

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 23 December 2025 12:44:43 UTC+00:00
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 23/12/2025 12:44 PM.

Application Summary

Address:	Former Novartis Site Parsonage Road Horsham West Sussex RH12 5AA
Proposal:	Residential development comprising 206 dwellings and a commercial unit, including the part-demolition and 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 (amended proposal)
Case Officer:	Jason Hawkes

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Address:	13a Richmond Road Horsham
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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- Other- Overdevelopment- Privacy Light and Noise- Trees and Landscaping

Comments:

Under UK planning law and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), public consultation is not a token gesture.

It is a statutory requirement designed to ensure that planning decisions reflect not only developer interests - but also the views, knowledge and lived experience of the community.

It should also be open and factually correct.

So why does both Horsham District Council and the highways authority, West Sussex County Council - continue to apparently mislead the public about serious safety concerns over traffic and access to this site?

Concerns that have existed for many years now?

It's already accepted that most of the major road junctions in the vicinity are already running over capacity, and that the re-phasing of the level crossing gates in Parsonage Road already causes long delays and tailbacks.

Local groups, including Wimblehurst Road Residents' Association and Horsham Denne Neighbourhood Council, together with individuals who've lived in the area for several decades, have pointed out several times in the past - and continue to do so - that Novartis stopped using Wimblehurst Road as its main entrance many years ago because of safety fears.

This is based on historical fact.

Yet it continues to be ignored by both district and county councils, as well as the developers behind these applications.

Why?

How can our councillors be expected to make a decision based on inaccurate information?

I'm also concerned about drainage of the whole site.

Has anyone factored in the potential impact from the proposed removal of so many mature trees on this land?

Trees significantly help drainage by absorbing vast amounts of water, slowing surface runoff, improving soil permeability with their roots, and acting as natural sponges, reducing flood risk.

Added to that will be the impact from another 1,000-plus people living there, if what's being proposed gets the go ahead.

Residents in the Richmond Road Conservation area have already experienced increasing issues with flooding in basements and

gardens due to fractured water mains and a rising water table.

Southern Water Authority teams, who've had to dig up the roads several times over the past year to carry out repairs, have explained that the problems are due to the building of new housing estates in the area which have overwhelmed already ageing pipes.

And now we learn there are on-going flooding issues on the Novartis site, which cannot be fully investigated until the two wings of buildings 3 and 36 are removed.

Again, it's a matter of public record that this land has active underground streams running under it.

Returning to the trees on the site, in particular the currently protected cedar tree avenue, more than 2,200 people have now signed a petition for them to be saved.

It's hard to believe only five years ago, in approving an earlier scheme for the site, Horsham District Council agreed it was 'crucial' that these beautiful trees should be preserved.

Now it's proposed that all of them should be chopped down - evergreens to be replaced with deciduous trees - that will lose all their foliage and remain bare from autumn until spring.

In light of this sudden about-turn - I feel it's in the public interest to include the original report into why it was felt crucial for these beautiful cedars to be retained, by Horsham District Council's then Arboricultural Officer, Will Jones - who acted as their custodian for more than 20 years.

Will.Jones
Sent: 05 March 2019 16:12
To: Jason.Hawkes
Subject: Cons response - DC 18 2687 (outline): Former Novartis site, Parsonage Road, Horsham.
Dear Jason,
Thank you for consulting me on this application.
I have examined the information submitted regarding arboricultural matters, and comment on the proposed developments at the site as set out on the Illustrative Masterplan (drawing No. MP001, dated 14 Dec 18) as submitted by Savills.

As you are aware, I have visited the site a number of times previously over the last 20 years.

Summary: I register NO OBJECTION to the proposals at this outline stage.

Notes:

1. The principal arboricultural feature on the site is the line of Blue Atlas cedars striding the access route from Wimblehurst Road east to the main building.

Nine of these trees remain, and all are protected under TPO/0686, an order served on 28th August 1990, and confirmed on 4th December of the same year. It is in my view crucial that these trees are retained, and that development in the area respects their root protection areas (RPA's) as defined under BS5837 'Trees in relation to design, demolition, and construction - Recommendations' (2012).

It is also necessary to ensure that the trees do not become under threat of removal due to the proximity of newly-erected buildings suffering from excessive shading and lack of solar gain; this is also a consideration dealt with under BS 5837.

2. All of these trees are targeted for retention. The plan is at a scale of 1:2500, and hence I would not want to be drawn at this stage as to whether the trees have been given a satisfactory amount of room viz-a-viz BOTH of the points within BS 5837 referred to above. The consideration as to the suitability of the room allotted each tree must be assessed in regard not only in terms of distance, but the size, breadth, height, use, aspect, and fenestration of the buildings to be erected nearby, this being a matter for examination of reserved matters.

3. Central to this point is of course the size and spread of the trees in question. Existing crown spreads are noted within the Tree Survey Schedule, as they should be. But in terms of the development of this site, and the retention of a harmonious relationship between the proposed built form and these trees, I am of the view, exceptionally, that consideration should be given to whether they should be trimmed, laterally, reducing their radial crown spreads. This is because this particular species is well known to suffer from branch fracture due to a combination of extended lateral growth with a high proportion of foliage - and accordingly weight - at the branch tips, and a propensity for fork failure.

In his 'Observations on selected tree genera and species', Lonsdale (Principles of Tree Hazard Assessment and Management, DETR, 1999, appendix 2) notes that the genus *Cedrus* has a high propensity to form weak forks; for fork failure; and to fail due to decay. He advises also that "branch failures at the points of attachment.. (are) reported in the commonly grown variety of the Atlantic cedar, *Cedrus atlantica* var. *Glauca*".

The Tree Survey Schedule notes evidence of recent such storm damage on 6 of the 9 cedars already, suggesting that their radial branch growth has already become suspect.

This does NOT mean that the trees are over-mature, 'too large' overall, or hazardous. But developing the site for residential use suggests that the management of this raises its importance.

An application for such preventative tree surgery would be required under the TPO, but at officer level I can advise that I would be in support of the rationale behind such works.

Why can't these trees be kept and maintained, as Will Jones suggested?

I'm writing this on the day that the Met Office revealed 2025 is on course to be UK's hottest year since records began, saying that climate change is continuing to drive higher temperatures.

It's a known fact that trees cool temperatures through evapotranspiration, releasing water vapour that cools the air, and by providing shade, blocking solar radiation from hitting surfaces like concrete and asphalt, reducing heat absorption.

Even more reason for the Novartis cedars to be saved, surely?

Thank you.

Kind regards

Telephone:

Email: planning@horsham.gov.uk



**Horsham
District
Council**

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