



Horsham District Council
Parkside
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

Date: 26 November 2025
Our ref: 11556

For the attention of: Daniel Holmes

Application ref: DC/25/1700
Location: The Slips West End Lane Henfield West Sussex
Proposal/Description: Change of use of the land for the stationing of 4no. gypsy and traveller static caravans for residential purposes and 5no. associated dayrooms.

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.

Summary

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

This review is based on a desktop study without a site visit of the above-referenced application and its submitted documents. Our Landscape comments are as follows:

Site Context

The site is located in a countryside setting, outside of the Built-Up Area Boundary of Henfield. It comprises a long and narrow grassed field, enclosed by varying lengths of hedgerow and trees on all sides. The site is currently used as a camping facility.

We note that the site has previously been subject to hedgerow and tree removal along the northern boundary facing West End Road, which is now defined by a non-native evergreen laurel hedge. The western boundary consists of a mix of trees and native hedgerow, while the eastern boundary is more open in character, featuring several mature oak trees. A number of trees on site are protected under a Tree Protection Order (TPO). The southern boundary is defined by an evergreen hedge.



The site and its surrounding context are primarily rural, characterised by agricultural fields. There are scattered dwellings to the south of the site and various residential properties along West End Lane, further west of the site. Despite the presence of these properties and its proximity to Henfield, the site and its immediate area retain a rural character.

There are several Public Rights of Way (PRoW) in the surrounding area, including public footpath to along the southern boundary. However, existing vegetation and topography help to limit visibility into the site.

The Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment (HDLCA) (2003) identifies the site within D2: Henfield and Small Dole Farmlands Landscape Character Area (LCA). The key characteristics of this LCA relevant to the site and surrounding area include:

- Small to large size regular and irregular fields with a variable hedgerow pattern.
- Variable hedgerow pattern, low and gappy in parts, strong in others.
- Ancient coppice with oak and ash standards.

The relevant key issues for LCA D2 include “previous and continuing loss of hedgerows through field rationalisation.”

Overall sensitivity to change is identified as high, with key sensitivities to “cumulative impact of small scale incremental change, e.g. suburbanisation.”

Relevant Planning and Land Management Guidelines include to:

- Ensure any new development does not intrude onto visible ridgelines.
- Conserve and manage existing hedgerows, especially where they surround small scale irregular field patterns.

Review of the proposal/submitted information

The withdrawn application (Ref. DC/25/0519) was for 5no. static caravans for residential purposes and associated day rooms. Comments were provided by the LPA Landscape Officer (dated 15/07/2025) noting that while the principle of development was not opposed, there were concerns regarding the long-term retention of the protected trees:

“The trees are of a recognised landscape value and their loss or the deterioration of their condition - by lopping and encroachment into RPAs - would give rise to adverse effects on visual amenity and landscape character. Therefore, we recommend that the layout is reviewed with this in mind, and that consideration is given to the loss of one pitch so that the proposals can sit more comfortably within the receiving landscape.”

A number of recommendations were also provided at the time.

The current application is for 4no. static caravans and 4no. associated dayrooms (although the application description refers to 5 day room, only 4 are shown on the drawings). The revised scheme includes a reduction in the number of units and amendments to the layout,

removing areas of hardstanding and buildings from the vicinity of existing trees. While the changes to the proposed layout shown on Block Plan (2412WE_001, REV 002), compared to the previous withdrawn application, are welcomed, we still have several comments and recommendations regarding the proposed layout:

- We welcome the proposal to use permeable surfacing, such as pea shingle or similar, to maintain the rural character of the area. We would expect this material to be applied to the access track, parking areas and hardstanding plots. Hard surfacing should be clearly specified and annotated within a Hard and Soft Landscaping Plan, which can be secured through a planning condition.
- While we welcome the proposed 1.2m timber post and rail fence to subdivide caravan plots, we note the previous request to combine native hedgerow planting with post and rail fencing. This approach is still recommended.
- The existing and proposed boundary treatment should be clearly identified on the drawings. We note a discrepancy on the Block Plan (2412WE_001, REV 002) regarding the location of the annotation 'existing fence' to plot 1, as the Tree Protection Plan (TPP 02) shows this fence line further east. We are also unclear whether the enhanced grass area to the southeast will be open for public use or remain restricted, and what boundary treatment, if any, and to what extent, is proposed for this area. This information should be included within a Hard and Soft Landscaping Plan, which can be secured through a planning condition.
- Additional tree planting should be implemented along the northern boundary to soften the appearance of the development from West End Lane. This was advised on previous comments but has not been addressed within the current proposals. We also reiterate the previous recommendation to remove the existing laurel hedges and replace them with native hedgerow species, in line with the proposed planting specification. This applies specifically to the north, east and southern non-native hedged boundaries on site. We consider this change to be an essential and positive contribution to local landscape character and biodiversity, helping to better integrate the proposals within their setting and the wider landscape.
- We note the proposed removal for trees T14 and T13 and we acknowledge the justification provided for their removal. We also note the condition of hedge H6. As part of the proposals, the strengthening of this hedged boundary should be included, alongside replacement tree planting along the western boundary to compensate for tree loss and maintain the character and appearance of the landscape and the amenity of neighbouring properties, as per Policy 23 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF). Additional tree planting in this location will help to soften views of the new buildings and avoid weakening the green infrastructure network, supporting Policies 25, 31 and 33(6) of the HDPF.
- Plot 1 currently sits adjacent to an open boundary and access gate. We recommend strengthening the eastern boundary with a native mix hedgerow to soften views into

the site. We also note the presence of a laurel hedge along the northern section of this boundary and advise that this is replaced with a native hedge.

