, and the proposed swale and pond as part of the drainage scheme will also provide associated ecological enhancements.

4.14 The proposed scheme will result in a +37% net gain in biodiversity.



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**Figure 6:** Proposed Site Elevations and Sections (200 E).



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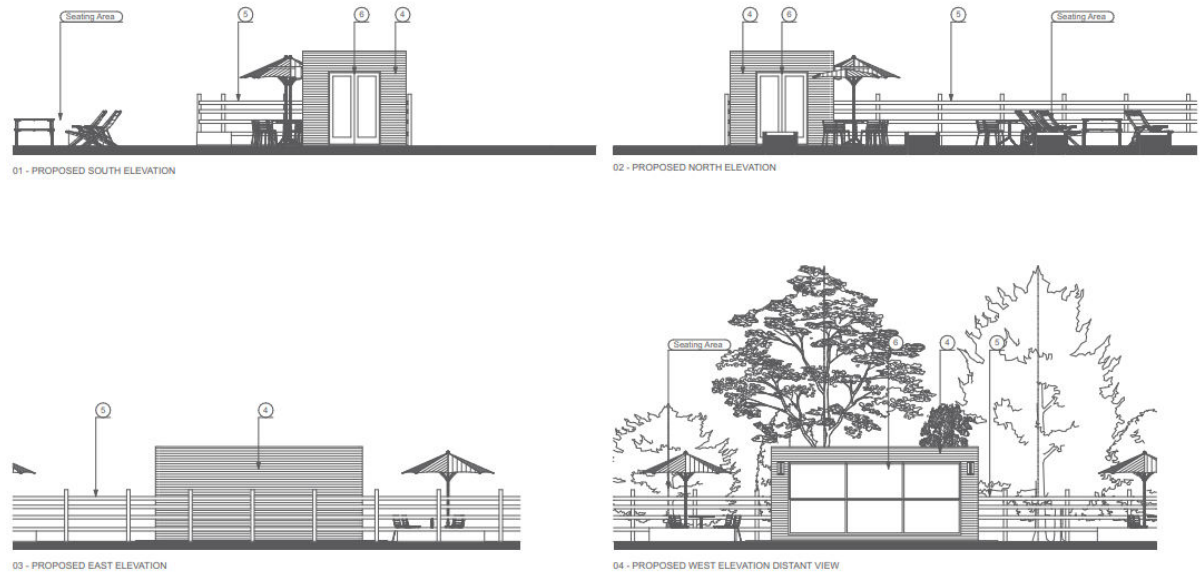


Figure 7: Proposed Unit Elevations (201 E).



Figure 8: Visual.

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**Figure 9: Visual.**



**Figure 10: Visual.**



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Figure 11: Visual.



Figure 12: Visual.

## 5.0 Planning Policy Context

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that, where the Development Plan contain relevant policies, an application for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

### ***The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2023)***

5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was initially published in March 2012, revised in July 2018, February 2019, and in July 2021, and again more recently in September and December 2023. It sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

### Chapter 2 (Achieving sustainable development)

5.3 Paragraph 8 confirms that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives (economic, social and environmental), which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways.

5.4 Paragraph 11 confirms that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development and decision-taking. This means:

- *“Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
- *Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
  - *The application of policies in this framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
  - *Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this framework taken as a whole.”*

- 5.5 Prompt approval of those that accord with the Development Plan (unless material considerations indicate otherwise) equates to applying the presumption, without the need for any prior decision as to whether the proposal would be “*sustainable development*”.

Chapter 6 (Building a strong, competitive economy)

- 5.6 Supporting a prosperous rural economy is referred to within Paragraph 88, which states that planning policies and decisions should enable (inter alia):

- *“The sustainable growth of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, beautiful new buildings; and*
- *Sustainable rural leisure development which respect the character of the countryside.”*

- 5.7 Paragraph 89 confirms that planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport).

Chapter 8 (Promoting healthy and safe communities)

- 5.8 Paragraph 96 confirms that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places and beautiful buildings which (inter alia):

- *“Promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other; and*
- *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 sports facilities.”*

- 5.9 Recreation is specifically referred to within Paragraph 102, and confirms that access to opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-



being of communities, and can deliver wide benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change.

#### Chapter 9 (Promoting sustainable transport)

5.10 Within the context of the impact of development on the local road network, Paragraph 115 confirms 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”.

