



Horsham District Council
Parkside
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

Date: 14 August 2025
Our ref: 07693

For the attention of: Tamara Dale

Application ref: DC/25/1120
Location: Land Adjacent To Pucks Croft Cottage, Horsham Road, Rusper, West Sussex
Proposal/Description: Outline application for the erection of 4no. dwellings, extension to existing cottage, alterations to access and provision of landscaping

Thank you for consulting with Place Services on the above Outline 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:

The proposed development comprising 4no. dwellings could be accommodated within this site from a landscape perspective. We advise that the below conditions and recommendations are considered.

Site Context:

The application site is located along Horsham Road within Rusper village and comprises Pucks Croft cottage and associated land. Existing residential areas are located to the north and east of the site along Horsham Road. The wider landscape comprises woodland, grassland fields and strong vegetated boundaries. A Public Right of Way (PRoW) runs close to the west of the site

Planning Policy Context:

Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) (2015)

- Policy 25: 'The Natural Environment and Landscape Character', Policy 26: Countryside Protection and
- Policy 31: 'Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity' should be considered.

Rusper Neighbourhood Plan (Made 2021) 2018-2031

- Policy RUS3: Design
- Policy RUS5: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

Landscape Appraisal:

The application has been accompanied by a Landscape Appraisal (June 2025) undertaken by PJC. The assessment was undertaken in August 2024 when vegetation was in full leaf, however this constraint has been acknowledged within Para 1.3.1.

Landscape Character

Within the Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex (2003), key characteristics of the LW4 Low Weald Hills Landscape Character Area (LCA) include undulating low densely vegetated ridges, large blocks of woodland, rural character with intricate patchwork of small to medium size pasture fields, fields enclosed by hedgerows, ridgetop villages such as Rusper and Small and large irregular fields carved out of woodland (assarts).

Within the Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment (2003) the site is located in landscape Character Area (LCA) I2: Warnham and Rusper Wooded Ridge. Key characteristics of this LCA include the undulating wooded ridges, escarpment north of Horsham, secretive wooded ghylls, strong pattern of shaws and hedgerows, patchwork of small pasture fields, north/south roads which are sunken in places, linear ridgetop villages and rural character. There is a local pressure for urban development, a localised intrusion from suburban features, increasing traffic pressures and poor hedgerow management. Key sensitivities are to large scale housing development and cumulative impact of vertical structures on ridges. Guidelines include conserving the rural wooded character where large-scale development is likely to damage the small-scale field pattern character, ensuring small scale development responds to the traditional settlement pattern and conserve ridgetop woodlands and hedgerows.

The Landscape Appraisal provides no judgements on the anticipated effects on landscape character, specifically to the identified Character Areas and to the site itself. We note that the site is characteristic of the local character, comprising a small, assarted grassland field on the edge of the village.

We disagree with the conclusion which states that the site “has an existing urban quality due to proximity to Horsham Road and the buildings which form the existing Pucks Croft / Pucks Croft Cottage curtilage”. The site is a rural edge of a village where there a very limited urbanising features within the site itself.

We also disagree that the scheme would “enhance the landscape character” (Para 8.3.2) since the proposed development would remove the small, assarted grassland fields which are very characteristic of the LCAs. Enhancing the vegetated boundaries will contribute to reducing the visual effects and also address some of the key sensitivities, however this will not enhance the landscape character.

We judge that effects on the landscape character of the site itself are likely to be major, owed to the change of use and character to a small development from the current undeveloped grassland field. The effects on the LCAs would be less, however it is noted that that site contains characteristic features of the LCAs, including the small, assarted grassland field.

Overall, we judge that the assessment provides an inadequate assessment of the anticipated landscape character effects associated with the scheme.

Visual Amenity

Table 01 provides the methodology for the Overall Degree of Visual Effects: Definitions and Descriptions. We question the proposed scale for the judged effects, which range from No Change to Moderate Adverse. We judge that this scale is skewed towards the lower end of the spectrum.

Para 8.2.3 states “Viewpoints 01 and 06 are both located to the Horsham Road which lies immediately north of Pucks Croft and the proposed development site. Both locations are anticipated to have a Negligible / Neutral overall degree of visual effect.”

Views from Horsham Road south into the application site are clearly visible through the opening at the gateway access. The selected viewpoint locations have been strategically selected to be located to the east and west of the gateway and therefore are not representative of views into the site.

Table 02 ‘Summary of Visual Effects’ judges a negligible/neutral effect from Horsham Road. However, we judge that if Horsham Road as a visual receptor was judged with consideration for direct views into the site from the main access, that impacts would be judged at least low/slight adverse.

We do not disagree with the judged effects for the adjacent PRoW, which is judged to experience moderate adverse effects. We also judge that the visual effects associated with the scheme are localised and contained to the immediate surroundings.

Summary

Overall, we judge that the methodology and effects judged are inadequate owed to the lack of judgements provided and insufficient information. However, we judge that the visual influence and the effects on wider landscape character are expected to be minimal and therefore we do not require additional information to be submitted within the Landscape Appraisal.

Review of Submitted Information:

We note that an application for 7no. dwellings across a wider site area was refused in 2020 (DC/20/2465) and dismissed at appeal in 2021. The scheme submitted under this application forms a smaller land area and a reduced number of dwellings, which can be more easily accommodated within the development site.

The proposed dwellings are set back further from Horsham Road than the Appeal Scheme (2021). Whilst this is less consistent with the linear settlement type that has established along Horsham Road, we note that this will contribute to reducing the urbanising effect on Horsham Road, where there is an evident transition into the countryside on this rural edge.

Little information is provided on the proposed hard landscaping and boundary treatments, and further detail is sought at the next stage. The majority of the proposed properties have garden spaces adjacent to the public realm, and close board fencing facing on to public realm/public open space will not be an acceptable approach. A large area of hard standing is proposed to the rear of the scheme. We advise that this is proposed as a permeable surface such as block paving considering its extent. This would also contribute to the visual amenity of the space.

The large swathe of hard landscaping could also be further broken up with some soft landscaping, such as tree planting or rain gardens.

More hedgerow planting is proposed within the Proposed Site Plan (Rev. P1) compared to the Indicative Soft Landscape Mitigation Layout Plan (Rev. C). To soften the scheme, we advise that additional hedgerow planting is proposed to match the Proposed Site Layout. These hedgerows should be accompanied by a 3/2 wire fence to form definitive boundaries. We also advise the following is considered:

- A predominance of one species or variety should be avoided in order to minimise the risk of widespread biotic threats to the urban forest and to increase species diversity. Preference should be given to native trees and shrubs.
- Every effort should be made to minimise the urbanising influences (i.e., kerbing, widening, domestic paraphernalia) to ensure that the proposals are sympathetic to the rural surroundings. Confirmation should be provided regarding hard landscape materials demonstrating how they will match and form a seamless transition from the highway to the frontages the residential properties.
- A flowering lawn mix should be proposed across all grass areas to contribute to the biodiversity of the scheme.
- We would expect details of tree pit design to be provided and where trees are proposed in close proximity to hard landscaped / surfaced areas or equipment, details of root barrier systems should also be provided.

Submission Documents:

- Hard Landscape Plan
- Soft Landscape Plan
- Landscape Management Plan

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.