- We find the proposed 1.2m stock fence and hedging to the two day rooms to the north of the site incongruent and lacking clear justification for this boundary treatment at this location. If fencing is required to delineate usable areas, we recommend using timber post and rail fencing without hedging in this instance. We request clarification on the rationale behind the proposed arrangement or ask that alternative options are explored.
- The proposed native hedging to the south of Plot 4 would benefit from being extended to connect with the existing hedge along the western site boundary.
- Further information is requested regarding the 'enhanced grassland area'. The proposed wildflower mix or turf and method of implementation should be specified, alongside a detailed planting plan that includes all existing and new planting, as well as planting schedule and specification.
- The following previous LPA Landscape Officer comments under the withdrawn application (Ref. DC/25/0519) remain relevant, with some already reflected in our recommendations above:
 18. *Plans should be updated to reflect the ditch present on the western edge of the proposed development site.*
 19. *Please provide a plan detailing existing and proposed services above and below ground, such as drainage, power, communications cables and pipelines, to demonstrate the proposals do not conflict with existing and proposed landscape features.*
 21. *In addition, we consider there to be further opportunity to soften the appearance of urbanising features.*
 25. *Trees, treelines and hedgerows, which are key characteristics of the local landscape, can deteriorate due to increasing levels of light pollution. Therefore, light spill must be considered sensitively so as not to cause potential adverse effects. In addition, given the openness of the surrounding undeveloped fields, lighting should be absent or restricted. We note that in the appeal decision notice under APP/Z3825/W/24/3345055, for the site for 3 pitches located 1 field to the north, it states that, 'A condition restricting external lighting is reasonable given the rural location of the appeal site'. Given the similarly rural location, we recommend that this condition is also applied to this site.*
 26. *While not compulsory, we recommend that the laurel on site is removed and replaced with native hedgerow, as indicated in the planting schedule for the southern boundary. This is to minimise the urbanising appearance that is incongruous with the rural qualities experienced on West End Ln. This will also minimise competition with native species, as highlighted in the PEA, given the invasive nature of laurel and its propensity to overshadow other planting.*

Summary

Overall, the principle of development is not opposed. The current proposals include a reduction in the number of units and amendments to the layout, addressing the previous concerns regarding impacts on existing valued trees and their long-term retention.

While the revised layout compared to the withdrawn application is welcomed, several recommendations remain necessary to achieve a more sensitive scheme within this rural location. These measures aim to reduce urbanising features that detract from the local rural landscape character.

A review of the landscape proposals is requested to incorporate additional planting and replace the existing laurel hedging with a native mix hedgerow. This will help maintain the character and appearance of the landscape and safeguard the amenity of neighbouring properties, in accordance with Policy 23 of the HDPF. It will also prevent weakening of the green infrastructure network, supporting Policies 25, 31 and 33(6) of the HDPF.

Recommended Conditions

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

ACTION REQUIRED PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT: HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING SCHEME.

No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority a **scheme of hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatment** for the site, which shall include any proposed changes in ground levels and also accurately identify spread, girth and species of all existing trees, shrubs and hedgerows on the site and indicate any to be retained, together with measures for their protection which shall comply with the recommendations set out in the British Standards Institute publication BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction.

The soft landscaping plan should include plant species, number, density, location and sizes of the proposed planting. The planting specification should provide details of tree planting pits, green roof, planting preparation and establishment operations, where applicable. We would recommend an alternative to plastic guards, such as the use of perimeter protective fencing where appropriate, or guards manufactured from 100% biodegradable materials.

The hard landscaping plan should include details of specific materials, colours and finishes of paved or otherwise hard surfaces, fencing, built features and street furniture. The plans should clearly show the position of any new fencing and hard surfaces in relation to existing and proposed planting.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area. This condition is required to be agreed prior to the commencement of any development to

ensure matters of tree and hedgerow protection are secured early to ensure avoidance of damage or lost due to the development and/or its construction. If agreement was sought at any later stage, there is an unacceptable risk of lost and damage to important trees and hedgerow that would result in harm to amenity.

ACTION REQUIRED PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT: LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN (LMP)

No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority a landscape management plan for a minimum of 5 years. This should include:

- Drawing/s showing the extent of the LMP i.e. only showing the areas to which the LMP applies, areas of private ownership should be excluded
- Written Specification detailing:
 - All operation and procedures for soft landscape areas; inspection, watering, pruning, cutting, mowing, clearance and removal of arisings and litter, removal of temporary items (fencing, guards and stakes) and replacement of failed planting.
 - All operations and procedures for hard landscape areas; inspection, sweeping, clearing of accumulated vegetative material and litter, maintaining edges, and painted or finished surfaces.
 - Furniture (Bins, Benches and Signage) and Play Equipment
 - All operations and procedures for soft landscaping to SuDS features; inspection of linear drains, basins and swales, removal of unwanted vegetative material and litter, including inlets and outlets.
- Maintenance task table which explains the maintenance duties across the site in both chronological and systematic order.
- Mechanism for monitoring and review of the management plan and operations.

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.