



Horsham District Council
Parkside
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

Our ref: 22838
Date: 02 October 2026

For the attention of: Tamara Dale

Application ref: DC/26/1212
Location: Annexe Clockhouse Farmhouse, Stonehouse Lane, Cowfold, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 8DL
Proposal/Description: Demolition of 6no. existing agricultural buildings within the wider farm holding. Conversion of the existing brick stables into 5no. residential dwellings; erection of a new commercial building and erection of a new Sussex barn with landscaping and associated infrastructure works.

Thank you for consulting with Place Services on the above Full planning 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 of the above-referenced application and its submitted documents. Our Landscape comments are as follows:

1.0. Site Context

- 1.1. The site lies west of Stonehouse Lane and comprises several agricultural buildings and areas of hard standing. To the north and south are medium-scale arable and pasture fields which are edged with a mix of hedgerows and tree lines. The village of Cowfold lies to the east. The site is accessed from Stonehouse Lane via a concrete track which runs between two residential dwellings: Clockhouse Farmhouse and Dairy Cottage, further north is Little Patches (1027052) which is Grade II Listed. To the north-east is Stonehouse Farm which is an equestrian centre with stables and external manège. Public Right of Way (PRoW) footpath COW-1823 follows the southern boundary, footpath COW-1757 is located to the



north. A number of PRow are located to the southeast on higher ground including bridleway COW-1758 and footpath COW-1760.

2.0. Planning Policy Context

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)

2.1. Within the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) (2015) the following policies are considered relevant to landscape:

- Policy 24 Environmental Protection
- Policy 25 District Character and the Natural Environment
- Policy 31 Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
- Policy 35 Climate Change

Cowfold Neighbourhood Plan 2019 – 2031

2.2. Within the Cowfold Neighbourhood Plan 2019 – 2031 (CNP) (Referendum version, September 2025), the following policies are considered relevant:

- Policy 2 Green Infrastructure
- Policy 9 Residential Development Principles

3.0. Review of the proposal/submitted information

Landscape Appraisal

3.1. A Landscape Appraisal / Study has been submitted and includes a desktop study, an evaluation of the landscape and visual baseline, an assessment of receptors, and a final summary and conclusion. It is noted that the report is not intended to be interpreted as a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment or Landscape and Visual Appraisal and does not follow GLVIA3 guidance. We have used professional judgement to review this as such. A field survey was carried out in January 2026 when vegetation was limited which will have provided worst case scenario in terms of visual effects.

Landscape Character

- 3.2. The submitted Landscape Appraisal correctly identifies the site as lying within National Character Area 121: Low Weald; character area LW10 - Eastern Low Weald of the West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment; and character area J3: Cowfold & Shermanbury Farmlands of the Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment. We welcome the inclusion of adjacent character area M1: Crabtree & Nuthurst Ridge & Ghyll Farmlands.
- 3.3. Given the proximity of the site to the Grade II listed Little Patches and the site's farmstead character and layout associated with it, we consider that the current layout and character of

the site makes a valuable contribution to the immediate and local landscape's characteristics and features. As stated within paragraph 5.1.12 of the appraisal the layout is typical of traditional farmsteads.

- 3.4. The boundaries comprise mature trees and dense shrubs as noted in paragraph 5.1.13; however, no provision of tree removals or protection measures have been provided. Notwithstanding this, we note Section 6.0 of the appraisal states that the proposals intend to retain and protect all boundary trees. Arboricultural report(s) should be submitted to demonstrate this.
- 3.5. Both the existing vegetation and the farmstead character are considered valued features which contribute toward rurality of the site and increases the susceptibility of the site to residential development. Outside the presence of the two residential dwellings and the equestrian centre to the east at Stonehouse Farm, there is little surrounding built development, we therefore do not consider the site semi-rural as stated within the appraisal.
- 3.6. While the proposals are of small scale, a comprehensive Landscape and Visual Appraisal would have provided a greater understanding of the granular contribution of the site toward the rural agricultural landscape as described in Landscape Character Area (LCA) J3 and M1 of the Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment.
- 3.7. Notwithstanding this, we consider the existing stable block (B1) as indicated on the Proposed Block Plans (Dwg. BP-01) to be the most valuable building in terms of character and the retention of this is welcomed. The removal of existing blocks B3, B7 and B8 provide an opportunity to improve the character of PRoW COW-1823 such as providing high-quality farmstead character buildings set back from the footpath.
- 3.8. The appraisal concludes that existing and proposed planting would limit perceptibility of the proposal. This should be supported by the submission of a Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment, which would provide information on the condition of the existing vegetation and help inform the proposed planting design.
- 3.9. We anticipate the level of effect arising from the proposed change in land use would be limited given the retention of the existing farmstead layout and the existing level of intervisibility with surrounding residential properties.

Visual Amenity

- 3.10. The viewpoint photography is provided in Appendix B; we are generally satisfied with the quality of the photography to represent the viewpoints of visual receptors. Our preference would be to have the images annotated to provide a clearer understanding of the relationship of the site within the visual context.

