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## Planning Statement

Extension to visitor entrance building for new ticket sales area and café; infilling roof to former generator block courtyard, re-roofing Alpine House and internal reconfiguration; single storey winter garden conservatory to Stable Block, terrace extension to east and internal reconfiguration; change of use from redundant staff offices and staff accommodation within Stable Block to guest accommodation; change of use of part of Red House first floor to staff accommodation; small WC extension to Engine House; wedding pavilion to lawn, south of Leonardslee House; landscaping changes to forecourt of Leonardslee House.

Leonardslee Lakes and Gardens, Brighton Road, Lower Beeding, Horsham, RH13 6PP

JULY 2025

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# CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>SITE AND SURROUNDINGS.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>PLANNING AND PRE-APPLICATION HISTORY .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>PLANNING POLICY .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>PLANNING ASSESSMENT .....</b>	<b>20</b>
	(A) PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT.....	20
	(B) LOSS OF ANCILLARY OFFICE SPACE AND STAFF ACCOMMODATION .....	21
	(C) HERITAGE.....	21
	(D) ARCHAEOLOGY.....	23
	(E) LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT .....	23
	(F) ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY .....	24
	(G) ECOLOGY .....	25
	(H) TREES .....	28
	(I) TRANSPORT / HIGHWAYS .....	30
	(J) DRAINAGE AND FLOOD RISK .....	32
	(K) WATER NEUTRALITY .....	33
	(L) AMENITY.....	33
<b>7</b>	<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>34</b>

# I INTRODUCTION

## Background

- I.1 Walsingham Planning has been instructed by Leonardslee Ltd to prepare a Planning Statement in support of planning and listed building applications for the following development at Leonardslee Lakes and Gardens, Brighton Road, Lower Beeding, Horsham, RH13 6PP.

*“Extension to the visitor entrance building to house a new ticket sales area and café; infilling roof to the former generator block courtyard, re-roofing of the Alpine House and internal reconfiguration; Single storey winter garden conservatory to the Stable Block, terrace extension to the east and internal reconfiguration; Change of use from redundant staff offices and staff accommodation within the stable block to guest accommodation; Change of use to the partial first floor of the Red House to staff accommodation; Small WC extension to the Engine House; Lightweight wedding pavilion to the lawn, south of Leonardslee House; Landscaping changes to the forecourt of Leonardslee House.”*

- I.2 Leonardslee Ltd acquired Leonardslee Lakes and Gardens (the application site) in 2017. Early investment in the Gardens and refurbishing Leonardslee House as a hotel and restaurant allowed it to reopen to the public. Further investment is now required to ensure its future viability, including maintaining a site and property of this size and importance.
- I.3 The applicant has worked with its team of architects, landscape architects, ecologists, and heritage experts in devising a holistic vision for the Estate’s future in consultation with key stakeholders that include Horsham District Council (HDC), Council Members, Cabinet Members, Historic England (HE), and Sussex Gardens Trust (SGT). Consultation has taken place and included a series of meetings and site visits with stakeholders to discuss proposals and seek formal pre-application planning advice from HDC.
- I.4 The applicant has taken onboard the advice given to date and revised the proposals accordingly.

## Planning Submission

- I.5 An application for full planning permission and listed building consent for the proposed investment into the site is submitted to HDC and includes the following items:

### **Site and Landscape Drawings by Purcell:**

- Existing Site Location Plan 242769-PUR-00-XX-DR-A-I001

- Proposed Site Location Plan 242769-PUR-00-XX-DR-A-2001
- Existing Landscape Site Plan 242769-PUR-00-XX-DR-A-1020
- Existing Ground Floor Plan Stable Block 242769-PUR-00-XX-DR-A-1020
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan Stable Block 242769-PUR-00-XX-DR-A-1022
- Proposed Landscape Site Plan 242769-PUR-00-XX-DR-A-2020
- Proposed Landscaping Plan Public Realm 242769-PUR-00-XX-DR-A-2020
- Proposed Landscaping Plan Main House Carpark 242769-PUR-00-XX-DR-A-2023

**Stable Block Drawings by Purcell:**

- Existing Ground Floor Plan Stable Block 242769-PUR-01-00-DR-A-1001
- Existing First & Second Floor Plan Stable Block 242769-PUR-01-01-DR-A-1002
- Existing Roof Plan Stable Block 242769-PUR-01-RF-DR-A-1003
- Existing North & East Elevations Stable Block 242769-PUR-01-ZZ-DR-A-1011
- Existing South & West Elevations Stable Block 242769-PUR-01-ZZ-DR-A-1012
- Existing Sections AA, BB, & CC Stable Block 242769-PUR-01-ZZ-DR-A-1021
- Existing Sections DD, EE & FF Stable Block 242769-PUR-01-ZZ-DR-A-1022
- Demolition Ground Floor Plan Stable Block 242769-PUR-01-00-DR-A-1501
- Demolition First & Second Floor Plan Stable Block 242769-PUR-01-01-DR-A-1502
- Demolition Roof Plan Stable Block 242769-PUR-01-RF-DR-A-1503
- Demolition North & East Elevations Stable Block 242769-PUR-01-ZZ-DR-A-1511
- Demolition South & West Elevation Stable Block 242769-PUR-01-ZZ-DR-A-1512
- Demolition Sections AA, BB, & CC Stable Block 242769-PUR-01-ZZ-DR-A-1521

- Demolition Sections DD, EE & FF Stable Block 242769-PUR-01-ZZ-DR-A-1522
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan 242769-PUR-01-00-DR-A-2001
- Proposed First & Second Floor Plan Stable Block 242769-PUR-01-01-DR-A-2002
- Proposed Roof Plan Stable Block 242769-PUR-01-RF-DR-A-2003
- Proposed North and East Elevation Stable Block 242769-PUR-01-ZZ-DR-A-2011
- Proposed South and West Elevation Stable Block 242769-PUR-01-ZZ-DR-A-2012
- Proposed Sections DD, EE & FF Stable Block 242769-PUR-01-ZZ-DR-A-2022
- Proposed Sections AA, BB & CC Stable Block 242769-PUR-01-ZZ-DR-A-2023

**Engine House Drawings by Purcell:**

- Existing Ground Floor Plan Engine House 242769-PUR-02-00-DR-A-1001
- Existing Roof Plan Engine House 242769-PUR-02-RF-DR-A-1002
- Existing North & West Elevations Engine House 242769-PUR-02-ZZ-DR-A-1011
- Existing South & East Elevations Engine House 242769-PUR-02-ZZ-DR-A-1012
- Demolition Ground Floor Plan Engine House 242769-PUR-02-00-DR-A-1501
- Demolition Roof Plan Engine House 242769-PUR-02-RF-DR-A-1502
- Demolition North & East Elevation Engine House 242769-PUR-02-ZZ-DR-A-1511
- Demolition South & East Elevations Engine House 242769-PUR-02-ZZ-DR-A-1512
- Demolition Sections AA & BB Engine House 242769-PUR-02-ZZ-DR-A-1521
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan Engine House 242769-PUR-02-00-DR-A-2001
- Proposed Roof Plan Engine House 242769-PUR-02-RF-DR-A-2002
- Proposed North & East Elevations Engine House 242769-PUR-02-ZZ-DR-A-2011

