



Horsham District Council
Parkside
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

Date: 7 October 2025
Our ref: 09832

For the attention of: Hannah Darley

Application ref: DC/25/1364
Location: Staalcot Farm Stall House Lane North Heath West Sussex
Proposal/Description: Use of land for the stationing of 2no. caravans for residential purposes, together with the formation of hardstanding and associated landscaping. Construction of associated utility buildings.

Thank you for consulting with Place Services on the above Full planning application. This letter sets out our consultation response on the landscape impact of the application and how the proposal relates and responds to the landscape setting and context of the site.

We previously provided comments for applications on this site under referenced DC/23/2098 (refused and appeal withdrawn), DC/24/0356 (refused and appeal dismissed) and DC/24/1573 (refused).

Summary

Not supportive on landscape grounds	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supportive subject to attached recommendations and / or conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Further information required prior to determination	<input type="checkbox"/>
No landscape comments / does not wish to comment	<input type="checkbox"/>

Site Context:

The application Site is located to the east of North Heath hamlet, accessed from Stall House Lane which runs along the south-eastern boundary of the Site. A railway line runs close to the west of the Site however is separated by a pastoral field and established hedgerows. Stall House Lane is a dead-end road which provides access to a number of properties and farm buildings to the east. The A29 Stane Street is located 0.6km to the west providing access to Pulborough to the south and Billingshurst to the north.

The Site itself comprises a pastoral field separated from Stall House Lane by an established hedgerow and tree lined boundary. The western boundaries remain open since the application Site comprises only part of a larger pastoral field.

17th Century (Grade II listed) Laurel Cottage is located adjacent to the Site on the opposite edge of Stall House Lane.

A public right of way (PRoW) runs close to the south-west of the site and then runs north alongside the Arun Valley trainline before crossing. Another PRoW runs close to the Site along the access track to Stallhouse Farm in the north-east.

Planning Policy Context:

Horsham District Planning Framework

The Horsham District Planning Framework Proposals Maps identifies the site as being located outside the defined built-up area boundary and therefore designated as countryside. Policy 26: Countryside Protection sets out a presumption against development unless for agriculture, forestry minerals, recreation or ensures the sustainable development of rural areas. It also goes on to say that development permitted must be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character location and must not lead, either individually or cumulatively, to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside and/or conserves, and / or enhances, the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located.

Policy 25: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character also sets out that proposals will be required to protect, conserve, and enhance the landscape and townscape character, taking into account areas identified as being of landscape importance, the individual settlement characteristics, and maintains settlement separation.

Policy 23: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation sets out the following [inter alia]; *“The development will not have an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the landscape and the amenity of neighbouring properties, and is sensitively designed to mitigate any impact on its surroundings.”*

The proposals should also have regard to Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity which requires development to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity and should be compliant with Policy 33: Development Principles which states that proposals should be distinctive in character, respect the character of the surrounding area (including its overall setting, townscape features, views and green corridors) and, where available and applicable, take account of the recommendations/policies of the relevant Design Statements and Character Assessments.

Review of the proposal/submitted information:

The application has not been accompanied by the submission of a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA). We have made the professional judgement that the given the predominant rural character of the immediate area, with limited residential properties and farms, the proposal would have an adverse impact on landscape character. Views are however partially mitigated by the presence of the hedgerow along the roadside boundary which prevents some views into the Site.

The submitted proposals include 2no. static caravans and 2no. touring caravans on the same plot. This proposed layout takes the developed area way from the PRoW which runs along the western edge of the field. Compared with the previous submitted applications, this

layout is preferred as the visual impact from the PRoW (the most sensitive receptor) is reduced.

The Horsham Landscape Capacity Assessment (2021) identifies the site as being located within Local Landscape Character Area (LCA) 43 'North Heath and surrounds'. Key characteristics of this LCA include the gently undulating landform and small-medium fields with a hedgerow pattern and a strong rural character in places.

The assessment judges this LCA as having low-moderate capacity for medium scale housing development, described as; "*The area only has potential to be able to accommodate development in limited locations without unacceptable adverse landscape and visual impacts or compromising the values attached to it, taking account of any appropriate mitigation*". We note that this type of development is considerably lower than the threshold for medium scale. However, the mitigation for any incongruous development is particularly important to the assimilation of the development in the landscape.

Permission was granted for a barn within the application site (Ref: DC/16/2026) in October 2016. This application was for the removal of a barn and replacement barn. The proposed barn is to have dark green coloured profiled metal walls to blend in with the natural colours of the hedge and meadow. Access to the barn was proposed from the same entrance as this application.

