

Horsham District Council
Parkside
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

Date: 28 November 2025
Our ref: 11661

For the attention of: Nicola Pettifer

Application ref: DC/25/1658
Location: Woodfords Shipley Road Southwater Horsham West Sussex RH13 9BQ
Proposal/Description: Reserved matters application for the erection of up to 73no. dwellings, open space and child play provision, residential parking facilities and associated infrastructure, including access arrangements following outline application DC/21/2180, relating to layout, scale, appearance and landscaping.

Thank you for consulting with Place Services on the above reserved matters 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.

Summary

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

Review of the proposal/submitted information

In 2022, an application for 78 dwellings (Ref. DC/20/2564) was refused and dismissed at appeal. In July 2024, Outline planning permission was approved for 73 dwellings under application DC/21/2180.

Following the approval of application DC/21/2180 for 73 dwellings, the current Reserved Matters application shows an increase on the number of dwellings to 78 dwellings.

We have concerns regarding the density of the proposed development and advise that the dwelling numbers are reduced within the scheme to the original numbers approved at outline application (Ref. DC/21/2180) to be more reflective of the countryside edge settlement location to the south of Southwater.

The scheme now retains the farmhouse and is excluded from the red line boundary, which is welcomed, however, an increase in density within the development parcel is now evident as a result of the additional number of dwellings proposed.

Within the Outline Design and Access Statement (September 2021), Para 3.18 states “*At the development edges, scale and massing of dwellings will be reduced to create a transition to the rural edge.*” “*This approach is in general accordance with best practice for sustainable edge-of-settlement housing developments.*” Additionally, the Outline Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) (September 2021) states “*The new homes vary in the density from north to south, responding to a transition from the current settlement edge to a softer, more rural edge to the south*”.

The Outline approval was based on this information. Within the Reserved Matters application, the tallest 3-storey apartment building is located furthest from the existing settlement edge of Southwater. On the southern and eastern boundaries, a less dense and lower storey approach should be located on the countryside edge. Taller, high-density buildings with solid frontages should be situated towards the existing settlement boundary edge, as per the LVA.

Illustrative Perspective 03 (Dwg no. 102108-BEL-SL-PER03) shows a heavily vegetated SuDS area to the north-east corner of the site. However, the Planting Plans (Dwg no. 3424-APA-ZZ-XX-PP-L-2001/2002/2003 Rev. P02) show that the SuDS basins are planted only with EM8 Wetland Meadow Mix. We advise that the planting within and around the basins is supplemented with other shrubs and planting which provides additional interest alongside the meadow mix proposed. Additional shrub planting will also provide a physical buffer and biodiversity.

We recommend that Viburnum tinus spp. is removed from the planting palette. The species can be severely damaged by Viburnum beetle and often produces an unpleasant smell particularly when the foliage is wet.

Common elder (Sambucus nigra) should not be specified as part of the hedge mix. The shrub is very vigorous and will suppress the growth of the other species specified.

Additional planting such as hedgerow or trellis climbers should be proposed around the substation, which currently terminates the views along the POS and from the east. This will soften this feature within the POS.

The eastern greenspace is largely fenced or hedged off from the neighbouring roads. There are opportunities to reduce the reliance on knee rails to restrict access to their eastern greenspace. Introducing soft landscaping including shrub planting can provide a softer barrier to the SuDS areas.

Specifications for the headwalls have not yet been provided, however we advise that these are not proposed as precast concrete alongside galvanised handrails. There are opportunities to propose high quality headwall features with improved visual amenity.

As demonstrated by Illustrative Perspective 02, the POS is surrounded by a low knee rail. To increase the permeability of this space and multifunctionality in line with the four pillars of SuDS, we advise that this knee rail is removed.

The surface treatment to the northern private road is not included in the key. However, we advise that this treatment also is applied to the road serving Plots 1-3, and other private roads fronting onto areas of POS, such as for Plots 19-22 and 25/26.

We recommend that the proposals are reviewed to consider the above comments to deliver a scheme that better integrates with the countryside edge.

In summary, we advise the above comments are considered regarding the design and landscaping of the submitted scheme. We have concerns regarding the revised layout compared to the Outline submission, where the apartment block is located on the countryside edge, where further design changes could further align the layout with the DAS (2021).

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.