5.11 Paragraph 116 confirms that application for development should:

- *“Give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;*
- *Address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;*
- *Create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards; and*
- *Be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.”*

#### Chapter 12 (Achieving well-designed and beautiful places)

5.12 Paragraph 135 confirms that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments (inter alia):

- *“Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- *Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- *Are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change; and*

- *Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- *Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being.”*

#### Chapter 14 (Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change)

- 5.13 Planning for climate change is dealt with in Paragraph 162, which confirms that local planning authorities should expect new development to take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption, and that flood risk is not increased elsewhere.

#### Chapter 15 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment)

- 5.14 Paragraph 180 confirms that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, and recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

#### ***Lewes District Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1) (May 2016)***

- 5.15 Encouraging economic development is referred to within Core Policy 4. The policy confirms that the Council will promote the development of sustainable leisure facilities.
- 5.16 Core Policy 10 refers to the natural environment and landscape character. The policy refers to several criteria that should be met in order to conserve and enhance the natural environment of the district, including landscape assets, biodiversity, and geodiversity.
- 5.17 Core Policy 11 refers to high-quality design, and confirms that the Council will seek to secure high-quality design in all new development through the following (inter alia):
- *“Respects and, where appropriate, positively contributes to the character and distinctiveness of the district’s unique natural heritage;*
  - *Outside the South Downs National Park, has regard to the setting of the National Park and its purposes;*
  - *Adequately addresses the need to reduce resource and energy consumption;*

- *Responds sympathetically to the site and its local context and is well-integrated in terms of access and functionality with the surrounding area;*
- *Is adaptable, safe and accessible to all;*
- *Makes efficient and effective use of land, avoiding the creation of public space which has no identified use or function; and*
- *Minimises flood risk in accordance with Core Policy 12.”*

5.18 Core Policy 12 refers to flood risk and sustainable drainage. The policy confirms that the Council will seek to reduce the impact and extent of flooding.

5.19 Core Policy 13 refers to sustainable travel. The policy confirms that the Council will promote and support development that encourages travel by walking, cycling and public transport.

***Lewes District Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2) (February 2020)***

5.20 Policy DM1 deals with the planning boundaries, and confirms that outside the planning boundaries, the distinctive character and quality of the countryside will be protected and new development will only be permitted where it is consistent with a specific development plan policy or where the need for a countryside location can be demonstrated.

5.21 Policy DM11 refers to existing employment sites in the countryside, including leisure facilities, and confirms that outside the planning boundaries, the re-development or intensification of existing employment sites will be permitted for employment purposes where the following criteria are met:

- *“The existing development and employment use is lawful;*
- *The proposed development would not detract from the distinctive rural character of the locality or local residential amenities by virtue of the nature and intensity of the use, noise, dust, fumes, the siting, design, scale and site coverage of the buildings, or its access requirements or associated traffic generation; and*
- *Proposals which would be likely to create a significant number of jobs are well located in relation to neighbouring towns or villages and readily accessible by public transport.”*

5.22 In addition, Policy DM11 confirms that exceptionally, the outward expansion of an existing employment site outside the planning boundaries will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that it would facilitate the retention of an employment use which is important to the local economy, subject to the above criteria and there being no suitable alternative site available. Proposals will be expected to deal comprehensively with the site as a whole and include measures to secure environmental improvements, such as enhanced landscaping and biodiversity gains.

5.23 Policy DM15 confirms that the Council will seek to achieve the provision of outdoor playing space, which is a matter of practice and policy available for public use.

5.24 Water resources is dealt with in Policy DM22. The policy confirms that development will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that it would not result in unacceptable risk to the quality and quantity of surface and groundwater or changes to groundwater and surface water levels that would have unacceptable adverse impacts.

5.25 Policy DM23 refers to noise and confirms that noise-generating development will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that nearby noise sensitive uses will not be exposed to noise impact that will adversely affect the amenity of existing or future users. Where appropriate, proposals will be required to mitigate noise impacts through careful planning, layout and design. In assessing mitigation proposals, account will be taken of;

- *“The location, layout and design of the proposed development;*
- *Existing levels of background noise;*
- *Measures to reduce or contain generated noise; and*
- *Hours of operation and servicing.”*

5.26 Design is dealt with in Policy DM25. The policy confirms that development which contributes towards local character and distinctiveness through high quality design will be permitted where the following criteria are met (inter alia):

- *“Its siting, layout, density, orientation and landscape treatment respond sympathetically to the characteristics of the development site, its relationship with its immediate surroundings and, where appropriate, views into, over or out of the site;*

- *Its scale, form, height, massing, and proportions are compatible with existing buildings, building lines, roofscapes and skylines;*
- *It incorporates high quality, durable and sustainable materials of an appropriate texture, colour, pattern and appearance that will contribute positively to the character of the area;*
- *Existing individual trees or tree groups that contribute positively to the area are retained;*
- *Any car parking or other servicing areas are appropriate to the context and sensitively located and designed; and*
- *There will be no unacceptable adverse impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties in terms of privacy, outlook, daylight, sunlight, noise, odour, light intrusion, or activity levels.”*

5.27 Policy DM27 refers to landscape design, and confirms that where appropriate, development proposals should demonstrate a high-quality of landscape design, implementation and management as an integral part of new development.

***Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) 2017 - 2032 (April 2018)***

5.28 Policy DS 1 confirms that development will be permitted outside the settlement boundaries where it complies with the relevant policies in the Development Plan, and it is small-scale development which supports an existing rural business, or it is for facilities for low-key countryside recreation.

5.29 Standards for design of new development is referred to within Policy CONS 2. The policy confirms that new development should be to a high standard of design in harmony with the distinctive character of the area, where (inter alia):

- *“Careful consideration has been given to the height, massing, scale, layout, appearance and landscaping of proposals;*
- *Natural and local landscape features are protected and sensitively incorporated;*
- *It incorporated measures to protect and enhance wildlife; and*
- *It does not adversely intrude into important views.”*

5.30 The conservation of landscape and important views is dealt with in Policy CONS 6. The policy confirms that the distinctive landscape, views and scenic beauty of the



Neighbourhood Plan Area should be conserved and enhanced, and the landscape of the South Downs National Park and its setting shall be protected in accordance with legislation, national planning policy and planning practice guidance.

- 5.31 CONS 8 refers to dark night skies. The policy states to preserve night skies, proposals for development entailing the provision of external lighting, including lighting of public thoroughfares, will be required to demonstrate there are no adverse impacts on the quality of dark night skies, and proposals for external lighting in prominent locations likely to be visible from the surrounding landscape and viewpoints will not be supported.
- 5.32 CONS 9 refers to the protection and enhancement of habitats and biodiversity. The policy confirms that these elements will be protected and where possible enhanced.

***Technical Advice Notes (TAN)***

- 5.33 The following TAN documents have been taken into account as part of the assembly of this application:
- Biodiversity Net Gain TAN (February 2021); and
  - Sustainability in Development TAN (February 2021).

## 6.0 **Planning Assessment**

6.1 The key planning consideration associated with this application are the following:

- a) Principle of development;
- b) Design and effects on the visual amenity and landscape setting;
- c) Effects on residential amenity;
- d) Parking provision and impacts on the local road network;
- e) Ecology impact and biodiversity net gain; and
- f) Surface water drainage.

### ***a) Principle of development***

6.2 National planning policy directs decision makers to plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces and community facilities such as sports venues. This is to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.

6.3 Local planning policy seeks to encourage the development of sustainable leisure facilities within Core Policy 4 of the LLP1, and Policy DM11 of the LPP2 confirms that the intensification of existing employment sites (including leisure facilities) will be permitted provided the existing development and employment use is lawful, the development would not detract from the distinctive rural character or local residential amenities, and the proposals would likely create a significant number of jobs in relation to nearby towns or villages and readily accessible by public transport.

6.4 Whilst Mid Sussex Golf Club is located outside of the defined development boundary, it is a well-established golfing sports venue providing golf facilities in the form of an 18-hole golf course for the wider area. The catchment area of the golf club is extensive with existing golf club members travelling from settlements within the wider locality to make use of the facility. Built form is already present at the golf club in the form of a clubhouse plus ancillary buildings and car park.

6.5 The provision of a padel court facility at Land at Mid Sussex Golf Club consists of a compatible sporting use to be in operation in parallel to the golf club. The provision of the padel courts will not result in any loss of the existing golf course area or golf club facilities.

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 Provision of 4no. padel courts (Class F2) with ancillary office unit and casual seating area, plus associated infrastructure including court lighting with automatic timers. Provision of vehicle parking area, bicycle storage, drainage scheme, with additional soft landscaping and ecological enhancements.  
 Planning Statement (Sustainability & Social Impact Assessment incorporated)



6.6 In accordance with Policy DM11 of the LPP2, the existing golf club comprises a lawful employment and leisure use that has been established for many years, the proposed padel court facility will not detract from the distinctive rural character or local residential amenities as demonstrated within this Planning Assessment Section of the Planning Statement, and the padel court facility will create at least 10no. jobs, with a minimum of 5no. new jobs being created for occupants within Burgess Hill, Hassocks, Ditching, Streat and Plumpton Green with public transport provided via the 2no. existing bus stops adjacent to the vehicular access. The padel court facility will as a minimum require the following employees:

- 3no. operating managers;
- 1no. head padel coach;
- 1no. assistant padel coach; and
- 5no. part-time staff.

