HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Pennthorpe School Church Street Rudgwick West Sussex
DESCRIPTION:	Retention of earth bank adjacent to all-weather sports pitch (Retrospective)
REFERENCE:	DC/24/0232
RECOMMENDATION:	Advice / More Information

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION:

No concerns are raised with the principle of planting woodland as a means for earth bank retention, however given the 32° slope gradient in certain areas, a natural, biodegradable stabilisation blanket that allows planting to establish may be necessary.

It is noted however that due to the retrospective nature of the proposal, some planting has already been carried out. Therefore the success of plant establishment should be monitored as priority and a stabilisation blanket applied in case of failure.

MAIN COMMENTS:

Under permitted application DC/19/2573 for *Removal of 2no. existing tennis courts and creation of an all-weather sports (AWS) pitch*, Condition 6 states that, '*no trees or hedges on the site shall be wilfully damaged or uprooted, felled/removed, topped or lopped without the previous written consent of the Local Planning Authority until 5 years after completion of the development. Any proposed planting, which within a period of 5 years, dies, is removed, or becomes seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation*'.

We note that an area of dense woodland was regrettably lost during construction. No tree survey was previously submitted, therefore it is difficult to establish the scale of the loss through historic imagery alone.

With this in mind, it is considered that the whips planted/proposed alone are not considered an acceptable replacement for the loss of the dense woodland. Therefore, in addition to the proposed whips, we recommend planting 5 native, select standard trees (with a minimum girth size of 10-12cm) as appropriate replacement.

While the planting schedule is welcomed, we have concerns regarding establishment. Without maintenance plans in place involving watering and weeding, it may not be possible to achieve the proposed woodland.

In addition, for future planting we advise against incorporating fertiliser into backfill as it limits root growth and establishment, leading to increased maintenance efforts and less effective soil retention.

We request the following information to be provided prior to approval:

1. An updated planting schedule.
2. A Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan (LMMP) or combined Woodland Management Plan detailing management responsibilities, specification and maintenance schedules, including watering regime. This should additionally include:
    a. Information regarding tree guards and when they are to be removed
    b. Specification that chemical fertilisers, herbicides and pesticides are not to be applied at any time due to the slope runoff and water course below.
3. Regarding conditions 6 under DC/19/2573, details of any external lighting if proposed.
4. Tree pit detail for select standard specimens.

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS: N/A

NAME:	Elly Hazael Trainee Landscape Architect (Planning)
DEPARTMENT:	Specialists Team - Strategic Planning
DATE:	26/03/2024
SIGNED OFF BY:	Inês Watson CMLI Specialists Team Leader (Landscape Architect)
DATE:	16/04/2024