



HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	1 Hilltop Cottages, The Mount, Ifield West Sussex
DESCRIPTION:	Demolition of existing outbuilding. Erection of 1no detached two storeys dwelling with associated works.
REFERENCE:	DC/25/1963
RECOMMENDATION:	No Objection
SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION: The current proposals would contribute to a small incremental change further eroding the rural character of the area as result of the additional urbanising features and external lighting. However, given the existing domestic nature of the site, and the relationship of the proposals with the pair of semi-detached dwellings, the new building will not appear unexpected or out of character in this location. Further, the retention of open space in front of the dwelling will retain the existing relationship for walkers and vehicular users of The Mount. We recommend that a mixed native hedge is delivered within the site's boundary and have suggested a condition to secure this.	
MAIN COMMENTS: <u>Site description & context</u> 1. The application site is located some 2km to the east of Rusper village, within the parish of Rusper, in a countryside location. The site relates to infill development within the garden area of an existing residential property at 1 Hilltop Cottages. The garden is mainly laid to lawn and a small outbuilding located in the southeastern corner, proposed for demolition. The existing site boundaries consist of picket fencing to the north and east and are undefined to the west and south as currently within the grounds of the parent property. 2. The site is positioned within a cluster of development known as The Mount Farm, comprising of a mixture of residential, agricultural and equestrian uses. 3. The proposed access is located via an existing track to the east of the site, off The Mount. The Mount itself is a narrow, winding lane, verdant in character and representative of the Landscape Character Area K1: Upper Mole Farmlands in which the site is located. 4. The site's wider setting is predominantly rural and agricultural in character on account of the surrounding, undeveloped fields and agricultural features, including the presence of farm buildings, which are reflective of the local	

agricultural vernacular. The area is notably quiet and tranquil, positively contributing to its rural qualities.

5. There is a predominance of undeveloped, agricultural fields of irregular pattern, defined by hedgerow and shaws, as well areas of woodland some of it Ancient (AW) predominantly to the north.
6. Nearby public rights of way include PRoW 1506 to the east of the site and PRoW 1496/1. The Mount, while not indicated as a public right of way, it's the only available route to users to connect both footpaths. Views towards the site from The Mount are readily available.
7. The Mount Farm is identified as Grade II listed and sits to the west of the site, beyond the 2 semi-detached hilltop cottages.

Landscape Character

8. The site sits within Landscape Character Area K1: Upper Mole Farmlands, of the Horsham District Character Assessment. Key characteristics relevant to the site are gently undulating landform, small to medium irregular field pattern divided by thick hedgerows, predominantly pasture farmland, small block of woodlands and copses, distinctive field trees and farm ponds.
9. The key sensitivity to change overall is moderate reflecting limited visibility on the account of intervening vegetation and moderate intrinsic landscape qualities. Key sensitivities are:
 - Large scale commercial and residential development
 - Small scale incremental changes eroding rural character
10. Planning and Land Management Guidelines for the LCA include:
 - Conserve the mostly rural character of the area
 - Ensure any small development responds to the historic dispersed settlement pattern and local design and materials
 - Conserve historic lanes with their ancient oaks and unimproved roadside verges
 - Conserve and strengthen existing hedgerows

Assessment

11. The proposal is for the demolition on an outbuilding and erection of a detached dwelling house with associated works. The proposed dwelling sits in a similar alignment to 1 Hilltop cottage and retains a small front garden, the existing green house and small existing trees.
12. The current proposals would contribute to a small incremental change further eroding the rural character of the area as result of the additional urbanising features and external lighting. However, given the domestic nature of the site, and the relationship of the proposals with the existing pair of semi-detached dwellings, it will not appear unexpected or out of character in this location. Further, the retention of open space in front of the dwelling will retain the existing relationship for walkers and vehicular users of The Mount.
13. The proposals show a hedgerow surrounding the plot. Although this is referenced as 'existing' it is clear that most of it is new hedgerow and therefore a condition to secure these details will be required. The hedgerow must be of a mixed native species as this will be important to soften the appearance of the built form and respond to the land management guidelines as indicated within the LCA.

ANY RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS:**Hard and Soft Landscaping Scheme**

Pre-Occupation Condition: Prior to the first occupation of any part of the development hereby permitted, full details of all hard and soft landscaping works shall have been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include plans and measures addressing the following:

- Details of all existing trees and hedgerow to be retained and removed
- Planting and seeding plans, including a schedule specifying plant numbers, sizes, densities and species in Latin names
- An outline hard and soft written specification, including ground preparation, cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment
- Details of all hard surfacing materials and finishes, including layout, colour, size, texture, coursing and levels
- Details of all boundary treatments - such as walls, fencing and railings - including location, type, heights and materials

The approved landscaping scheme shall be fully implemented in accordance with the approved details within the first planting season following the first occupation of any part of the development. Unless otherwise agreed as part of the approved landscaping, no trees or hedges on the site shall be wilfully damaged or uprooted, felled/removed, topped or lopped without the previous written consent of the Local Planning Authority until 5 years after completion of the development. Any proposed planting, which within a period of 5 years, dies, is removed, or becomes seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory development that is sympathetic to the landscape and townscape character and built form of the surroundings, and in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

NAME:	Inês Watson CMLI Specialist Team Leader (Landscape Architect)
DEPARTMENT:	Specialists Team - Strategic Planning
DATE:	28/01/2026