6.7 The submitted Business Plan confirms that padel is progressively establishing itself as a global sport, with its future development driven by its expansion in strategically important regions, including the UK.

6.8 With specific reference to Sussex, there are approximately 10,700 potential padel players, with a strong demand for padel courts to serve the population. Presently within the wider area, there are only 6no. operational padel court facilities at 2no. separate sites as shown within the table below:

<b>Padel Facility</b>	<b>Court</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>No. of Padel Courts</b>	<b>Distance from Mid Sussex Golf Club (km)</b>
Withdean Leisure Centre, Brighton		Tongdean Lane, Withdean, Brighton BN1 5JD	1no. padel court	10km (as the crow flies)
The Padel Hub, Handcross		Unit 4, Link 23, Haywards Heath RH17 5JS	5no. padel courts	16km (as the crow flies)

6.9 These 6no. existing padel courts do not meet the demonstrated demand for these types of sporting facilities within the wider locality and as demonstrated within the submitted Business Plan.

6.10 The financial plan and financial forecasting (incorporated within the Business Plan) that accompanies this application confirms that the proposed padel court facility will be financially viable, as demonstrated below:

- Year 1 Profit- £71,380
- Year 2 Profit- £101,973
- Year 3 Profit- £139,286

6.11 Overall, the relationship between Mid Sussex Golf Club and Mid Sussex Padel will result in a profitable and viable business that will in turn directly benefit the golf club by securing its long-term future as a sports venue for the benefit of future generations.

#### Sustainable development

6.12 There are 3no. dimensions of sustainable development as described in Paragraph 11 of the NPPF: economic, social and environmental.

6.13 The proposed padel court facility will meet all 3no. dimensions of sustainable development and are dealt with in full within the Sustainability & Social Impact Assessment found within Section 7.0 of this Planning Statement.

6.14 The location of the site in proximity to the SDNP means that the 2no. purposes of the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) have been considered as part of the assembly of this application. The 2no. purposes of the SDNPA are the following:

1. To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area.
  - This purpose is met within the detail presented within the specialist reports and documents which accompany this application, and the suggested mitigation measures that have been incorporated within the scheme.
2. To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.

- This purpose is met given the scheme will encourage visitors to use the padel court facility from within the wider locality. This in turn will result in a secondary opportunity for visitors to enjoy and therefore understand the special qualities of the SDNP.

6.15 Overall, all elements of the scheme are fully justified with the proposed padel court facility representing an acceptable form of development in principle and which meets the three strands of sustainable development in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF and local Development Plan.

***b) Design and effects on the visual amenity and landscape setting***

6.16 Core Policy 10 (natural environment and landscape character) and Core Policy 11 (high-quality design) of the LPP1, along with Policy DM25 (design) and Policy DM27 (landscape design), and the relevant provisions within the NDP provide the policy protecting the character and appearance of the wider landscape setting.

6.17 A Landscape & Visual Appraisal (February 2024), prepared by Furse Landscape Architects Ltd, accompanies this application. The proposed padel court facility will be located in proximity to the existing golf club facilities that already comprise a sizeable clubhouse, ancillary buildings plus parking area.

6.18 The proposed scheme will create more permanent structures at the site through the 4no. padel courts and associated seating area, parking area, and court lighting. However, it is not considered that these elements will appear significantly uncharacteristic given the long-standing sporting use of the wider site and the ancillary infrastructure. In addition, existing tennis court (that comprise similar infrastructure when compared to the proposed padel court facility) are already visible from the South Downs within the wider landscape setting.

6.19 The proposed scheme has been designed to minimize the associated impact on the wider landscape setting. The walls of the padel courts will be only 4.2 metres and 3.0 metres high with clear glazing, and the office unit will be single-storey and modest size. The seating area and parking area will be no larger than required, and the proposed soft landscaping provided throughout the scheme will help screen the scheme from the wider views.



#### Court lighting and the surrounding landscape impact

- 6.20 Policy CONS8 of the NDP confirms that proposals for external lighting in prominent locations likely to be visible from the surrounding landscape and viewpoints will not be supported.
- 6.21 The submitted LVA confirms that the proposed court lighting will have an initial **Neutral/Slight Adverse** effect upon the SDNPA, and this limited effect relies upon the use of modern LED luminaires with a highly controllable light spill and will be further reduced to Neutral at year 15 by the continued growth of the intervening mature vegetation that is proposed as part of the scheme.

