



Horsham District Council
Parkside
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

Our ref: 20232
Date: 28 July 2026

For the attention of: Daniel Holmes

Application ref: DC/25/1957
Location: Oaklands Stud Forest Grange Horsham West Sussex RH13 6HX
Proposal/Description: Demolition of pole barn. Conversion of existing stable building into 1no. detached dwelling with associated works.

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	☐

This review is based on a desktop study with previous site visit undertaken November 2025 of the above-referenced application and its submitted documents. Our Landscape comments are as follows:

1.0. Site Context

- 1.1. The site is located to the south of Highbirch Hill Woods, an area of Ancient Woodland, and directly north of Forest Grange Manor Grade II listed building. It also lies within the High Weald National Landscape. Currently, the site is accessed via Forest Grange track and is managed as a horse paddock.
- 1.2. Public Right of Way (PRoW) Bridleway COL-2822 is located to the east. Highbirch Hill Woods is Open Access Land under CRow Act 2000.

2.0. Planning Policy Context

Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) (2015)

- 2.1. The following policies are considered relevant to this application:
Policy 23: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation



Policy 24: Environmental Protection
 Policy 25: District Character and the Natural Environment
 Policy 26: Countryside Protection
 Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

- 2.2. DC/24/0974 - Proposed change of use of land from equestrian to a mixed use including settled gypsy accommodation site comprising 2 pitches. Retention of existing hardstanding and proposed biodiversity enhancements (Retrospective) - Appeal Dismissed (31/03/2025)

DC/25/0462 - Conversion and extensions to existing stables and pole barn to form 1no. detached dwelling and associated works – Refused. Appealed. Withdrawn (17/02/2026)

DC/25/1428 - Proposed two pitch settled gypsy accommodation site along with retention of cess pit. – Refused. Appeal pending.

We have previously commented on DC/24/0974 and DC/25/1428.

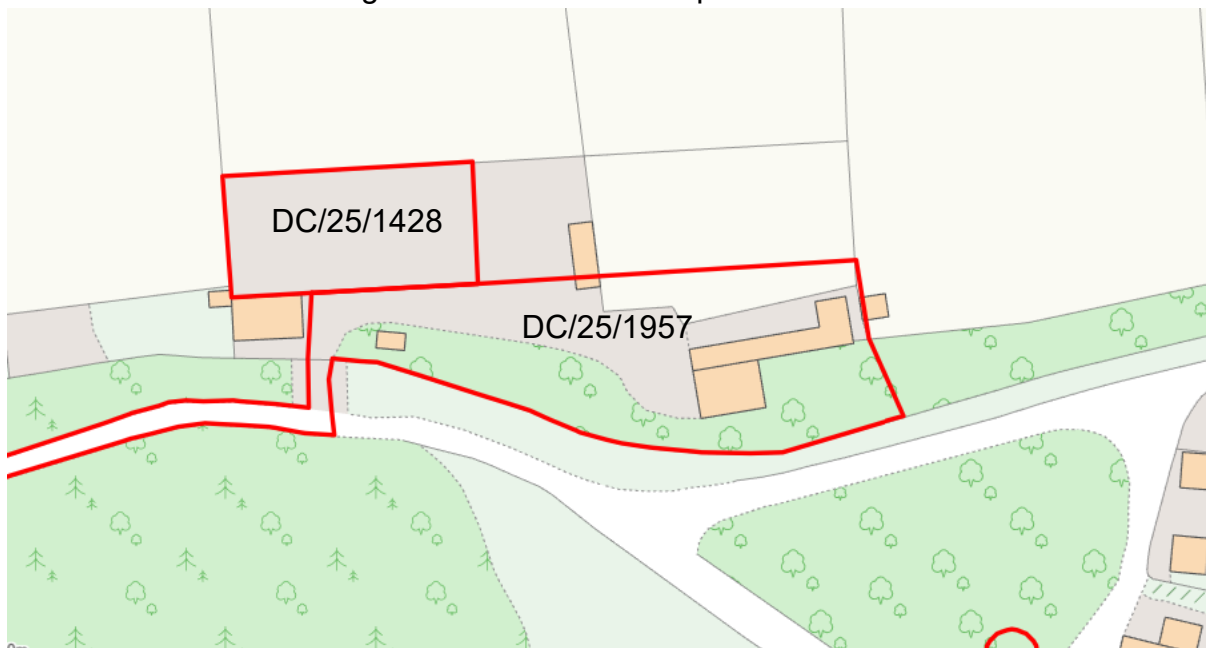
3.0. Review of the proposal/submitted information:

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)

- 3.1. The application is accompanied by a LVIA prepared by Harper Landscape Architecture LLP.
- 3.2. Section 6.3 correctly identifies the site as being located within NCA 122 High Weald; LCA HW2 of the Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex and L1: St Leonard's Forest, Landscape Character Area (LCA) of the Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment (2003).
- 3.3. The susceptibility for all landscape receptors has been judged to be low; the accompanying narrative refers to the existing nature of the stable block. The definition of low susceptibility as set out within Appendix A - Landscape Character and Visual Impacts and Effects Methodology is *"A landscape where receptors are likely to make a minimal positive contribution and could therefore accommodate the type of development proposed without causing a detrimental change to the base line condition."*
- 3.4. While we agree the built form is existing, the use of land will change from equestrian to residential (domestic) and will change the base line condition of the aforementioned landscape receptors which are considered a positive contribution towards local and district landscape character. Furthermore, the application boundary extends wider than the stable block itself and it is unclear what is proposed within the Red Line Boundary and what boundary treatments are proposed.
- 3.5. Given the acknowledgement of "moderate perception of remoteness and tranquillity" as a positive landscape receptor (para 6.2.4, LVIA) and the contribution of the site towards National Character Area 122 High Weald, the High Weald National Landscape Management Plan, the West Sussex Landscape Strategy HW2 High Weald Forests and

the Horsham Landscape Assessment L1 St Leonard's Forest (para 6.3, LVIA), we consider the susceptibility of the site and the wider landscape that it contributes towards to be greater than low. Magnitude of change for all landscape receptors has been judged to be low adverse, defined in the methodology as *"Defined as just-perceptible, long-term change in components of a landscape, or more noticeable temporary and reversible changes"*. As previously noted, the lack of information provided for the site beyond the footprint of the building makes it difficult to be certain that changes would be "just perceptible". The domestication of the stable block will inherently alter the character of the pastoral building associated with rural activities and its setting.

- 3.6. Para 6.2.5 of the LVIA considers equestrian uses as landscape detractor. This is a shared key issue within the landscape character assessments for HW2 High Weald Forests and LCA L1 St Leonards Forest. The introduction of land use change will potentially result in further detracting elements noted as association such as those detailed in para 6.2.5: hardstandings, fencing, vehicles, plant and machinery, car parking and vehicle access and urbanising elements. We consider the magnitude of change to be greater than low.
- 3.7. We reference appeal decision APP/U1430/W/25/3361605, where the Inspector states: *"the shift from paddock to domestic garden land is not visually or functionally neutral."* (para 8). This is evident in the site photos within the LVIA where viewpoint E evidences domestic practices associated with the static caravan on site.
- 3.8. Para 8.3.1 of the LVIA states that "No known committed developments were identified that would combine with the proposed development to give rise to cumulative landscape or visual effects. The cumulative effect is therefore Neutral and Not Significant." However, we highlight the existing appeal pending decision DC/25/1428 for two pitch settled gypsy accommodation site along with retention of cess pit. See below:



- 3.9. GLVIA3 para 7.13 states: "The baseline for assessing cumulative landscape and visual effects should then include those schemes considered in the LVIA and in addition potential

schemes that are not yet present in the landscape but are at various stages in the development and consenting process:

- schemes with planning consent
- schemes that are the subject of a valid planning application that has not yet been determined.

We would therefore expect to the cumulative assessment of both applications.

4.0. Summary

- 4.1. We consider the LVIA underestimates both the susceptibility of the site and the magnitude of change arising from the proposals. Whilst the stable block is existing, the proposed change from equestrian to residential use would alter the baseline landscape condition and introduce a domestic character that is neither visually nor functionally neutral. Given the site's contribution to the High Weald National Character Area, the recognised qualities of tranquillity and remoteness, and its role within the relevant local landscape character areas, the landscape should be afforded a higher susceptibility rating than that applied.
- 4.2. Furthermore, the absence of clear information regarding the wider application site, including proposed land use, boundary treatments and ancillary domestic features, prevents a robust assessment of likely effects.
- 4.3. The LVIA should therefore be revised to:
 1. reassess landscape susceptibility and magnitude of change to understand the site's sensitivity
 2. provide detailed proposals for all land within the red line boundary, including boundary treatments and domestic infrastructure
 3. fully assess the likely urbanising effects associated with residential use, including hardstanding, fencing, vehicles and garden paraphernalia
 4. reconsider cumulative effects in light of the pending appeal proposal at DC/25/1428, which has the potential to contribute to cumulative landscape and visual impacts.

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.