- Proposed South & East Elevations Engine House 242769-PUR-02-ZZ-DR-A-2012
- Proposed Sections AA & BB Engine House 242769-PUR-02-ZZ-DR-A-2021

**Wedding Pavillion Drawings by Purcell:**

- Existing Site Plan Wedding Pavilion 242769-PUR-04-SL-DR-A-1000
- Proposed Site Plan Wedding Pavilion 242769-PUR-04-SL-DR-A-2000
- Existing South and East Elevations Wedding Pavilion 242769-PUR-04-ZZ-DR-A-1010
- Proposed Base and Roof Plans Wedding Pavilion 242769-PUR-04-00-DR-A-2001
- Proposed South & East Elevations Wedding Pavilion 242769-PUR-04-ZZ-DR-A-2010
- Proposed Elevation & Section Wedding Pavilion 242769-PUR-04-ZZ-DR-A-2011

**Former Generation Block Drawings by Purcell:**

- Existing Ground Floor Plan 242769-PUR-05-00-DR-A-1001
- Existing Roof Plan Former 242769-PUR-05-RF-DR-A-1002
- Existing North & East Elevations 242769-PUR-05-ZZ-DR-A-1011
- Existing South & West Elevations 242769-PUR-05-ZZ-DR-A-1012#
- Existing Sections AA & BB 242769-PUR-05-ZZ-DR-A-1021
- Existing Sections CC & DD 242769-PUR-05-ZZ-DR-A-1022
- Demolition Ground Floor Plan 242769-PUR-05-00-DR-A-1501
- Demolition Roof Plan 242769-PUR-05-RF-DR-A-1502
- Demolition North & East Elevations 242769-PUR-05-ZZ-DR-A-1511
- Existing South & West Elevations 242769-PUR-05-ZZ-DR-A-1512
- Demolition Sections AA & BB 242769-PUR-05-ZZ-DR-A-1521

- Demolition Sections CC & DD 242769-PUR-05-ZZ-DR-A-1522
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan 242769-PUR-05-00-DR-A-2001
- Proposed Roof Plan 242769-PUR-05-RF-DR-A-2002
- Proposed North & East Elevations 242769-PUR-05-ZZ-DR-A-2011
- Proposed South & West Elevations 242769-PUR-05-ZZ-DR-A-2012
- Proposed Sections 242769-PUR-05-ZZ-DR-A-2021
- Proposed Sections 242769-PUR-05-ZZ-DR-A-2022

**Red House Drawings by Purcell:**

- Existing Ground Floor Plan 242769-PUR-06-00-DR-A-1001
- Existing First Floor Plan 242769-PUR-06-01-DR-A-1002
- Existing Roof Plan 242769-PUR-06-RF-DR-A-1003
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan 242769-PUR-06-00-DR-A-2001
- Proposed First Floor Plan 242769-PUR-06-01-DR-A-2002
- Entrance Building (Retail Block) Drawings
- Existing Ground Floor Plan 242769-PUR-08-00-DR-A-1001
- Existing Roof Plan 242769-PUR-08-00-DR-A-1002
- Existing Elevations 242769-PUR-08-ZZ-DR-A-1011
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan 242769-PUR-08-00-DR-A-2001
- Proposed Roof Plan 242769-PUR-08-00-DR-A-2002
- Proposed Elevations 242769-PUR-08-ZZ-DR-A-2011

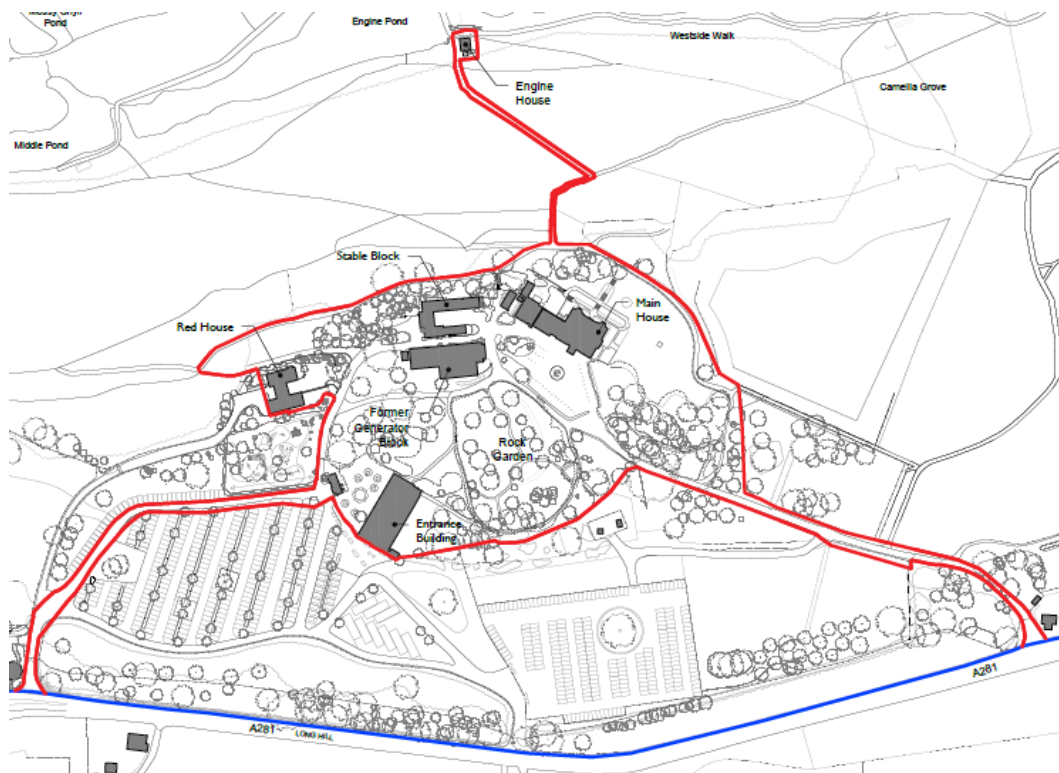
**Supporting Documents:**

- Planning Statement, Walsingham Planning, July 2025
- Design and Access Statement, Purcell, May 2025
- Heritage Impact Assessment, Purcell, June 2025
- Leonardslee Garden Conservation Management Plan, Donald Insall Associates, September 2024
- Leonardslee Park and Gardens Conservation Management Plan Addendum, LUC, February 2025
- Planting Plan, LUC, June 2025
- Public Realm Planting and Landscape Strategy Report, LUC, June 2025
- Travel Plan Statement, GTA, September 2024
- Water Neutrality Assessment, EAS Ltd, May 2025
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statements for Stable Block, Engine House, House Forecourt, Former Generator Block, Visitor Entrance, Wedding Pavilion, Temple, June 2025
- Bat Dusk Emergency Survey Report, Stable Block, Temple, September 2024
- Bat Dusk Emergency Survey Report, Honey Cottage, Temple, September 2024
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment, Leonardslee House, Entrance Building, Stables, Former Generator Block, Engine House, Wedding Pavilion, Temple, March and December 2023
- Community Infrastructure Levy Form
- Biodiversity Gain Plan, Temple, July 2025
- Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA), LUC, July 2025



## 2 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 Leonardslee Lakes and Gardens (the application site) is a Grade I listed park and garden located in the eastern part of West Sussex, southeast of Horsham and south of the village of Lower Beeding. The site comprises of 54ha of parkland and 32ha of ornamental gardens.
- 2.2 Leonardslee House (located within the park and garden) is a Grade II listed building, comprising an early 19<sup>th</sup> Century house with several outbuildings within its listed curtilage.
- 2.3 The outbuildings include the Stable Block, Former Generator Block, Engine House, Red House and Entrance Building.



*Site Location Plan showing the location of each of the above-mentioned buildings*

- 2.4 The Engine House is the only structure outside of the main house's immediate cluster of buildings. It is located in the valley to the east of main house, where a string of ponds meander through the gardens on a north-south alignment.
- 2.5 The landscape to the east of the ponds features woodland walks, pinetums and a large deer park, whilst the designed landscape to the west is made up of woodland gardens, parkland, and ornamental pleasure grounds.

- 2.6 A mix of estate fencing, deer fencing and planting hedging runs around the perimeter of the site.
- 2.7 The site is bound by Long Hill (A281 and B2210) to the west which provides vehicular access to the site and its car and coach parks.
- 2.8 The buildings on the Estate comprise of a number of existing uses. The House is currently used as a hotel and fine dining restaurant. Its ancillary buildings are used as cafés, WCs, doll's house museum, staff accommodation, offices, visitor entrance building and other ancillary uses. The location of these uses is shown on page 27 of the Design and Access Statement.
- 2.9 The site lies within an Archaeological Notification Area (DWS8715), as designated by Horsham District Council.
- 2.10 The site is also located within the High Weald National Landscape (HWNL) (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)).
- 2.11 The supporting Heritage Impact Assessment by Purcell provides an in-depth analysis of the heritage assets, including the Round House, an octagonal lodge, which is Grade II listed in its own right and located adjacent to the site entrance.
- 2.12 There is only one TPO registered over a Yew Tree next to the Round House (TPO/0297). There are however several Ancient Tree Inventory (ATI) trees located in the park boundary.
- 2.13 The site is within the countryside and outside of a built-up area boundary (BuAB).
- 2.14 According to the Government's Flood Map for Planning, the site resides within flood zone 1 (low risk).
- 2.15 Surrounding the site and making up the local landscape is St. Leonard's Forest, principally woodland and open heath, and agricultural land.



*Aerial Image of extent of Leonardslee Lakes & Gardens*



*Photograph of Leonardslee House and curtilage buildings within the gardens*

### 3 PLANNING AND PRE-APPLICATION HISTORY

#### Application History

3.1 The site's most recent relevant planning history is as follows:

- DC/12/1892 (PP) and DC/12/1893 (LBC) - Works to provide new car parking, new and adjusted access to A281 and B2110, alterations to the Red House, stables complex, museum block and engine house and 4 new timber structures associated with opening Leonardslee Gardens to the public (Full Planning) – Permitted 07/08/2014 and completed.
- DC/18/0689 - Change of use, restoration and extension of existing green house for use as a ticket office/gift shop, extension of toilet block, external works to existing car park to create a formalised parking arrangement, upgrade works to two of the existing access points and associated works and landscaping associated with the opening of Leonardslee House and Gardens to the public – Permitted 10/10/2018 and completed.
- DC/19/1067 - Construction of a new gardener's barn and Victorian style greenhouse – Permitted 16/07/2019 and completed.
- DC/22/2229 - Construction of enlarged and rationalised existing car park and grassed enclosure for overflow car parking, with tree planting. Installation of new children's play area. Relocation of chicken enclosure. Amendments to road layout within the site, with associated enlarged and enhanced landscape buffer and reinstatement of hedge to A281 boundary (Part retrospective) – Permitted 10/07/2023 and completed.
- DISC/24/0014 - Application for Approval of Details Reserved by Conditions 6 (rectification works) and 7 (revised Conservation Management Plan and allied Conservation Garden Management Plan) to approved application DC/22/2229 – Approved.

#### Pre-application Advice

3.2 Pre-application advice with Horsham District Council for the current proposals began in 2023 under reference PE/23/0245. The applicant and their consultant team met with the Council in November 2023, and January and March 2024, with the Council providing written pre-

application advice in July 2024. Further pre-application advice was sought in March 2025, and a written response issued in April 2025 (PE/24/0219).

- 3.3 The pre-app proposals set out a masterplan vision for the whole of the Leonardslee Estate which would allow for the site to be enjoyed throughout the year and provide the viability required to conserve and manage it.
- 3.4 As summarised in the Council's pre-app response, the proposals included *"a series of interventions, centred around repositioning the focal point of the gardens and a wayfinding strategy"*, including:
- *"Free visitor offering to the Victorian Rock Garden via revised circulation and repositioning of ticketed garden entrance (new kiosk building) further into the site, with new landscaped area (a central meeting point 'radial square') in front of the former generator halls, main house, and stable block and courtyard. Landscape interventions to physically separate the main house from the central meeting point;*
  - *Alterations to the stable block (existing Clocktower Café) and courtyard, and former Generator Halls (existing function room/dolls house museum/alpine house) to create a more varied food and drink offer and new events and function space;*
  - *Alterations to the stable block (existing Potters Cottage; Staff Office/Carriage Cottage; Honey Cottage) and Red House, to create new guest accommodation (Airbnb offer); and*
  - *Alterations of the Engine House to provide for WC provision."*
- 3.5 The main feedback from the pre-app is summarised as follows:
1. The Council confirmed that no change of use would take place as a result of the proposals.
  2. The development was unlikely to significantly impact on any below ground archaeology.
  3. The Estate Plan, Conservation Management Plan (CMP) and Conservation Garden Management Plan (CGMP) should cross reference and consider the estate as a whole.
  4. The principle of the proposed internal and external alterations and extensions to the existing buildings is supported subject to detail and keeping to a minimum.
  5. There are no objections to the proposed new wedding pavilion.
  6. There are no objections to the proposed extension of the Engine House seating area, subject to detail.

7. The proposed zoning strategy and boundary treatment is supported, subject to detail.
  8. Retaining historic views and having visitors to the garden being able to appreciate the main house architecture is critical.
  9. The revised parking arrangement centred around the fountain in front of Leonardslee House is supported.
  10. The proposed new kiosk supported in principle and relocated location encouraged.
  11. Negative impacts arising from potential additional visitor numbers will need to be appropriately managed to ensure the benefits of the proposal outweigh its harm.
  12. A formal planning application would need to demonstrate the proposals would conserve the HWNL.
  13. New ecology surveys will need to be undertaken.
  14. External lighting will need to avoid excessive light pollution.
  15. There is considered to be sufficient parking on site to accommodate the proposals.
  16. Sustainable transport opportunities should be explored.
  17. There are not considered to be any adverse amenity impacts as a result of the proposals, but the use of the existing estate compound should be appropriately managed.
  18. The use of water efficient fixtures and fittings is an appropriate strategy to achieving water neutrality. A robust Water Neutrality Assessment will be required.
- 3.6 The pre-app response concluded that the scale and extent of development had been sensitively located and designed to help minimise harmful impacts. However, further detail was required to demonstrate the investment would achieve the recommendations in the 2023 Conservation Management Plan and Conservation Garden Management Plan.
- 3.7 A Statement of Community Involvement is included in the Design and Access Statement.



## 4 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 Planning permission and listed building consent is sought for a collection of proposals described as:

*“Extension to the visitor entrance building to house a new ticket sales area and café; infilling roof to the former generator block courtyard, re-roofing of the Alpine House and internal reconfiguration; Single storey winter garden conservatory to the Stable Block, terrace extension to the east and internal reconfiguration; Change of use from redundant staff offices and staff accommodation within the stable block to guest accommodation; Change of use to the partial first floor of the Red House to staff accommodation; Small WC extension to the Engine House; Lightweight wedding pavilion to the lawn, south of Leonardslee House; Landscaping changes to the forecourt of Leonardslee House.”*

- 4.2 The proposals have the aim of:

1. Increasing visitor numbers during the off-peak periods and improving the ability of the Estate to manage demand during peak periods. Currently the Estate is over reliant on visitor peaks during spring floral displays, Christmas and in summer.
2. Achieving sustainability of the heritage asset by reducing the impact of hosting numerous events that draw large crowds, which have the most potential to cause harm to the gardens.
3. Introducing a masterplan for the Estate including new landscaping and planting, improved views of the House, and high-quality alterations to existing infrastructure.

- 4.2 Page 30 of the Design and Access Statement shows how this reconfiguration will be achieved. The proposed works consist of:

- An extension to the south elevation of the main visitor entrance building to house a ticket desk/kiosk and a welcome café.
- Softening the landscaping in front of the main house with additional planting, more natural-looking surface materials and relocation and reconfiguration of the car parking.
- A new winter garden extension to the Stable Block along with a lightweight terrace to the east. The Clocktower Café within the Stable Block will be refurbished and back

of house spaces consolidated with new WCs introduced. The existing staff accommodation will be refurbished into additional guest accommodation.

- The open courtyard of the former Generator Block will be covered to create a new events space, and the adjoining Alpine House will be refurbished and made part of the events space. The Doll House Museum will be moved to the Red House and replaced with WCs for the event space.
- The current staff welfare space at the Red House has already been moved to the gardener's compound, and the Doll House Exhibition will be moved here, closer to the children's play area. The redundant offices at first floor level will be converted and renovated into staff accommodation with a sitting room and kitchen.
- A small extension is proposed to the Engine House for an accessible WC. An extension to the existing terrace is also proposed to enlarge the outside seating area.
- A new lightweight wedding pavilion (gazebo) is proposed on the lawn to the south of Leonardslee House as focal point for outdoor wedding ceremonies.

4.3 The proposals are set out in full in the supporting Design & Access Statement and shown on the submitted drawings.





*CGIs of the proposed works*

## 5 PLANNING POLICY

- 5.1 This section of the Statement sets out the relevant planning policies at national level and at Development Plan level, as well as any other documents which are material planning considerations.
- 5.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The duty is therefore for the LPA to exercise its judgement and consider many (sometimes) conflicting issues to decide whether planning permission should be granted. This will mean examining the Development Plan as a whole and taking material considerations which apply to the proposal into account. These must be properly considered otherwise the decision of whether or not to grant permission may be unlawful. This process is often termed the “Planning Balance”.
- 5.3 In this case, the Development Plan comprises policies from the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF), adopted in November 2015.
- 5.4 A review of the Council’s Local Plan began in 2018, and a new Plan (Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040) was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination. Following the examination, the Inspector concluded in their response letter dated 4 April 2025 that, due to water neutrality issues, the Plan was not legally compliant and should be withdrawn.
- 5.5 The Lower Beeding Neighbourhood Plan has been subject to successful examinations but cannot currently proceed to referendum, also due water neutrality. As of 1 July 2025, this Plan is not “made”, but HDC have prepared an Advice Note that highlights how the Neighbourhood Plan policies align with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and sets out that these policies should be given significant weight in the decision-making process.
- 5.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also an important material consideration.

### Development Plan

- 5.7 The Development Plan therefore comprises the adopted Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) adopted in November 2015 as well as policies from the Lower Beeding Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.8 The Council’s pre-application advice identified the following relevant policies from the HDPF:
- Policy I - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development

- Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
- Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
- Policy 7 - Strategic Policy: Economic Growth
- Policy 9 - Employment Development
- Policy 10 - Rural Economic Development
- Policy 11 - Tourism and Cultural Facilities
- Policy 12 – Vitality and Viability of Existing Retail Centres
- Policy 13 – Town Centre Uses
- Policy 24 - Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection
- Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
- Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
- Policy 30 - Protected Landscapes
- Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
- Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
- Policy 33 - Development Principles
- Policy 34 - Cultural and Heritage Assets
- Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
- Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use
- Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
- Policy 38 - Strategic Policy: Flooding
- Policy 39 - Strategic Policy: Infrastructure Provision
- Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
- Policy 41 - Parking
- Policy 42 - Strategic Policy: Inclusive Communities
- Policy 41 - Community Facilities, Leisure, and Recreation

5.9 Policies in the Neighbourhood Plan that align with the general aims of the NPPF and are relevant to the proposals are considered to be:

- Policy 1: Biodiversity
- Policy 2: Landscape Character
- Policy 3: Green Infrastructure
- Policy 4: Sustainability
- Policy 5: Energy Efficiency
- Aim 1: Light Pollution

- Policy 12: Design
- Policy 18: Economic Growth

#### National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.10 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was first published in March 2012 with the aim of making the planning system less complex and more accessible. Revised versions have been published since with the latest in version published in December 2024. The NPPF is supplemented by the (ever evolving) Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), first published in March 2014. These replace the much more detailed policy and guidance contained in the suite of Planning Policy Statement documents and elsewhere.
- 5.11 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development; development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay.
- 5.12 Paragraph 2 of this Framework states that it is itself a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 5.13 Section 2 of the NPPF puts emphasis on the importance of sustainable development. There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic social and environmental. This section makes clear that planning should drive and support sustainable economic development and goes on to state that the planning system should do everything it can to support sustainable economic growth and that economic growth should be given “significant weight”.
- 5.14 Paragraph 39 of the NPPF deals with decision making and states that “local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way... and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.”
- 5.15 Section 6: Building a strong, competitive economy states that “planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors”.
- 5.16 Paragraph 85 states that “Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.”

