



Horsham District Council
Parkside
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

Our ref: 13748
Date: 29 January 2026

For the attention of: Hannah Darley

Application ref: DC/26/0041
Location: Spring Acres West End Lane Henfield West Sussex
Proposal/Description: Permission in Principle for the erection of up to 9no. self-build dwellings.

Thank you for consulting with Place Services on the above 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

Not supportive on landscape grounds	☒
No landscape objection, subject to attached recommendations and/or conditions	☐
Further information required prior to determination	☐
No landscape comments / does not wish to comment	☐

Overall, we judge that the proposed development would affect the tranquil character of West End Lane and introduce urbanising features along this rural road. The site removes an open gap between residential groups along the lane, which contributes to the rural character of the minor road, and provides a break in the existing ribbon developed character. We therefore judge that introducing additional linear development along the entire site road edge consisting of 9no. dwellings would have an adverse effect on the character of West End Lane.

There may be capacity for a reduced number of dwellings occupying a smaller section of the proposed field, while still remaining consistent with the ribbon development pattern to the south of West End Lane.

Based on the current submission, we would not be supportive of this application.



1.0. Site Context

- 1.1. The Site is located to the west of Henfield, and to the north of minor West End Lane. Development in the surrounding area is largely in a ribbon development along the southern edge of West End Lane. The Site comprises the southern part of a larger grassland field. The site's southern boundary is defined by a low hedgerow along West End Lane. An area of woodland is located to the east, and rear gardens of dwellings are located to the west.

2.0. Planning Policy Context

- 2.1. Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) (2015)
- 2.2. The following policies are considered relevant to this application: Environmental Protection (Policy 24), District Character and the Natural Environment (Policy 25), Countryside Protection (Policy 26) and Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity (Policy 31).
- 2.3. Henfield Neighbourhood Plan (2021)
- 2.4. Within the Neighbourhood Plan, Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity (Policy 10) is considered relevant.
- 2.5. Horsham District Landscape Capacity Assessment (2014)
- 2.6. The Site is located within Area 68 Land West of Henfield. Landscape Character Sensitivity features include small to medium pattern of fields with mixed hedgerows, scattered housing along lanes, a strong rural character along lanes, unspoilt character in good condition. The report states: *"Development of this area would therefore result in a significant urban intrusion into the wider countryside which would be fairly visible from the wider landscape."*
- 2.7. For medium scale development, there is a low/moderate capacity for development, which is described as: *"The area only has potential to be able to accommodate development in limited locations without unacceptable adverse landscape and visual impacts or compromising the values attached to it, taking account of any appropriate mitigation"*. We do however note the scale of the development proposed is much smaller than that referred to within the capacity assessment.

3.0. Review of the proposal/submitted information

- 3.1. The site is located within Landscape Character Area (LCA) D2: Henfield and Small Dole Farmlands of the Horsham Landscape Character Assessment (2003). Key characteristics of this LCA include undulating low ridges, long views to and from the ridges, small rectangular fields, loose-knit groups of cottages strung along roads and lanes.
- 3.2. The LCA is sensitive to the cumulative impact of small-scale incremental change which contributes to the suburbanisation.

- 3.3. Policy 26 Countryside Protection (HDPF, 2015) states that outside the built-up area boundary (BUAB), *“the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development. Any proposal must be essential to its countryside location”*. Specific reference is made to protecting, conserving or enhancing the key characteristics of the area, including the *“development pattern of the area”*, *“tranquillity and sensitivity”*, and the *“pattern of woodlands, fields, hedgerows, trees, waterbodies and other features”*
- 3.4. The proposed development is for 9no. dwellings arranged in a linear form along West End Lane. Existing development to the south of West End Lane also follows a ribbon pattern but with noticeable spacing and occasional clusters in the surrounding area. This creates a dispersed but clearly road-fronted settlement form. The proposed development does therefore somewhat respond to the development pattern of the area along West End Lane.
- 3.5. The character of the landscape includes loose-knit groups of cottages strung along lanes consistent with LCA D2, and scattered housing along lanes with a strong rural character which is consistent with Area 68 Land West of Henfield. Although residential development along minor roads is a character of the local landscape, emphasis on the scattered arrangement is noted, with breaks between the groups or individual dwellings.
- 3.6. Gaps between groups and individual dwellings contribute to the rural character of the minor road. The open field site contributes to the rural character of the road, providing a break in the ribbon developed character. This is particularly notable considering the ribbon development opposite the site.
- 3.7. The increase in development along this road will impact the tranquillity of West End Lane, with increased vehicular movement, urbanising features introduced into the site and lighting pollution.
- 3.8. SuDS infrastructure and green infrastructure planting would need to be included as part of the proposals. Within the red line boundary (RLB), space for these features would need to be integrated. The spatial constraints of the site limit available space for these features to be proposed without reducing the indicative number of dwellings.
- 3.9. At present, no Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been submitted to accompany this application. In our professional judgement, the proposed development would have an adverse effect on the local landscape character and from surrounding visual receptors. The proposals would have an adverse effect on both the site and local level, eroding the undeveloped character of the site and area and introducing urbanising features.

- 3.10. Given the sites location amongst an area of scattered ribbon development along West End Lane, some development could be accommodated within the site. However, the extent of development proposed fills the full width of the field parcel to the north of the road and erodes the overall rural character of West End Lane, which has a loose-knit development. Breaks in the built development are integral to the sense of rurality in this location, which is eroded by the proposed development which urbanises and encloses this section of the road.
- 3.11. The effect on the local landscape could be reduced by reducing the number of dwellings in this location to minimise the urbanising effect and respond to the surrounding loose-knit development pattern.
- 3.12. Information on the proposed access to the development is not clear. Utilising the existing access is acknowledged to have the least impact on the hedgerow which runs alongside West End Lane.
- 3.13. The northern boundary treatment is currently undetermined. However, introducing an urban treatment such as a close-board fence would have an adverse impact on the rural character of the area. Most other dwellings within the local area have relatively wide green buffers consisting of hedgerows and tree lined boundary, which form a more natural and softer edge to the plots. Proposing dwellings which form a small part of a larger field requires careful consideration of boundary treatments.

4.0. Summary

- 4.1. Overall, we judge that the proposed development would affect the tranquil character of West End Lane and introduce urbanising features along this rural road. The site removes an open gap between residential groups along the lane, which contributes to the rural character of the minor road, and provides a break in the existing ribbon developed character. We therefore judge that introducing additional linear development along the entire site road edge consisting of 9no. dwellings would have an adverse effect on the character of West End Lane.
- 4.2. There may be capacity for a reduced number of dwellings occupying a smaller section of the proposed field, while still remaining consistent with the ribbon development pattern to the south of West End Lane.
- 4.3. Based on the current submission, we would not be supportive of this application.

5.0. Recommended Submission Document(s)

- 5.1. If minded for approval, the following documents should be submitted:
- Landscape Strategy
 - Hard Landscape Plan

- Boundary Treatment Plan
- Soft Landscape Plan
- Landscape Management Plan

Please 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.

We are unable to respond directly to applicants/agents or other interested parties. Any additional information, queries or comments on this advice that the applicant/agent or other interested parties may have, must be directed to the Planning Officer at the relevant LPA, who will seek further advice from us where appropriate.