#### Impact on the setting of Blackbrook Farmhouse as Grade II Listed Building

- 6.22 Blackbrook Farmhouse is located to the north-east of the site and comprises a Grade II Listed Building.
- 6.23 Given the existing mature and dense vegetation that is located directly to the north of the golf club driveway, and the siting and built form of the existing building between Blackbrook Farmhouse and the proposed padel court facility means that the proposed scheme will not result in an undue impact to the setting of this designated heritage asset.
- 6.24 In addition, the setting of Blackbrook farmhouse has already been eroded to an extent by the existence of the golf club and the associated built-form and facilities to the north, east and south of this designated heritage asset.
- 6.25 Overall, in terms of design and effects on the character and appearance of the locality, the proposed scheme complies with the relevant provisions of the NPPF and the local Development Plan.

#### ***c) Effects on residential amenity***

- 6.26 Due to the siting and form of the proposed padel court facility, there will be no overbearance or loss of light impacts resulting from the scheme.
- 6.27 The physical separation and existing and proposed soft landscaping will ensure that will be no undue loss of privacy to nearby residential amenities.

### Noise and disturbance

6.28 A Noise Assessment (12750C V1), prepared by Phlorum Limited, accompanies this application.

6.29 The noise survey was undertaken over a weekday and weekend period in January 2024 in order to understand the baseline noise impact. Source noise measurements were also taken at an operational padel court facility based in Chichester.

6.30 The Noise Assessment confirms the following:

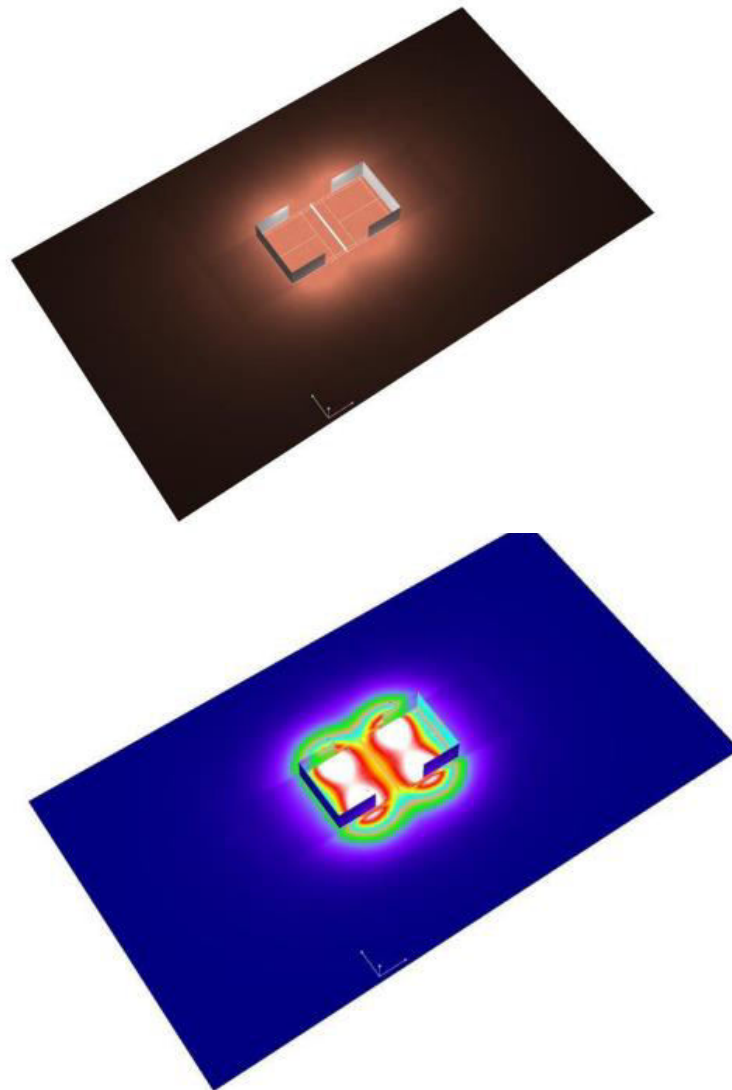
- The structure around each padel court will provide additional sound attenuation when compared to other similar sports facilities such as an open tennis court.
- The Noise Assessment indicates that the predicted padel court noise is below the existing daytime ambient noise levels at Brook Cottage and at the lowest measured ambient noise level at Blackbrook Farm. The predicted padel court 90th percentile maximum noise levels are also below the existing 90th percentile maximum noise levels at the nearest receptors. Furthermore, the predicted absolute noise levels are well below the outdoor noise targets provided by the World Health Organisation guidelines and by Sports England. On this basis it is considered that no noise mitigation measures are required for the proposed scheme.
- The noise increase from development traffic at properties on Spatham Lane is considered to be negligible, and no noise mitigation measures are required to reduce the noise effect of traffic associated with the padel court facility.

6.31 Overall, the Noise Assessment confirms that noise does not pose a constraint to the proposed padel court facility, and as such there will be no undue noise impact to the nearest residential amenities as a result of the padel court facility.

### Court lighting

6.32 Policy DM25 of the LPP2 confirms that development should not result in unacceptable light intrusion to neighbouring properties.

- 6.33 Each proposed padel court will be supported by court lighting. These will be arranged with 2no. located alongside the length of each side of the padel court.
- 6.34 A Floodlighting Details and Calculations document (Pistas Padel & FT-21200) provided by application is supported by the floodlight calculations, provided by Fit Energy SL is submitted in support of this application. The documents provide the technical details of the proposed court lighting, and confirms the floodlight positioning and orientation.
- 6.35 The court lighting will be provided on 6m tall columns and consist of the model FT-21200, fitted horizontally and incorporating all necessary baffles to achieve the predicted light levels and reduce glare. These lights use ultra-low glare technology.



**Figure 13:** Floodlight renders.

- 6.36 This specific court lighting has been chosen given the location of the site outside of the development boundary and the need to protect dark skies at night, and with residential dwellings relatively nearby.
- 6.37 The court lighting will be used during periods of darkness only and up until 10pm throughout the week. Their use will be on timers and integrated with the padel court bookings, and programmed to come on 5 minutes before and 5-minutes after the booked padel court session.
- 6.38 The court lighting will be necessary for the use of the padel courts during the darker months of the year, and their design has been integrated into the scheme to minimise impact upon the night sky and neighbouring amenity.
- 6.39 Overall, the proposed development will not result in any significant noise or light intrusion to nearby residential amenities, and will not result in any undue loss of light, dominance or loss of privacy in accordance with the NPPF or local Development Plan.

***d) Parking provision and impacts on the local road network***

- 6.40 A Transport Technical Note (TS\_SGR\_MSG\_040124\_V4), prepared by Reeves Transport Planning Ltd, accompanies this application.
- 6.41 The submitted Transport Technical Note confirms the following:
- The padel court facility will likely generate up to 32 vehicle movements per hour per day. This suggests an average of 1no. additional vehicle movements every two-minutes. Combining the traffic movements generated by the golf club, during the busiest hour between 2pm and 3pm there will be a maximum of 67 vehicle movements using the access to the golf club.
  - The T-junction of the golf club driveway onto Spatham Lane can accommodate circa 300 vehicle movements per day when Spatham Lane itself has the potential to accommodate up to 13,000 vehicle movements per day.
  - Despite the potential 13,000 vehicle movements per day for Spatham Lane, this road currently has circa 1,600 vehicle movements per day, which is only



12% of the maximum daily flow where a ghost island junction should be considered.

- When the proposed traffic generation at an average of 1no. vehicle every minute in the peak hour is taken into account, there will be no risk that the free flow of traffic using Spatham Lane will be affected or that the existing access would experience any material queue of vehicles. As such the existing access configuration is suitable to serve both the existing golf club and proposed traffic impact resulting from the padel court facility.
- The recorded traffic volume and speed data confirms that the required visibility splays can be secured on land that is either publicly adopted highway or able to be controlled by Mid Sussex Golf Club.
- The allocation of car parking within the site is sufficient to accommodate the maximum demand derived from the padel court facility. The scheme also includes facilities to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport, in the form of cycle parking, with the provision of 2no. bus stops adjacent the access onto Spatham Lane providing a certain level of public transport.

6.42 Overall, the scheme will not result in an undue impact on the local road network, and complies with the relevant provisions of the NPPF and the local Development Plan.

#### ***e) Ecology impact and biodiversity net gain***

6.43 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (23084 Rev 0) and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (23 April 2024), prepared by CT Ecology Limited, accompanies this application.

#### Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

6.44 In January 2024 an ecological survey was undertaken at the site by CT Ecology Limited. Several recommendations and ecological enhancements are recommended within Section 5.0 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, and which refer to the following:

- In terms of great crested newts (GCN), the site is located within the red impact zone, and based on the network of ponds within 250m and 500m of

the site, it is recommended that the scheme is registered on Lewes District Council's District Level Licensing (DLL) Scheme.