- 5.17 Paragraph 86 explains that planning policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan. Whilst paragraph 87 is clear that: “planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors”.
- 5.18 Paragraphs 88-89 seek to provide support for rural businesses, in particular sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside and the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities.
- 5.19 Section 12 concerns achieving well-designed places, and paragraph 131 sets out that “good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.”
- 5.20 Section 15 seeks to conserve and enhance the natural environment, including the countryside and National Landscapes.
- 5.21 Paragraph 210 states: ‘In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of: a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 5.22 Paragraph 215 states that “Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.”
- 5.23 In Annex 2 of the NPPF significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.
- 5.24 In summary, there is in principle support for proposals which provide visitor accommodation, support the rural economy and continued use of a listed building at both a local and national level. This is subject to various tests and detailed consideration of other issues and material considerations, which will be addressed as part of this application.

## 6 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

### (A) PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

- 6.1 The proposals seek permission for works to support the continued viability and upkeep of the Estate which provides an important stock of visitor accommodation to this part of the district, helps support the management of the gardens, provides local employment, linked spending, supports local suppliers and allows for the continued optimum viable use of the listed buildings.
- 6.2 The additional overnight guest accommodation will provide tourism benefits to the District, Leonardslee Park and Gardens, and to the Wealds National Landscape, making sustainable use of existing buildings without an adverse effect on other strategic development or the wider conservation and character protection aims of the High Weald National Landscape Management Plan 2024-2029.
- 6.3 The principle of providing visitor accommodation, food and drink and retail provision on the site has already been established and HDC confirmed in its pre-application advice that the reconfiguration and enhancement of these would not warrant a change in the use of the site. The mixed-use of uses therefore remains fully compliant.
- 6.4 The need for a mixed-use approach to revitalise and support the continued management of the Estate has long been recognised, and similar business models have been implemented successfully at other Sussex Homes and Gardens including Nymans, Wakehurst Borde Hill, and Hever Castle. The need for mixed uses and how these will be managed to conserve heritage assets are included in the Leonardslee Park and Gardens Conservation Management Plan Addendum (2025) submitted with this application.
- 6.5 There is unequivocal support for the principle of this development within a rural community from both local and national planning policies and this is reflected in previous proposals on the site being supported by the LPA.
- 6.6 HDPF Policies 1, 7, 9, 10, 11, 33, 41 and 42 and Lower Beeding Neighbourhood Plan Policies 4 and 18 make it clear that proposals which seek to protect, maintain and enhance sustainable tourism, visitor, community and rural facilities such as this will be supported.

**(B) LOSS OF ANCILLARY OFFICE SPACE AND STAFF ACCOMMODATION**

- 6.7 It is recognised that the proposals result in the loss of some of the Estate's ancillary office space and staff accommodation. The completion of the compound towards the southern end of the site (permitted under application DC/19/1067) has provided more connected, fit for purpose office space to serve the Estate, which has meant the office space within the Stable Block and Red House has become redundant. Furthermore, both the office space and staff accommodation are ancillary to the primary use of the site and the demand for dedicated office space and staff accommodation has reduced with the growth of flexible and home working and improvements in technology.
- 6.8 It would be inappropriate for the site to market either of the ancillary uses.
- 6.9 An appropriate amount of office space and staff accommodation would remain in the main across the estate, primarily within the completed gardener's staff compound.
- 6.10 The reconfiguration and repurposing of the space available on the site will ensure buildings remain in use and maintained – an important heritage benefit.
- 6.11 Whilst not strictly classed as employment uses, the enhanced provision of visitor accommodation, food, drink and retail, and the intention to increase visitor numbers to the Estate year-round will also create additional jobs.
- 6.12 The proposals are therefore considered to comply with the overall aims and objectives of HDPF Policy 9 and Lower Beeding emerging Neighbourhood Plan Policy 17.

**(C) HERITAGE**

- 6.13 The proposals are supported by a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) which sets out the significance of the listed buildings and heritage assets. It assesses each of the elements of the proposal in relation to their impact on the assets.
- 6.14 The HIA considers the main visitor entrance/shop building to have no heritage significance and the proposals to have no impact upon the Grade I Registered Park and Garden or Grade II Listed Buildings (Leonardslee House and Lodge to northwest of Leonardslee).
- 6.15 The HIA considers the Stable Block buildings to hold medium heritage significance and the proposals to have an overall neutral to low beneficial impact on the heritage assets.

- 6.16 The HIA considers the Generator Block and Alpine House to hold medium heritage significance and the proposals to have an overall neutral to low beneficial impact on the heritage assets.
- 6.17 The HIA considers the Engine House to hold medium heritage significance and the proposals to have an no impact on the heritage assets.
- 6.18 The HIA considers the site for the proposed wedding pavilion to hold low heritage significance and the proposals to have a low beneficial impact on the heritage assets.
- 6.19 The HIA considers the existing forecourt to the main house to hold low heritage significance and the proposals to have a medium beneficial impact on the heritage assets.
- 6.20 In summary, whilst elements of the proposals will involve some low-level harm to limited elements of the heritage assets this impact has been concluded in the HIA to be mitigated by sensitive, subservient, high-quality design and further balanced by the heritage and public benefits of the proposals which include enhanced landscaping and usage of the buildings.
- 6.21 Part of the goal of the proposals is to improve the public access/benefit of the site and its buildings. The masterplan seeks to improve accessibility within the grounds in support of wider patronage of food, beverage, meeting, education, and overnight cottages proposed on site.
- 6.22 The Stable Block, Former Generator Block and the Engine Block are curtilage listed and another part of the goal of this project is to turn these buildings into long-term sustainable use as restaurant, group gathering spaces, and a second coffee shop. Creating new covered spaces in the Former Generator Block and Alpine House where school and tour groups can assemble, enhances the Estate's capability to host visitors and educate them about the significance of the heritage asset and the existing and new plant collections on site in accordance with Policy 34 of the adopted HDPF.
- 6.23 Alongside these goals, substantial new landscaping seeks to enhance the heritage assets and provide improved vantage points of the listed House. The submitted Public Realm Planting and Landscape Strategy offers more than visual enhancements, it draws visitors to different parts of the Gardens and accentuates newly created views of the House in line with the Conservation Garden Management Plan through high quality hard landscaping and thoroughly considered planting that suits both the historic and academic interest in the Gardens, in line with Policies 25, 32, 34, and 35 of the adopted HDPF, 2015.



- 6.24 It is concluded that there would be less than substantial harm to those heritage assets which are impacted, and at the low end of the less than substantial scale. In accordance with the NPPF and Policies 32 and 34 of the HDPF and Policy 12 of the Neighbourhood Plan, the harm identified will be comfortably outweighed by the public benefits of the proposed development, which include securing the listed buildings' optimum viable use, allowing and improving public access and appreciation of the heritage assets, supporting the upkeep of the registered gardens and supporting a rural business.

#### (D) ARCHAEOLOGY

- 6.25 The site lies within an Archaeological Notification Area (DWS8715), as designated by Horsham District Council and protected by Policy 34 of HDPF, 2015. The pre-application advice received confirmed that the proposed areas of work are unlikely to affect archaeological aims of the area. The HIA contains brief assessments of the archaeological potential of each building site, although these are considered "low" and no further archaeological works are considered necessary.

