

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 27 May 2025 11:40:22 UTC+01:00
To: "Planning" <planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Subject: Comments for Planning Application DC/25/0629
Categories: Comments Received

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 27/05/2025 11:40 AM.

Application Summary

Address:	Former Novartis Site Parsonage Road Horsham West Sussex RH12 5AA
Proposal:	Residential development comprising approximately 206 dwellings, including the conversion of 'Building 3' and demolition of 'Building 36'. Vehicular access taken from Wimblehurst Road. Car and cycle parking, landscaping and open space and associated works. The replacement of the existing cedar trees at the site.
Case Officer:	Jason Hawkes

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Address: 13A Richmond Road Horsham

Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Member of the Public
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Design- Highway Access and Parking- Loss of General Amenity- Overdevelopment- Privacy Light and Noise- Trees and Landscaping

Comments:

Why have the two planning applications to redevelop the former Novartis site been submitted separately? Surely the impacts of what's been planned for the whole site - another 450 homes - for over 1,000 people plus parking for 568 cars - need to be considered together?

The Muse application (DC/25/0415) for 244 dwellings with access onto Parsonage Road, was validated on March 18.

This latest application (DC/25/0629) by Muse's sister company, Lovell, to build another 206 homes with access onto Wimblehurst Road, was validated six weeks later, on April 30.

Is this an attempt to try to underplay the serious highways and transport issues such an overdevelopment of the land will undoubtedly bring?

There are long tailbacks already, due to the re-phasing of the railway crossing gates in Parsonage Road and traffic gridlock, particularly during the morning rush hour, with a build up of cars and buses queuing at the traffic lights in Wimblehurst Road, and along Richmond Road, which is increasingly used as a rat run.

While I understand there's a need for affordable housing, and being a brownfield site, the land is suited to be developed in this way but what's currently being proposed will substantially blight not only residents already living in the area - but those moving into the proposed new development - who won't be able to drive in or out of the site safely.

Having read through the hundreds of documents loaded onto the planning portal in respect of these two applications - there appear to be serious errors and omissions in the Transport Assessments carried out not only by the developers, but by West Sussex County Council - the highways authority - and owner of the site - itself.

Having lived in the area for over 25 years, and knowing several people who worked at Novartis when it was operating there - it is a known fact that the Wimblehurst Road entrance was used by only a small number of visitors. The reason for this was that the entrance on Wimblehurst Road was considered too dangerous for the workforce to use.

This has been pointed out by numerous concerned parties to West Sussex County Council, Horsham District Council and the developers - yet none of them appear to accept this. Or have chosen to ignore it.

What's also astonishing is that the junction of Wimblehurst Road and Richmond Road - just a few metres away from the proposed single entrance/exit for the Lovell housing plan - has been totally

missed out of their Transport Assessment. The sight lines at this junction are very poor due to the railway bridge and are already dangerous for both motorists and pedestrians.

What about all the extra cars using North Heath Lane and Wimblesbury Road once the Mowbray Estate is finally finished and the new Bohunt School there fully operational? How will all these additional drivers - on top of the 1,000+ people on the Novartis site - affect our local transport infrastructure in the future?

Why is there no assessment of this in the transport modelling reports?

So what does West Sussex County Council have to say about local residents' concerns over road safety and the Novartis redevelopment?

In point 38 of their report on the planning portal they write: 'In reviewing the capacity impact, WSCC recognise that this development will generate additional traffic onto the local network, which in turn will worsen existing issues.'

They continue: 'As stated already, the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) sets a high bar whereby development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe taking into account all reasonable future scenarios. WSCC do not consider that this development will result in severe or otherwise unacceptable impacts.'

How can West Sussex County Council say this when they don't seem to have even taken the future traffic impact from the Mowbray estate into account? And what 'mitigation' are they talking about?

Surely the time to sort out any highways issues is before any planning permission is granted? Ultimately these are going to be more difficult and cost far more to resolve after any housing is built.

Turning to the majestic avenue of nine mature blue Atlas cedar trees on the Novartis site, which are currently protected by Tree Preservation Orders, I'm horrified to hear the developers want to fell the lot of them.

Two, according to Lovell's tree expert, are diseased and need to come down. The other seven are apparently in the way of their proposed development.

These trees are a valuable asset in their size and positioning. Not only do they reflect the Horsham district's abiding character -

which celebrates and preserves mature trees - they are a vital and much-loved green lung in an already intensively developed residential area.

The mature cedars help absorb pollution from queuing vehicles and also diesel from the railway lines which run along two sides of the land. They also border - and form an important backdrop - to the Richmond Road Conservation Area, which itself features a line of mature lime trees.

I don't understand how the cedars were declared an essential design feature of the original proposal for the site - but just a few years on - are now to be chopped down. These mature trees are also teeming with wildlife, including bats and many birds, including a pair of rare and protected peregrine falcons who've been nesting on the site for several years now.

Yet Horsham District Council's own Conservation officer Seán Rix is now raising no objection to the cedar trees being felled.

In his report on HDC's planning portal he states: 'Although the avenue of Blue Atlas Cedar trees forms a large part of the setting for Building 3, in heritage terms it is the position of the trees and their creation of a line of sight that is important. I would not object to their replacement with a more appropriate species that will provide the scale and grandeur of the existing trees.'

More 'appropriate' species?

Atlas cedars are in fact classed as 'endangered' by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which added the trees to its Red List of Threatened Species in 2013. *Cedrus atlantica* is currently listed as Endangered under IUCN criteria A2cd.

The Forestry Commission - the government department responsible for protecting, expanding and promoting the sustainable management of woodlands in the UK - not only lists Atlas cedar trees as endangered but says the species could have the potential for wider use as the climate warms. The Commission's agency, Forest Research, also considers Atlas cedars 'a valuable addition' to species for lowland planting in southern Britain.

These beautiful trees must be saved - particularly in light of the loss of biodiversity on the site due to the size of the proposed new housing estate. A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment document on the planning portal states: '...there is a large unit net loss for the development, as the quantum of development has filled the site and has left no further room for habitat creation.'

I'm also concerned about the contamination of the whole site,

which was used by the pharmaceutical company for many decades.

Various scientific reports on the planning portal show asbestos, heavy metals and potentially carcinogenic hydrocarbons remain in the soil, which various experts all agree, requires further testing to calculate the risk to human health.

Surely more investigations need to be carried out before any planning permission is granted?

For all the reasons listed above, I strongly object to both applications in their current form.

Kind regards

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