- Wildlife planting should be integral to the soft landscape plans and should include native species and/or species of recognised wildlife value. The use of nectar-rich and berry producing plants will attract a wider range of insects, birds and mammals. Species should be carefully selected to ensure they are suitable for the area.
- New tree and hedgerow planting should be undertaken between the padel facility and the adjacent access road. The planting should be connected to the existing hedgerow to the west of the site. This will serve to create additional linear features through the site and improve connectivity between the site and the wider landscape for more mobile species including hedgehog, great crested newt, bats and badger.
- The proposed court lighting will seek to minimize light spill, and the level of court lighting proposed will not cause in undue impact to nearby biodiversity and/or ecology.
- 2no. bird boxes and 1no. bat box should be incorporated within the scheme.

6.45 All recommendations and ecological enhancements proposed within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal have been incorporated within the scheme and as shown within the submitted drawings package.

#### Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment

6.46 The BNG Assessment (23 April 2023) and Biodiversity Metric 4.0 Calculation Tool confirms that the proposed development will result in a BNG of +37%.

6.47 This BNG will be achieved via both on-site mitigation through native tree planting, grassland, provision of the drainage basins as part of the drainage scheme, and provision of hedgerows.

6.48 Off-site BNG will be provided via scrub planting and the planting of rich grassland, and a single native tree. This off-site BNG will be provided directly adjacent to the application site and within the ownership of Mid Sussex Golf Club.

- 6.49 Appendix B of the BNG Assessment includes the Landowner Consent Letter, dated 23 April 2024. The letter is signed between Mid Sussex Padel and Mid Sussex Golf Club, and confirms that the planting and continued management of the off-site habitat would be undertaken by and be the sole responsibility of the applicant (i.e. Mid Sussex Padel), and in agreement with the landowner of the land (i.e. Mid Sussex Golf Club).
- 6.50 The BNG Plan meets the provisions as set within the Environment Act 2021, and the Council's Biodiversity Net Gain TAN (February 2021) document.

***f) Surface water drainage***

- 6.51 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 as designated by the Environment Agency. Flood Zone 1 comprises the lowest flood risk zone, and as such there is no requirement for the application to be accompanied with a specific flood risk assessment.
- 6.52 Whilst no specific flood risk assessment accompanies this application, the objectives of the NPPF and local planning policy contained within the development plan are met by the proposed scheme via the submission of a Surface Water Drainage Strategy (AEG3983\_BN1\_Brighton\_03), prepared by Aegaea Limited.
- 6.53 The report confirms that the runoff resulting from the proposed padel court facility can be accommodated without flooding, and via the provision of a linear swale directly to the east of the site, and a detention basin directly to the south of the site.
- 6.54 Overall, the proposed Surface Water Drainage Strategy complies with the provisions of the NPPF and the local Development Plan.

## **7.0 Sustainability & Social Impact Assessment**

7.1 In line with Paragraph 11 of the NPPF, this Sustainability & Social Impact Assessment has been prepared through an analysis of the intended social, economic and environmental consequences of the proposed padel court facility.

### ***Social Element***

7.2 The social benefits associated with the padel court facility are significant. The social benefits relate to increased health and wellbeing for the users of the padel court facility, for both the wider population and existing members of Mid Sussex Golf Club. The health and wellbeing benefits include the following:

- Increased aerobic exercise;
- Improved balance;
- Weight loss;
- Stress relief;
- Cognitive function; and
- Confidence building.

7.3 The padel court facility will be inclusive to all of society, including all age ranges, genders, people with disability and different physical conditions, school children and university students.

7.4 Based on established padel court markets such as within Spain and the Nordics, padel players from ages 27-54 make up approximately 73% of bookings, with an almost equally male to female ratio.

7.5 Mid Sussex Padel will engage with the target demographic through strategic marketing and cross-marketing with Mid Sussex Golf Club. This will be achieved via the following:

- Online presence- Provision of a professional and informative website and social media stream for Mid Sussex Padel. Utilisation of social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn Facebook, and Twitter to share updates, promotions, and engaging content. Targeted Digital Marketing Implement targeted online advertising campaigns to reach the demographic and location through platforms like Google Ads and social media ads.



- Community Events and Demo Days Open Days and Launch Events- Provision of open days and/or launch events to introduce padel to the community. Offering of free demos, coaching sessions, and promotional activities to encourage participation. Collaborations with Mid Sussex Golf Club Events and coordination with the golf club for joint events or activities, fostering a sense of community and shared interests.
- Membership Programs Exclusive Memberships- As per the submitted Business Plan, there will be exclusive membership programs with benefits such as discounted rates, priority booking, and access to members-only events.
- Referral Programs- Encourage current members to refer friends, offering incentives such as free padel sessions or merchandise for successful referrals.
- Coaching Programs Beginner Programs- Development of beginner-friendly programs targeting those new to padel, offering introductory lessons and equipment.
- Skill Development Programs- Offering of skill development programs and coaching sessions to cater to players looking to improve their padel game.
- Tournaments and Leagues Local Tournaments- Organisation of local padel tournaments with various categories, encouraging friendly competition and community involvement.
- Inter-Club Leagues- Establish inter-club leagues, promoting friendly matches between Mid Sussex Padel and other clubs in the region.
- Incentives and Promotions Launch Promotions- Offering of special promotions during the launch phase to attract initial interest and drive early bird sign-ups.
- Seasonal Promotions- Introduction of seasonal promotions, discounts, or package deals to keep the offerings fresh and appealing.

- Feedback Mechanisms Surveys and Feedback Sessions- Regularly seek feedback from members to understand their preferences and make necessary adjustments to services.
- Community Engagement- Actively participate in local forums, social media groups, and community events to stay connected and responsive to community needs.
- Sponsorship and Partnerships Local Sports Teams- Sponsor local sports teams or events to enhance visibility and community engagement. Local Businesses: Partner with local businesses for cross-promotions or joint events, fostering a sense of community collaboration.

7.6 The relationship between Mid Sussex Golf Club and Mid Sussex Padel will be integral. The existing and new golf club members will automatically become Mid Sussex Padel members and will benefit from discounted padel court bookings, priority bookings and coaching discounts.

7.7 It is expected that 90% of the golf club members will use the padel court facility at least once, 60% will use the facility at least once a month, and 30% will use the padel court facility weekly.

7.8 In terms of social benefits for the wider population, Mid Sussex Padel will partner with local community organizations, schools, universities and businesses, and the padel court facility will be open to members of the public. All users of the padel court facility will experience the increased social well-being and health benefits that the sport offers.

### ***Economic Element***

7.9 Short-term economic benefits associated with the scheme will be met through the construction of the padel court facility and parking area, and provision of soft landscaping and ecological enhancements.

7.10 The longer-term economic benefits of the scheme will be met through visitors to Mid Sussex Golf Club and Mid Sussex Padel making use of the padel court facility throughout the year.

- 7.11 The scheme will require a minimum employment of 10no. staff in the form of 3no. operating managers, 1no. head padel coach, 1no. assistant padel coach, and 5no. part-time staff employed from within the local area. This will result in a direct economic benefit as a result of the padel court facility.
- 7.12 The padel court facility will attract new visitors from the wider locality which in turn will inevitably drive further economic growth in the form of food and drink and general spending within the nearby settlements.
- 7.13 The proposed parking provision will benefit both the padel court facility and the golf club thereby ensuring less congestion that in turn may provide a small economic benefit resultant from a more efficient local road network.

#### ***Environmental Element***

- 7.14 Environmental benefits associated with the scheme will be met through the protection and enhancement of the existing natural environment.
- 7.15 The scheme will incorporate additional soft planting adjacent the parking area and golf club driveway, additional soft landscaping within the parking area and seating area and to the west of the padel courts and parking area.
- 7.16 Several bat and bird boxes will also be provided, and the proposed swale and pond as part of the drainage scheme will also provide associated ecological enhancements.
- 7.17 The proposed court lighting will be controlled on automatic timers and are designed to be energy efficient through the provision of modern LEDs to benefit of the nearby biodiversity.

## 8.0 Conclusion

8.1 This full planning application proposes the following description of development:

- *“Provision of 4no. padel courts (Class F2) with ancillary office unit and casual seating area, plus associated infrastructure including court lighting with automated timers. Provision of vehicle parking area, bicycle storage, drainage scheme, with additional soft landscaping and ecological enhancements.”*

8.2 The site is Land at Mid Sussex Golf Club, Spatham Lane, Westmeston, East Sussex BN6 8XJ. The application is made on behalf of the applicant, Mid Sussex Padel.

8.3 The padel court facility will be operated by *“Mid Sussex Padel”*. The chief objective of Mid Sussex Padel is to provide a unique padel experience with a key emphasis on socialising and community, and improved health and well-being for participants.

8.4 The proposal presents a policy-compliant scheme in accordance with the Development Plan and represents an acceptable form of development in principle. The proposed scheme appropriately preserves the character and appearance of the wider landscape setting, and will be acceptable in terms of the effects on residential amenity, highway impact, drainage and ecology.

8.5 Overall, there are no identifiable adverse impacts that significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development, and therefore this application should be approved in line with the relevant provisions of the NPPF and the Development Plan, subject to the attachment of appropriate conditions which are considered relevant, reasonable, necessary, enforceable and precise.