#### (E) LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT

- 6.26 As well as the listing status of the house, park and gardens, the site is also located within the countryside and the High Weald National Landscape.
- 6.27 A Conservation Management Plan (CMP) and Public Realm Planting and Landscape Strategy Report accompany the application and provide a framework for future development and include detailed assessments to ensure proposals are integrated successfully into the landscape.
- 6.28 A Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) also supports the proposals and assesses their impact upon the landscape and public views using a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV).
- 6.29 The ZTV shows that visibility of the proposals is largely confined to the Registered Park and Garden, occurring within and in close proximity to the application site.
- 6.30 The LVA concludes that the proposals will have 'no effect' or 'negligible effect' on landscape character and visual receptors owing to their limited scale and being appropriately integrated into the landscape which provides visual containment and prevents views.
- 6.31 The loss of a small number of trees (relative to the number within the application site) will result in a 'minor adverse effect' but, when assessing the impact upon the Estate as a whole,

the impact would be 'negligible'. New and replacement planting will also mitigate the losses and create an overall landscape enhancement.

- 6.32 The LVA concludes that there will be no implications for the special qualities of the High Weald National Landscape as a result of the proposals. The beauty and distinctive appearance of the site and surroundings is conserved, and the works allow for the provision of a functional relationship and special affinity with the historic and natural heritage of the area.
- 6.33 The proposals are appropriate and essential to the countryside location (they cannot be located within a settlement boundary) and protect the rural landscape character and undeveloped nature and natural beauty of the countryside and High Weald Area National Landscape. They are therefore in accordance with HDPF Policies 25, 26, 30, 32 and 34 and Policy 2 of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.34 In 2019, Leonardslee Lakes and Gardens re-opened its doors after a closure of 10 years. The proposals will maintain and allow for greater public enjoyment of the HWNL and support its economy in accordance with Policy 30. The proposals will retain and create jobs for the local population and ensure the site remain viable and open for public access.

#### (F) ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY

- 6.35 The NPPF makes it clear that sustainable development has three overarching objectives: an economic objective to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy; a social objective to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities; and an environmental objective to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.
- 6.36 The proposals support each of these three objectives. The site attracts visitors to the area and provides overnight accommodation resulting in linked spending within the wider district. It provides the local community with a significant amount of employment, as well as supporting local third-party suppliers. The works seek to support and retain the optimum viable use of the heritage assets in a sensitive manor and make efficient use of an existing brownfield site without needing to expand outside the existing curtilage.
- 6.37 As such, the proposed works would bring economic, social and environmental benefits and should be considered a sustainable development.
- 6.38 The Design and Access Statement sets out an outline Energy Strategy at page 125. To improve the energy performance of buildings on site a fabric first approach is taken to improve

insulation through new energy efficient heat pumps, glazing and insulation. Windows will provide natural ventilation and light.

- 6.39 The proposed works would therefore improve upon the site's existing energy efficiency in compliance with HDPF Policies 1, 35, 36 and 37 and Lower Beeding Neighbourhood Plan Policies 4 and 5.

## (G) ECOLOGY

- 6.39 The site is not subject to any international or national statutory nature conservation designations and no nationally designated sites are located within 2km of the Site. However, Policy 25 of the HDPF seeks to protect landscapes and habitats against inappropriate development and support development proposals which protects, conserves, and enhances the landscape character. Alongside this, legislative protection of species and habitats, including bats, are set out in The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). On a sub-regional level, the High Weald National Landscape Management Plan, seeks protection of Woodlands and reduced levels of lighting at night to ensure Dark Skies, to protect bat habitats.
- 6.40 Temple Group has therefore prepared Preliminary Ecological Assessments (PEA) and Preliminary Roost Assessments (where appropriate) for each of the areas of work within the red line application site, in which the impact of proposed development upon habitats in are assessed. These are discussed in turn.

### Entrance Building Extension

- 6.41 The extension is proposed over 'managed grassland' to the south of the entrance building, classed neutral in value. The PEA recommends methods to be followed during construction to avoid and mitigation against habitat loss.
- 6.42 Two young magnolia trees along with an Azalea and Rhododendron within the area of grassland are proposed to be translocated to facilitate construction. Although these species are non-native, they provide a foraging and sheltering resource for bird species. It is therefore recommended that these be removed October to January, outside the bird breeding season. If they are translocated and fail to re-establish, they should be replaced by native species of local origin. English Bluebells should also be translocated in Spring and Summer.
- 6.43 Recommendations to enhance the importance of the site for biodiversity are provided. These comprise roosting opportunities for bat and bird species, management practices to reduce

the presence of non-native species and promote ground vegetation growth and planting native species of a local provenance.

#### Main House Forecourt / Car Park

- 6.44 Ground level planters, flower beds and introduced shrubs around the car park provide limited habitats, but scattered trees in the nearby Garden provide moderate habitat conditions. Legally protected species have been scoped out as it is considered that the site does not contain habitats suitable to support them.
- 6.45 The likelihood of presence of Dormice and Great Crested Newts is negligible, as are breeding and overwintering birds, and Schedule I birds. There are no records of Badgers, reptiles, or badgers on site, therefore precautionary recommendations are not made. As no trees are removed, the habitat of common breeding birds found on site will not be affected by the works.
- 6.46 The submitted CMP and GCMP set out goals and programmes to protect Wood Pasture and Woodland across the entire Park, which support habitat protection in line with Sussex BAP and High Weald Management Plan. Rhododendron (Azalea) are invasive species and removal of shrubs and disposal of clippings should be controlled to prevent spread.

#### Stable Block

- 6.47 Bat roosts were confirmed in the stable block as part of the PEA and therefore bat emergence/re-entry surveys to characterise the roost and to design appropriate mitigation were undertaken. A European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) Licence is not required for the works but works should proceed under a Precautionary Working Method Statement (PWMS) to reduce and/or eliminate the risk of disturbance including sensitive timings of works.
- 6.48 A cluster of trees and a hedgerow on site are considered of poor quality, offering low habitat capability. However, replacement hedging and new trees are proposed as part of the landscape plan, which will improve the situation. Other legally protected species have been scoped out as it is considered that no further surveys are required but precautionary measures are adopted.

#### Former Generation Block

- 6.49 The modified grassland north and west of this building is a poor habitat area. An Empress tree in the courtyard will be removed to facilitate proposals to the courtyard. The value and significance of the tree is assessed in the Arboricultural Assessment.
- 6.50 Protected species have been scoped out and no further surveys are required.
- 6.51 Although the proposals are unlikely to result in any impacts to reptiles, a precautionary approach is recommended for slow worms when building the restaurant terrace. This development rests on timber columns and no woodland or parkland trees are affected on the east side of the valley.

