From: Linsey.King
Sent: 18 November 2026 12:09
To: Sam.Whitehouse
Cc: Andrew.Bush
Subject: DC/25/2087 Thakeham Tiles Ltd Rock Rd Storrington - Woodland Assessment 17/11/26

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Hi Sam,

Please see below my comments on the classification of priority habitat woodland on-site –

As per your request, the HDC Arboricultural Officer and I undertook a site visit to assess the woodland classification. Our visit was limited to the northern most parcels, as we agree that these parcels are subject to most disturbance/impact from the proposed development.

Background
As listed under the JNCC lowland mixed deciduous woodland priority habitat profile, the woodland parcels are indeed within well-defined boundaries and are considered small (>20ha) in size. There is evidence of past coppicing and general management, and there is great variety in the species composition of the canopy layer and shrub layer (see below for more detail) for the western woodland parcel. Due to the time of year (winter), the ground flora layer was difficult to assess, given the lack of vascular plants visible through the leaf litter.

Where trees have previously fallen from the storm of 1987, the woodland edge trees are more mature in nature, and the centre comprises young pioneer species, with areas to the north of the woodland denser than that to the south, which have many open pockets that receive high levels of sunlight. There is also abundant deadwood and multiple fungal and bryophyte species present (which could not be identified). The woodland is relatively wet with sandy soil, with pools of standing water with sedges, reeds and ferns throughout the woodland (more noticeably to the south of the pocket) and a ditch with running water running around the periphery. It should be noted that previous day's weather comprised heavy rain.

Species Composition
In terms of species present, the north-western parcels (which is proposed to be partially removed) canopy layer comprises sweet chestnut coppice which is the dominant tree species, abundant hazel and silver birch, frequent oak (with mature stands on the edges), occasional ash (usually in the form of saplings), and rare stands of willow species, yew, Scots pine, and Douglas fir.
The shrub layer largely comprised bramble, which was dominant, abundant hazel coppice and locally abundant currant in the southern part, frequent holly, occasional hawthorn and dogwood, rare spindle, rose sp, honeysuckle, rowan and tustan.

Additional species include cherry laurel and bamboo, which were limited to the periphery of the woodland as local introductions from nearby residential dwellings. Cotoneaster sp. and rhododendron sp. were also present in rare stands.

From the limited assessment of the ground flora, we identified hart's-tongue fern, hemp agrimony, greater willowherb, lesser trefoil, cleaver, wild strawberry, ground avens, herb Robert, self-heal, hedge bindweed, ivy sp., cyclamen, and violet sp. We anticipate there are many more, particularly in the areas with higher levels of sunlight.

Conclusion

We believe that the north-western woodland parcel likely falls under NVC classification W10 (sub community cannot be confidently ascertained without a spring visit), which is listed under the JNCC profile for lowland mixed deciduous woodland priority habitat. However, it should be noted that assessment during the winter is a limitation which must be considered.
We also believe that the level of cherry laurel and bamboo encroachment is not yet at a level to downgrade the priority status of this woodland. We therefore **disagree** with the latest rebuttals justification stating that the woodland is dominated by non-native species, and there was a lack of varying tree structure and species diversity within the woodland parcel.

Conversely, the northeastern woodland parcel has been taken over by cherry laurel with a very limited species composition, mostly comprising mature oak stands and rare stands of holly and ash. The ground flora is extremely sparse. Bracken is abundant in the southern section of the woodland where there are significant gaps in the tree canopy. As such, **we believe that the north-eastern woodland parcel does not meet the priority habitat status**. However, it should be noted that this woodland is subject to a TPO.

I hope this helps.

Best,
Linsey

Linsey King
Ecology Officer
Specialists Team - Strategic Planning
[redacted]

Horsham District Council

Horsham District Council, Albery House, Springfield Road, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 2GB
Telephone: 01403 215100 (calls may be recorded) www.horsham.gov.uk Chief Executive: Jane Eaton