



HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Land North of Little Slaughterford Chapel Road Barns Green
DESCRIPTION:	Proposed development of 68 dwellings with vehicular and pedestrian accesses, public open space, hard and soft landscaping and associated works including supporting foul and surface water drainage works, and works to existing culverted watercourse on site.
REFERENCE:	DC/25/2057
RECOMMENDATION:	Advice / Modification / Holding Objection to the complete removal of the Hedge - H1
SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION: The submitted Arboricultural Implications Assessment (AIA) and Method Statement (AMS) is a fair assessment the tree and woodland impacts of the proposed residential development at Land South of Smugglers Lane, Barns Green. Although, concerns are raised with the full loss of the hedge H1.	
MAIN COMMENTS Site layout Observations The proposed layout appears to demonstrate that arboricultural constraints at the site have been considered, and have informed the design, for the most part. Whereby, development is largely confined to the central and eastern areas, thus minimising development and post-development impacts on retained boundary trees. Most Category A and B trees are retained, and their Root Protection Areas (RPAs) are generally respected. This approach generally aligns with good practice and local policy objectives for retaining existing green infrastructure. Ancient woodland impact observations The western boundary of the site adjoins an area of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW). The provision of a 15-metre buffer between the woodland and the proposed development is noted and is considered appropriate in principle. Current Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) – Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions advises that, where possible, buffer zones should form part of the area's green infrastructure and wider ecological networks; consist of semi-natural habitats such as woodland or a mix of scrub, grassland, heathland and wetland created using appropriate local native species; allow access only where habitats	

will not be harmed by trampling; and exclude all development proposals, including gardens.

The buffer is largely free from built form and is intended to function as a transition zone between the development and the woodland. The proposed pedestrian path within this buffer utilises an existing agricultural access point, which limits the extent of new disturbance. The use of a no-dig construction methodology, cellular confinement systems and soil de-compaction measures is proposed. Subject to compliance with the advised methodology, these works are not considered to adversely impact Tree T26. Furthermore, subject to the footway being contained by permanent fencing running parallel to its route to prevent any incursion into the Ancient Woodland Buffer post-development, this aspect of the proposals would be acceptable in arboricultural terms.

Root Protection Areas (RPAs) Observations

In respect of development within RPAs, it is noted that no direct built development is proposed within the RPAs of retained trees either within or outside the site boundaries (e.g. dwellings, roads etc.). However, localised incursions are proposed in association with the repair of an existing culvert within the RPA of Tree T82 and an off-site roadside Oak, of high amenity and landscape value due to its prominent roadside location

With regard to T82, the incursions are located on the outer periphery of the RPA as currently plotted. However, it is noted that RPA T82 has been plotted using the standard circular method, which does not take account of the influence that the adjacent road to the east is likely to have had on root development.

BS5837 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction advises at paragraph 4.6.2:

"The RPA for each tree should initially be plotted as a circle centred on the base of the stem. Where pre-existing site conditions or other factors indicate that rooting has occurred asymmetrically, a polygon of equivalent area should be produced. Modifications to the shape of the RPA should reflect a soundly based arboricultural assessment of likely root distribution."

Amendments are therefore requested to the way the RPA of Tree T82 has been plotted.

The scheme also seeks to construct a new footpath within the RPA of Tree T26, which lies within the Ancient Woodland to the north of the site and passes through the Ancient Woodland buffer. As set out previously, PPG advises that buffer zones should exclude development and allow access only where habitats will not be harmed by trampling.

Tree and hedge removals observations

Tree removals have been identified and justified within the AIA. One tree (T15 Ash) is recommended for removal on arboricultural grounds i.e. its poor condition due to infection with ADB. Trees T80 (Field maple) and T81 (Ash), hedge H1 and part of hedge H2 are proposed for removal to facilitate access, drainage infrastructure and visibility requirements. With the exception of hedge H1, these features are of limited arboricultural value, and their removal is not considered to significantly undermine overall tree cover or landscape character of the site.

However, the loss of hedge H1 would, in my opinion, result in significant landscape harm and a noticeable loss of visual amenity to the area.

Hedge H1 forms a continuous, mature vegetated boundary along the eastern edge of the site and is an important, long-established landscape feature. Despite its limited species diversity, the hedge currently provides a strong visual and physical barrier between the built-up area of the village and the open countryside beyond.

The complete removal of hedge H1 would result in immediate and substantial landscape harm by opening up views across the site, eroding the established sense of enclosure, and undermining the historic boundary between the village and the countryside.

The loss of hedge H1 to facilitate access, drainage or ditch works would therefore be contrary to Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework, which seeks to protect and enhance landscape character, ensure development respects its context, and retain important landscape features such as trees and hedgerows.

As such, the full removal of hedge H1 should not be sought, and efforts should be made to retain as much of it as possible while still allowing for an appropriate site access. Additionally, where feasible, the scheme should reinforce this feature through the integration of additional tree planting at intervals, thereby safeguarding its long-term contribution to the character of the area.

NAME:	Andy Bush Arboricultural officer (Planning)
DEPARTMENT:	STRATEGIC PLANNING - SPECIALISTS
DATE:	03/02/26