We recognise that the presence of a new barn would alter the baseline condition of the site. However, since the replacement barn is not yet constructed, our judgements are currently based on the existing condition.

We also note that agricultural barns are more easily assimilated into the rural landscape than static caravans owed to their function and use within the rural countryside. The submitted information does not confirm the proposed colour and materiality of the static caravans, however until confirmed, caravans usually stand out against the vegetated backdrop owed to their light colour cladding.

The combination of the two caravans, potentially in white or light colour cladding material, may appear visually dominant in contrast to the more subdued tones of the barn.

The submitted Block Plan (Rev. 000) indicates the presence of a new hedgerow on the eastern edge of the existing PRoW 2298. It is indicated that it will be maintained at 1.2m to allow for users of the PRoW to experience the views into the pastoral fields in which the proposed development resides. We would however advise that the hedgerows planted around the edge of the development site are maintained higher to provide more screening.

We note that the proposed hedgerows extend beyond the red line boundary (RLB) within the blue ownership boundary, and therefore this cannot be secured under this planning application. Therefore, whilst we do not oppose to hedgerow planting, the RLB needs to include all areas where landscaping works are being undertaken.

We advise that tree planting is proposed throughout the development site, to contribute to enhancing the biodiversity and green infrastructure on site.

Limited detail has been provided regarding the proposed hard and soft landscaping and proposed boundary treatments.

Overall, we judge that the proposals will have an adverse impact on the character of the local landscape. However, the reduction in plot sizes and numbers, and the relocation towards the south-east corner of the field (compared to the previous submissions) reduces the visual and landscape character impacts of the development within this location.

If minded for approval, for the application to be acceptable in landscape terms, we would advise the following recommendations are taken into consideration:

- The hedgerow should be planted in double staggered rows, preferably 5 plants per linear metre. Though we would recommend this is accompanied by a 3-strand galvanised wire and timber post fence through the centre of the staggered row of hedge to prevent access through by pedestrians until the hedges are fully established. We would also advise that the following mix is used:
 - 60% Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
 - 20% Field maple (*Acer campestre*)
 - 10% Hazel (*Corylus Avellana*)
 - 5 % Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)
 - 5% Trees (Wild Cherry, Oak or Hornbeam)
- Additional tree planting should be included within the hedgerow to filter views from the most sensitive visual receptor and therefore contribute to the Land Management Guidelines of LCA LW5.
- Details of the proposed fencing will be required. We advise that this is low-level height to avoid introducing further urbanising features into the countryside and can be easier assimilated into the landscape.
- No tree planting has been proposed as part of the submission. There are substantial opportunities for tree planting on the site edges and within the site itself to filter views of the structures and enhance the visual amenity of the development. Trees should be planted within every plot and with the perimeter hedgerows.
- We advise the hedgerow is maintained to a height of at least 2.5m, once established, to contribute to mitigating views around the immediate edge of the caravans. 1.2m high hedgerow is welcomed along the PRoW.
- The visual impact of the static caravans is somewhat dependent on the materiality and colour palette used. We therefore advise that different materials and colours are explored to reduce the visual impact against the vegetated backdrop.
- Tree planting will be particularly beneficial along the extent of the northern boundary to filter views from the north on the PRoW.

Recommended Conditions:

If minded for approval, we would recommend the following conditions for your consideration:

ACTION REQUIRED PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT: SUBMISSION OF LANDSCAPE DETAILS

Prior to commencement of landscape works hereby approved, details comprising plans and particulars shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority showing precise details of the hard and soft landscaping which shall form part of the development hereby permitted. Any scheme of landscaping details as may be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority shall show the existing trees, shrubs, and hedgerows on the site where to be retained and shall include details of:

- A specification of soft landscape works, include a schedule of species, size, density and spacing of all trees, shrubs and hedgerows to be planted, areas to be grass seeded or turfed, including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment.
- paved or otherwise hard surfaced areas including the extent and specification for footways and kerbing, together with the type and specification of all permeable paving and asphalt surfaces.
- specification of all means of enclosure and all boundary treatments between individual plots, all boundary treatments around the perimeter of the site.

Such details as may be agreed, shall be implemented in their entirety during the first planting season (October to March inclusive) following approval, or in any other such phased arrangement as may be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries in relation to this advice.

Place Services – Landscape Team

Email: landscape@essex.gov.uk



Place Services provide landscape advice on behalf of Horsham District Council.

Please note: This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter.