Local Policing Support Team

Your Ref: WD/2021/2356/MAO Our Ref: PE/WEA/22/03/A Date 11th February 2022

Contact Name: Phill Edwards Tel: 01273 404 535 ext: 540113 Mobile No: [redacted]

Dear Mr Taylor

RE: Land at Old Orchard House, Harebeech Lane, Horam, TN21 9DZ.

Thank you for your correspondence of 25th January 2022, advising me of an outline application for the erection of up to 38 dwellings, access, landscaping and associated infrastructure at the above location, for which you seek advice from a crime prevention viewpoint.

I have had the opportunity to examine the detail within the application and in an attempt to reduce the opportunity for crime and the fear of crime I offer the following comments from a Secured by Design (SBD) perspective. SBD is owned by the UK Police service and supported by the Home Office and Building Control Departments in England (Part Q Security – Dwellings), that recommends a minimum standard of security using proven, tested, and accredited products. Further details can be found at www.securedbydesign.com Due to the application being outline, my comments will be broad with more in-depth advice being delivered at reserved matters.

The National Planning Policy Framework demonstrates the government's aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of attractive, well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high-quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.

With the level of crime and anti-social behaviour in the Wealden district being below average when compared with the rest of Sussex, I have no major concerns with the proposals, however, additional measures to mitigate against any identified local crime trends and site specific requirements should always be considered.

Mr M Taylor
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Planning Services
Wealden District Council

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The development has a sinuous spline road with manoeuvring areas off of it. There is one vehicular entry point with no through vehicle route and a pedestrian / cycle link to the adjacent Cuckoo trail. The development's design and layout have positioned the dwellings around a public green space (PGS) which has created very good observation over the PGS. Dwellings face onto the street layout providing good active frontage. Back to back gardens and the layout have eliminated the need for vulnerable rear garden pathways. Parking has been provided with on-curtilage, overlooked parking bays with a number of on-street visitor bays. This should leave the street layout free and obstructed.

In the main the parking has good observation over it, except the parking arrangements for the block of multiple dwellings plots 26-29. Where communal parking occurs, it is important that they must be within view of an active room within the property. An active room is where there is direct and visual connection between the room and the street or the car parking area. Such visual connections can be expected from rooms such as kitchens and living rooms, but not from bedrooms and bathrooms. Gable ended windows can assist in providing observation over an otherwise unobserved area.

I note the inclusion of a footpath / bridge into the northern elevation of the development from Horebeech Lane, adjacent to the front of plots 1 & 2 vehicle manoeuvring area. I do not recommend this given there is adequate footpath access into the site at the main entrance. Its presence brings unobserved and unnecessary permeability into the site creating vulnerable areas. Para 8.3 of SBD Homes 2019 V2 states; *Whilst is accepted that through routes will be included within the development layouts, the designer must ensure that the security of the development is not compromised by excessive permeability, for instance by allowing the criminal legitimate access to the rear or side boundaries of dwellings or by providing too many or unnecessary segregated footpaths.*

It will be necessary to clearly indicate the boundary between public space and private areas. To maintain good surveillance across the street layout, it is desirable for dwelling frontages to be open to view, so walls fences and hedges will need to be kept low or alternatively feature a combination (max height 1m) of wall, railings or timber picket fence. As the first line of defence, perimeter fencing must be adequate with vulnerable areas such as side and rear gardens needing more robust defensive barriers by using walls or fencing to a minimum height of 1.8metres.

Gates that provide access to the side of the dwelling or rear access to the gardens must be robustly constructed of timber, be the same height as the adjoining fence and be lockable from both sides. The gates must be located on or as near to the front of the building line as possible, so that attempts to climb them will be in full view of the street. The design height and construction of any gates within a perimeter fencing system should match that of the adjoining fences and not compromise the overall security of the boundary. Where possible the street lighting scheme should be designed to ensure that the gates are well illuminated. Gates must be capable of being locked (operable by key from both sides of the gate). The gates must not be easy to climb or remove from their hinges.

The LEAP adjacent to the block of multiple dwellings (plots 26-29) has limited surveillance over it from surrounding dwellings. Additional there are parking bays positioned around the perimeter of the LEAP which will reduce further any observation from surrounding dwellings. This also increases the potential of a pedestrian / vehicle collision occurring. However, I was pleased to note the enclosed railings creating a dog free environment. Signage will need to be displayed indicating the rule setting for this facility.

Areas of play should be situated in an environment that is stimulating and safe for all children, be overlooked with good natural surveillance to ensure the safety of users and the protection of equipment, which can be vulnerable to misuse. Communal areas, such as playgrounds, toddler play areas, seating facilities have the potential to generate crime, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. Care should be taken to ensure that a lone dwelling or dwellings will not be adversely affected by the location of the amenity space, and it should be noted that positioning amenity/play space to the rear of dwellings can increase the potential for crime and complaints arising from increased noise and nuisance. The position of the LAP may impact upon plots 26-29 amenity.

With respect the link to the Cuckoo trail at the southern elevation, I was pleased to note that the pathway width has been increased to a minimum of 2.75 metres. To discourage unwanted access into the development from the cuckoo trail, I recommend signage indicating 'no through route, resident's access only'. This should deter casual access into the development thus reducing unnecessary permeability. Anti-vehicle mitigation measures should also be considered.

Finally, lighting throughout the development will be an important consideration and should it be implemented into the development, it is to conform to the recommendations within BS 5489:2013. SBD considers that bollard lighting is not appropriate as it does not project sufficient light at the right height making it difficult to recognise facial features and as a result causes an increase in the fear of crime.

Sussex Police would have no objection to the proposed development as submitted from a crime prevention perspective subject to my above observations, concerns and recommendations being satisfactorily addressed.

The Crime & Disorder Act 1998 heightens the importance of taking crime prevention into account when planning decisions are made. Section 17 of the Act places a clear duty on both police and local authorities to exercise their various functions with due regard to the likely effect on the prevention of crime and disorder. You are asked to accord due weight to the advice offered in this letter which would demonstrate your authority's commitment to work in partnership and comply with the spirit of The Crime & Disorder Act.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

Phill Edwards
Designing Out Crime Officer
Sussex Police Headquarters