

HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Land On The South West Side of Rowhook Hill Rowhook West Sussex
DESCRIPTION:	Regrading of land levels to form a hardstanding area associated with horticultural use.
REFERENCE:	DC/26/0185
RECOMMENDATION:	Advice / More information

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION:

Proposals have been reviewed in tandem with enforcement cases EN/24/0434 and EN/24/0446.

Retrospective development comprises a large, regraded area of recently deforested land and associated hardstanding. Further deforestation is noted to be expected as per the Forestry Commission (FC) license, however, replanting plans and future operational usage is unclear.

Given the lack of information provided in regard to the rural function of the proposals as defined under HDPF Policy 26, it is unclear whether they are of a scale appropriate to their countryside character and location, or if in addition, proposals lead individually or cumulatively to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside.

Nevertheless, the extent of urbanising form has an eroding effect on the rural landscape character of the area, contrary to HDPF policies 25 and 26. More information is thus requested and modification recommended in order to conserve and enhance the key characteristics of the landscape character area, including woodland and landform.

MAIN COMMENTS:

1. The proposed site is located outside of the Built-Up Area Boundary (BUAB), in a countryside location.
2. Prior to the retrospective development, it comprised a conifer plantation with informal access.
3. Notwithstanding commercial and industrial use along Guildford Rd to the south, the wider landscape context is rural in character, comprising predominately of woodland interspersed with agricultural fields and scattered farmhouses.
4. Multiple public rights of way (PRoW) are located in the surrounds, however views into the site from the footpath network are currently not available due to intervening vegetation. This may be subject to change should the felling license be fully implemented and noting in addition the intention of the applicant to restart the Christmas tree cultivation business.
5. The retrospective development results in a small change to the existing natural topography of the land to accommodate a large hardstanding area to support the ongoing agricultural use of the land. These works, associated with the presence of a large oil tank and large storage unit

(outside the red line) are seen as further urbanising detractors, incongruous to the rural setting and predominantly undeveloped character of the area.

6. In addition, it is noted that the large mounds of earth distributed on site are not accurately represented in plan and it's unclear if the intention is to regrade. Clarification is requested.
7. Existing and proposed use is unclear and conflicting terms including horticulture, agriculture and cultivation of Christmas trees (forestry) have been used within the application. In order to ensure that the scale of hardstanding and regrading is appropriate, further clarity on future use, including vehicular activity should be provided and assessed by an agricultural consultant to establish if the proposals are proportionate to the needs of the business.
8. Based on the level of information provided, the retrospective development does not conserve or enhance the key features and characteristics of its landscape character area and therefore is contrary to HDPF Policies 25 and 26.

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS: N/A

NAME:

Elly Hazael
Trainee Landscape Architect (Planning)

DEPARTMENT:

Specialists Team - Strategic Planning

DATE:

02/06/2026

SIGNED OFF BY:

Inês Watson CMLI
Specialists Team Leader (Landscape Architect)

DATE:

04/06/2026