- 3.11. While the viewpoint locations provide representations of visual receptors in the immediate area, we request additional representation from the higher ground along bridleway COW-1758, footpath COW-1760 to the southeast. This will assist in understanding if the proposed mitigation is sufficient in terms of planting and materiality of the proposed buildings.
- 3.12. While we agree in principle with the appraisal's conclusion that there is potential to limit perceptual change to visual amenity, a full survey of the existing vegetation and an additional viewpoint photography from higher ground along bridleway COW-1758, and footpath COW-1760 to the southeast are required to support and verify this conclusion.

Landscaping

- 3.13. The Proposed Site Plan (Dwg. SP-01) identifies rear gardens associated with the residential units 1-4. We note that unit 5 does not appear to have any amenity space provided. Strategic Policy 17 Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity of the Emerging Regulation 19 Horsham Local Plan requires *"All new dwellings and commercial premises should seek to provide some form of outdoor 'green' amenity space."* While we accept the spatial constraints, we recommend consultation with LPA Urban Design Officers to seek advice on this matter.
- 3.14. The Landscape Layout Plan (Dwg. RCo605/01 Rev 02) identifies mixed native hedgerows to form the rear garden boundaries. We recommend providing a simple form of fixed boundary such as post and rail until establishment of these hedgerows.
- 3.15. The Impermeable Areas & Overland Flow Route Plan (Dwg. C3948-P-401-Rev 2) identifies a missed opportunity to provide Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) across the site, including permeable surfacing, swales and rain gardens. The use of SuDS is supported by Policy F8 of the new NPPF (August 2026) and they should be designed in accordance with National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems.
- 3.16. While we welcome the removal of existing concrete surfaces to provide new planting areas and gardens, we request details of soil preparation and improvement measures are provided to ensure that soils are of suitable quality to support the proposed planting and avoid plant failure.
- 3.17. Hard landscape surface materials can provide clear distinction between residential and commercial uses; we consider this particularly important on this site as there is one single access road for both users. Further details should be provided to demonstrate how this will be achieved.

4.0. Summary

- 4.1. Generally, from a landscape perspective, while we have no major concerns on the principle of development on the site. However, we request that arboricultural information, including a tree survey and tree protection details, are provided. Additionally, further understanding of visual impact from PRow users to the southeast on higher ground to understand sensitivities of the site and how these can be mitigated. Tree protection details should be approved by the LPA Arboricultural Officer.
- 4.2. Following the submission of the above details for further review, we consider outstanding design concerns can be address via conditions as suggested below.

5.0. Recommended Conditions

- 5.1. If minded for approval, we would recommend the following conditions for your consideration:

ACTION REQUIRED PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT: HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING SCHEME.

No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatment for the site, which shall include any proposed changes in ground levels and also accurately identify spread, girth and species of all existing trees, shrubs and hedgerows on the site and indicate any to be retained, together with measures for their protection which shall comply with the recommendations set out in the British Standards Institute publication BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction.

The soft landscaping plan should include plant species, number, density, location and sizes of the proposed planting. The planting specification should provide details of tree planting pits, green roofs, planting preparation and establishment operations. We would recommend an alternative to plastic guards, such as the use of perimeter protective fencing where appropriate, or guards manufactured from 100% biodegradable materials.

The hard landscaping plan should include details of specific materials, colours and finishes of paved or otherwise hard surfaces, built features and street furniture. The plans should clearly show the position of any new fencing and hard surfaces in relation to existing and proposed planting.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area. This condition is required to be agreed prior to the commencement of any development to ensure matters of tree and hedgerow protection are secured early to ensure avoidance of damage or lost due to the development and/or its construction. If agreement was sought at any later stage, there is an unacceptable risk of lost and damage to important trees and hedgerow that would result in harm to amenity.

ACTION REQUIRED PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT: LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN (LMP)

No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority a landscape management plan for a minimum of 5 years. This should include:

- a) Drawing/s showing the extent of the LMP i.e. only showing the areas to which the LMP applies, areas of private ownership should be excluded.
- b) Written Specification detailing:
 - i. All operation and procedures for soft landscape areas; inspection, watering, pruning, cutting, mowing, clearance and removal of arisings and litter, removal of temporary items (fencing, guards and stakes) and replacement of failed planting.
 - ii. All operations and procedures for hard landscape areas; inspection, sweeping, clearing of accumulated vegetative material and litter, maintaining edges, and painted or finished surfaces.
 - iii. Furniture (Bins, Benches and Signage) and Play Equipment.
 - iv. All operations and procedures for soft landscaping to SuDS features; inspection of linear drains, basins and swales, removal of unwanted vegetative material and litter, including inlets and outlets.
- c) Maintenance task table which explains the maintenance duties across the site in both chronological and systematic order.
- d) Mechanism for monitoring and review of the management plan and operations.

Reason: To support plant establishment and ensure appropriate management is carried out and to maintain functionality and visual aesthetic.

Please contact us if you have any queries in relation to this advice.

Place Services – Landscape Team

Email: landscape@essex.gov.uk



This advice has been provided by Place Services 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.

Place Services have a policy relating to the use of AI. Unless otherwise stipulated, any AI use will be limited to basic proof-reading, grammar, and spelling correction. This response has been reviewed by the author(s). If you have any queries, please [contact us](#) for information about our AI guidance.