#### Engine House

- 6.52 The Engine House proposals are not predicted to disturb features that have suitability to support roosting bats; therefore, no further surveys are required. The same applies to Dormice and Great Crested Newts, but lighting at night should be minimal to prevent impact to mice and birds. The site is also unlikely to be able to support large populations of widespread reptile species. Habitat conditions at this site are not suitable for Badgers and Hedgehogs, and do not require further surveys.
- 6.53 Many botanical species were identified in the valley, the majority of these are found 'Occasionally.' Rare species include Chinese white pine and Rhododendron (classed as invasive species). Given the area around the structure is cleared and covered in gravel, extending the terrace will not affect botanical species.

#### Proposed Wedding Pavillion/ Bandstand

- 6.54 The pavilion is to stand on modified grassland that offers poor habitat conditions. The lawn has low ability to support species, including protected species, and no further surveys are required.

#### Biodiversity Net Gain

- 6.55 The proposals are subject to the mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain requirement. Temple have therefore also produced a Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP) using the Statutory BNG Metric.
- 6.56 The pre-development biodiversity value of the on-site habitat is 1.07 habitat Biodiversity Units (BU), 0.03 hedgerow BU, and 0.00 watercourse BU.

- 6.57 The post-development biodiversity value of the on-site habitat will support a change of 0.12 habitat BU (11.38%) and 0.09 hedgerow BU (260.61%).
- 6.58 The proposed development will therefore deliver the required 10% Biodiversity Net Gain utilising the approaches outlined within this BGP and comply with policies 31 of the HDPF and 1 and 3 of the Neighbourhood Plan. There is no requirement for offsite provision.

#### Ecology Conclusion

- 6.59 The submitted PEA and PRAs for the areas of work conclude that proposed development will have no effect on habitats, which are considered of low or negligible value. Precautionary approaches are recommended during construction.
- 6.60 Bat roosts were found within the Stable Block, but a licence is not required, and work can commence so long as it is appropriately managed.
- 6.61 Recommendations to enhance the importance of the site for biodiversity are provided. These comprise an enhancement plan for the whole estate which incorporates the enhancements of each development. This will include a wildlife planting scheme and grassland diversity enrichment to enhance biodiversity for net-gain as well as dark-sky friendly lighting provision of nesting opportunities and inclusion of log piles where possible.
- 6.62 The proposals therefore comply with Policies 24, 25, 31 of the HDPF and Policies 1 and 3 of the Neighbourhood Plan., The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, and The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) in that habitats within the site are protected against inappropriate development, and that the landscape character will remain unspoilt.
- 6.63 The proposed development will deliver the required 10% Biodiversity Net Gain on-site.

#### **(H) TREES**

- 6.64 Arboricultural Impact Assessments have been prepared by Temple Group for each area of works, and these are submitted with this application. The impact development will have on existing trees are discussed for each area under separate headings.

#### Entrance Building

- 6.65 The tree survey recorded 8 individual trees and 2 groups. One tree (T50) is Category A (high quality) and will be retained in situ. Three trees and one group is Category B (medium quality)

of which one tree (T45, Goat willow) is proposed for removal. Four other trees (T46, T47, T48, T49, all Cotoneaster) are Category C (low value ornamental trees) and proposed for removal. These are positioned southwest of the existing building nearer the carpark, in the location of the proposed extension for the ticket hall and coffee shop. The loss of the trees is considered low impact and planting proposals elsewhere will adequately compensate for the loss.

#### Main House Forecourt / Car Park

- 6.66 The tree survey recorded 25 individual trees, two groups, and one hedgerow, which could potentially be affected by future development. One tree (T150) is Category A (high quality) and will be retained in situ. The majority are Category B (medium quality), and 16 trees are Category C (lowest quality). There are no TPO trees in the study area.
- 6.67 Two trees (T97 and T107) and hedges are proposed for removal to allow construction of the side extension to Honey Cottage and the circular paved area of the central meeting place, however this will be compensated with substantial new soft landscaping around the space, which has been carefully selected for its heritage value.

#### Stable Block

- 6.68 The tree survey recorded 27 individual trees, and one group which could potentially be affected by future development. Most surveyed trees were consistent with Category C status (12 tree of low value and quality); 11 trees and one group assigned Category B (moderate quality and value), and 4 trees in Category A (high quality and value). There are no TPO trees in the study area.
- 6.69 Two trees, T118 and T119 and a section of one group, G15 (all Category B) will require removal to facilitate development of the restaurant terrace. One Tree T113 will require pruning of its lateral branches in its southernmost canopy quadrant to facilitate the terrace.
- 6.70 The terrace is inside the Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of trees T113, T115, T116, T117 and G15 and will be constructed using piles. A hand dig and/or air spade investigation will be undertaken, under arboricultural supervision, to identify optimal locations for the sinking of the supports to avoid significant roots.
- 6.71 The trees are all located within actively managed gardens, open to the public and considered to be of very high cultural and arboricultural value. There is therefore a settled intention to restore and replace where any negative tree impacts are incurred. Compensatory replanting

can be expected to be delivered to a high standard and maintained appropriately to meet wider conservation aims.

#### Former Generator Block

- 6.72 The tree survey recorded 26 individual trees and 4 groups in and around the development site. Only one tree (T164, Paulownia) within the courtyard of this building will be removed to enclose it with a roof. The tree is Category B (medium value) and the loss of this one tree should be weighed against the planting retained and supplemented within the adjoining Alpine House, retaining all other trees in this area.

#### Engine House

- 6.73 The tree survey recorded five individual trees, one group and four hedgerows which could potentially be affected by future development, however only two hedgerows are proposed for removal to facilitate the WC and terrace extension, assessed as having very low impact. These will be replanted as part of the planting plan.

#### Trees Conclusion

- 6.74 Overall, the proposed number of trees removed in the areas where development is proposed are low to negligible compared to the abundant tree growth and canopy cover retained across the central group of buildings. Development will not result in the loss of any Category A trees or any of the Veteran trees in the Park.
- 6.75 Significant additional planting is proposed to compensate for the losses and tree cover along the east slope of Park Valley is unaffected as there are large clusters of trees, including Veteran trees on the east side of the Stable Block.

#### (I) TRANSPORT / HIGHWAYS

- 6.76 The site's existing access remains unchanged as a result of the proposals. The existing arrangements for delivery and refuse collections etc. also remain unchanged.
- 6.77 The site is adjacent to the A281 which provides easy access to the A24, A272, A23, M23 and M25. It is therefore well related to the main tourist routes within the area.
- 6.78 The existing car park provides sufficient dedicated on-site parking for the site, avoiding any adverse impact on the local road network by on-street parking.



- 6.79 Impacts pertaining to road safety and parking were adequately addressed in the 2018 re-opening, and it is considered that there is sufficient parking on site and internal estate road circulation to accommodate additional vehicular trips considered that the proposal conforms with HDPF Policy 4I. This was confirmed in the pre-application response issued by Horsham District Council.
- 6.80 Given the site's rural location, it must be accepted that the majority of visitors and staff will commute to work by car. However, sustainable transport methods are encouraged by the applicant and a Travel Plan Statement is submitted in support of the proposals to reduce the reliance on the private car.
- 6.81 The TPS is a "live" document, the objectives and measures will be developed and updated as time progress and new opportunities arise to guide the overall direction of the Travel Plan. At its core, a travel plan is a management document that the operator should implement and promote in collaboration with West Sussex CC Highways and someone in management acting as main contact for the travel plan.
- 6.82 The following physical improvements have already been made to improve travel:
- Improvements to the northern entrance and re-instating the middle access point to an exit only
  - Pedestrian and cycle access to the main entrance to the site from Long Hill A281 maintained, and along Long Hill to the further two access points
  - Secure cycle storage (16 spaces) provided for all users on site. The use of cycle parking facilities will be monitored to ensure they remain fit for purpose and expanded if necessary.
  - Electric Vehicle charging points are available on site for both visitor and staff use.
- 6.83 The Travel Plan Statement lists the following measures to be considered for implementation:
- Improvements on the A281 to provide better access to the north bound bus stop or an internal site connection to the bus stops.
  - The possibility of providing electric charging for cycles should demand by staff and visitors warrant it.
  - Up to date information on bus services, including route information and service frequencies, on the website.

- Staff will be encouraged to download the Stagecoach Bus App for live, real-time information on bus times and delays, this also provides mobile tickets for the user; a convenient option for ticket fares.
- Providing discounted entry to visitors who travel by bus or other forms of public transport, on presentation of their ticket, by way of incentivising the use of public transport to Leonardslee.
- A list of local taxi companies' contact details on the website for station pick-ups

6.84 Other opportunities could be explored for sustainable transport initiatives, publicity, promotions, and collaborations with Manning Heath Golf Course and the wine estate. Together, the successful implementation of the measures will ensure that the goals of HDPF Policy 40 are reached.

#### (j) DRAINAGE AND FLOOD RISK

6.85 The Design and Access Statement includes a proposed surface water and foul water drainage strategy (pages 123-124).

6.86 The entire Estate is in Flood Risk Zone 1, posing least probability of flooding.

6.87 In terms of surface water, the existing system collects rainwater from the core area of buildings and discharges into the lakes. As part of the landscape proposals, it is proposed to improve this system by installing rainwater attenuation crates under new landscape surfaces which will collect the runoff from the new roofs proposed over the Former Generator Block, Alpine Hall and the glass extensions to the Stables courtyard.

6.88 The amount of hard surfacing will decrease and there will be an increase in planting beds allowing for improved run off rates. Permeable surfaces will be used where possible. Rain harvesting tanks are also proposed to re-use water. Full details will be worked up at detailed design stage and secured via condition.

6.89 In terms of foul drainage, the existing system comprises of number of treatment plants. A new treatment plant is proposed/required for the Engine House. There is capacity in the existing foul water system for the additional discharge associated with the proposals.

6.90 The proposals are therefore appropriately located and make appropriate infrastructure provision in accordance with Policies 38 and 39 of the HDPF.

**(K) WATER NEUTRALITY**

- 6.91 The application is accompanied by an updated Water Neutrality Assessment by EAS Ltd.
- 6.92 The Assessment recognises all additional water uses on site as a result of the proposals and that the development would result in an increase water usage without mitigation.
- 6.93 It is therefore proposed to introduce water saving to achieve water neutrality. With these deliverable measures it is estimated that water usage would decrease from 3101 litres per day to 2568 litres per day.

**(L) AMENITY**

- 6.94 The applicant seeks to be a good neighbour and well-respected part of the local community.
- 6.95 As confirmed in the Council's pre-application advice, the remote nature of the site means there are no immediate amenity concerns caused by the proposals.
- 6.96 The Design and Access Statement includes a Ventilation and Extraction Statement which describes the required cooking and ventilation requirements and how they have been appropriately located and designed in accordance with Policy 33.
- 6.97 The applicant will accept a condition requiring a Construction Environmental Management Plan pre-commencement of development.
- 6.98 The lighting proposal for the scheme is set out on page 121 of the Design and Access Statement. This has been designed and developed in line with the objectives of the HWNL Management Plan for Character Component – Dark Skies. The aim of this SPD is to maintain dark skies across protected National Landscapes to appreciate the stars and reduce light pollution that threaten the habitats of nocturnal species, especially bats, which are a statutory protected species. The lighting plan has considered the mitigation strategies set out the Dark Skies manual and lighting fixtures following the specification set out in Bat Conservation Trust's Guidance Bats and Artificial Light.
- 6.99 The lighting strategy shows the various types of bat-sensitive lights proposed around the core group of buildings. Of note is minimal lighting along the paths along the outside of the Rock Garden. Lighting is not proposed inside the perimeter of the Rock Garden (ponds area) to maintain the habitat of bats, amphibians, invertebrates, and insects. The lighting strategy would minimise light pollution to an appropriate level in accordance with Aim 1 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

## 7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Planning permission and listed building consent is sought for the following development at Leonardslee Lakes and Gardens, Brighton Road, Lower Beeding, Horsham, RH13 6PP:

*“Extension to the visitor entrance building to house a new ticket sales area and café; infilling roof to the former generator block courtyard, re-roofing of the Alpine House and internal reconfiguration; Single storey winter garden conservatory to the Stable Block, terrace extension to the east and internal reconfiguration; Change of use from redundant staff offices and staff accommodation within the stable block to guest accommodation; Change of use to the partial first floor of the Red House to staff accommodation; Small WC extension to the Engine House; Lightweight wedding pavilion to the lawn, south of Leonardslee House; Landscaping changes to the forecourt of Leonardslee House.”*

- 7.2 The proposals aim to:

- Increase visitor numbers during the off-peak periods and improving the ability of the Estate to manage demand during peak periods. Currently the Estate is over reliant on visitor peaks during spring floral displays, Christmas and in summer.
- Achieve sustainability of the heritage asset by reducing the impact of hosting numerous events that draw large crowds.
- Introduce a masterplan for the Estate including new landscaping and planting, improved views of the House, and high-quality alterations to existing infrastructure.

- 7.3 The works are appropriate to the site and support its continued viability and ability to provide a significant amount of employment to the local area.

- 7.4 The protection, maintenance and enhancement of tourism, visitor and rural facilities is supported by local and national policies.

- 7.5 The works are sensitive, subservient, high-quality design such that any perceived harm to heritage assets has been judged to be less than substantial, at the lower end of this scale and comfortably outweighed by the benefits of the proposal, including securing the listed building's optimum viable use, allowing public access and appreciation of the heritage assets, supporting the upkeep of the registered gardens and supporting a rural business.

- 7.6 Equally, the LVA has concluded that there will be no adverse impact upon the special qualities of the High Weald National Landscape as a result of the proposals.

- 7.7 The proposals achieve over 10% biodiversity net gain.
- 7.8 They achieve water neutrality through appropriate and deliverable on-site mitigation.
- 7.9 There will be no detrimental impacts on residential amenity.
- 7.10 There will be no adverse highway impacts and sustainable transport will be actively encouraged.
- 7.11 The proposals are sustainable and comply with the provisions of the Development Plan and the NPPF, such that they should be supported, and planning permission granted by Horsham District Council.