HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Hop Oast Service Station Worthing Road Horsham West Sussex
DESCRIPTION:	Installation of a new EV Charging Hub, associated infrastructure and all other associated works.
REFERENCE:	DC/25/0313
RE-CONSULT:	1st set of comments in black 2nd set of comments in blue 3rd set of comments in green
RECOMMENDATION:	Holding Objection / More Information Holding Objection / Modification No Objection

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION:

3rd set of comments

The red line boundary has been adjusted to include 4no. proposed trees, in addition to proposed hedgerow along the southern boundary. While it is recommended that further trees are introduced within the hedgerow in line with point 3 of the original response, no further concerns are raised from a landscape point of view.

We note further that some outstanding comments have not been addressed in regard to specific landscape details, however on this occasion they are deemed minor.

2nd set of comments

It is regrettable that the mature trees have been pre-emptively felled prior to completion of the previously requested tree survey and AIA. These trees had been identified as making a positive contribution to the area's verdant character and considered integral to mitigating the anticipated adverse visual effects of the proposed development, particularly as a result of the incremental urbanising features introduced along an otherwise verdant boundary.

The loss of these trees has had a detrimental effect on the local landscape character. We echo the comments made by HDC's Arboriculturalist in regard to the loss of amenity to the area and support the call for a robust landscape strategy to be submitted to compensate for tree removal and mitigate adverse visual effects.

In addition, policy SNP18.1 Treed Landscape of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan states that, '*Where existing trees or an area of woodland is to be lost, it must be replaced with trees or new woodland of greater environmental value on site or elsewhere within the Plan Area*'. As such, it is essential that the adverse effects on the visual amenity and local landscape character as result of tree loss are appropriately mitigated. The provision of only two replacement trees within the red line boundary is not deemed sufficient. Accordingly, we request additional tree planting within the site. These must be indicated in a coordinated landscape plan which also includes existing and proposed services, above and below ground, to ensure their successful implementation.

We continue to request the inclusion of a vegetated buffer to mitigate the risk of polluted run off entering the adjacent ditch, as discussed at point 5 below. Such run off may result in the decline and additional adverse effects on the coppiced Hazel and other existing vegetation.

We request that the section titled, '*WOODLAND, HEDGEROWS AND VEGETATION',* removed from the PEA is reinstated. This is particularly relevant in light of the recommendations for boundary treatments aimed at reducing contamination and disturbance to existing landscape features during construction.

Not addressed.

Finally, we expect the following details to be added to the proposals:

- Location and specification of boundary treatments, as previously noted under point 6.

  Hedgerow added to the southern border, with thanks. No further boundary treatments have been proposed. Closed.
- Tree pit details, including specification and locations of tree root barriers where in proximity to utilities.

  Not addressed, however we continue to advise the use of tree root barriers. Closed.
- Soft Landscape details and specification amended to indicate that a 50-75mm layer of mulch should be applied to a 1m diameter around the stem/trunk with a 120mm collar left free of mulch to prevent the stem/trunk from rotting

  Not addressed, however we continue to advise the above. Closed.
- 'Weed Control' note and procedures amended to mitigate impacts on existing and proposed ecological features. Please note we strongly recommend that chemical fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides including glyphosate are not to be applied at any time due to proximity to and potential impacts on existing and proposed ecological features, particularly the ditch. Alternative methods for weeding should be considered such as hot foam or hot water systems, steel brushing in combination with acetic acid spraying, or electronic control systems. Please refer to pan-uk.org for guidance and resources.

  Not addressed, however we continue to advise that chemical fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides are not used. Closed.

1st set of comments

Given the immediate context of the site, the principle of expansion of the service station to accommodate the installation of the EV charging hub is deemed acceptable. However, concern is raised with the location of the proposals and likely effects on the landscape character and visual amenity, when appreciated from the A24/B2237.

To address these concerns, further information is required in regard to vegetation clearance and existing root protection areas (RPAs) in order to demonstrate that the retention of the mature trees and significant understorey vegetation buffer can be achieved. The existing vegetation positively contributes to the area's verdant character and is key to the mitigation of visual effects arising both from the proposals and existing service station.

In order to retain and protect these trees as per aims set out within the Design and Access Statement as well as policy 33 of the HDPF, a tree survey and AIA must be submitted and vegetation clearance clearly indicated in plan. Please see detailed comments below.

MAIN COMMENTS:

1. The proposed site is situated to the north of the village of Southwater, set outside of the Built Up Area Boundary (BUAB), in a countryside location. The site is the undeveloped area within a larger parcel that forms Hop Oast Service Station, which comprises associated ancillary structures and a commercial building. The site itself comprises vegetation, including trees and scrub that provide a verdant boundary to the Hop Oast roundabout.

2. While the site's wider landscape context can be described as predominately rural in nature, its immediate setting to the north is largely industrial, comprising the Hop Oast Depot, and to the south the A24, both existing urbanising detractors. Notwithstanding, large areas of woodland and mature roadside trees and understorey can also be found in the immediate surrounds, providing a verdant quality to the area.

3. Subject to appropriate mitigation, it is unlikely the proposals would appear out of place or dominant within the context of the surrounding landscape. To achieve this, a robust and structural buffer must be retained to enclose the proposals within the landscape as it is noted that the hedgerow flanking the A24 and adjacent to petrol station is not as effective in winter months and desirable for the location.

4. The current layout appears to encroach into this buffer, however little information is provided to demonstrate the impact of the proposals on the existing vegetation. We therefore recommend the provision of a tree survey and AIA. While trees are not proposed for removal, the likely introduction of hardstanding within RPAs will affect their integrity as their roots are sensitive to construction. Their deterioration or loss would lead to an eroding effect on the character of the area and an adverse effect on visual amenity as a result of the incremental urbanising features on an otherwise verdant boundary.

5. In addition, please note that given the ditch abutting the southern boundary, proposals should ideally retain a vegetated buffer in line with recommendations set out in section 4.1.18 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), in order to mitigate polluted run off which may have additional adverse effects on the existing trees.

6. As per section 4.1.20 of the PEA, we also expect to see the locations of boundary treatments in plan, including fencing and flowering plants.

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS:

If you're minded to recommend the application for approval without the concerns addressed above please get in touch as specific conditions will be required.

No landscape conditions required.

NAME:	Elly Hazael Trainee Landscape Architect (Planning)
DEPARTMENT:	Specialists Team - Strategic Planning
DATE:	27/03/2025

	16/10/2025 05/05/2026
SIGNED OFF BY:	Inês Watson CMLI Specialists Team Leader (Landscape Architect)
DATE:	02/04/2025 16/10/2025 05/05/2026