HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Land at Marches Road Warnham West Sussex
DESCRIPTION:	Change of use of land for the siting of 2 static caravans, 2 touring caravans for human habitation to be occupied Gypsy's and Travellers, with associated parking, relocation of existing access, erection of day room (Retrospective)
REFERENCE:	DC/25/0982
RECOMMENDATION:	Holding Objection / More Information / Modification

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION:

The submitted information does not address landscape concerns raised under refused DC/24/1551. In addition, further urbanising form is proposed, including an additional Dayroom structure and play area. Given the similarity of proposals under DC/24/1551, our previous comments continue to apply to this application and are repeated below for ease. Comments in green highlight key differences across the proposals:

In the absence of a landscape and visual appraisal (LVA), it is our judgement that the urbanising form and further loss of existing boundary vegetation has an adverse effect on visual amenity of the nearby public right of way (PRoW) and receptors on Marches Road, as well as an eroding effect on the rural landscape character of the area, contrary to policy 25 of the HDPF.

The increase in overall level of activity in the countryside location, and additional light and noise pollution incurred as a result of the development, is contrary to policy 26 of the HDPF and would detract from the tranquillity and sense of place of the rural countryside setting. The proposal in its current form equally does not conserve or enhance the key features and characteristics of its landscape character area, contrary to policies 26 and 23.

It is recommended that mitigation planting is proposed to soften the appearance of the development and retain the wooded and verdant character of the area. In addition, we strongly advise against the formation of the new access, which ~~will result~~ has resulted *in the loss of further well-established boundary vegetation.*

MAIN COMMENTS:

Site description & context

The proposed site benefits from the fallback position of B8 Storage and Distribution use for 1no. storage container, however we note two enforcement notices are in place in regard to access creation, laying of hardstanding and material change of use of land.

The site is situated outside of any Built Up Area Boundary (BUAB), in a countryside location. It is irregularly shaped, bounded by newly erected closeboard fence, with the exception of stock proof fence on the southeastern boundary. It currently comprises newly laid hardstanding, 2no. storage containers, 2no. static caravans and accompanying vehicles.

Agricultural land surrounds the site on all sides, comprising a strong and well-defined field pattern by hedgerow and hedgerow trees interspersed by shaws and sporadic dwellings and farmsteads; all key characteristics of the landscape character that can be found in the area. The wider context is predominately remote and undeveloped with few residential and urbanising detractors. The closest settlement is the hamlet of Winterfold, further east on Marches Road, however there are no larger settlements in proximity. In addition there is a small cluster of development on Northlands Road, however these dwellings are sensitively located within a limited visual envelope, therefore are not considered as major detractors to the countryside setting.

Access to the site is from Marches Road, a verdant road running in a west-east direction on the northwestern site boundary. Marches Road is generally bounded by vegetation, hedgerows and trees with the exception of Winterfold. Between Winterfold and the A29 junction, there are expansive, open views of the pastoral countryside to the north, reinforcing the rural qualities of the area.

A number of public rights of way can be found in the area. In close proximity, and connecting to the wider network, PRoW 1419 runs west-east, finishing adjacent to the northern corner of the site. The openness and undeveloped nature of the surrounds is enjoyed by receptors on PRoW 1419, and to an extent on Marches Road, and views onto site should positively contribute to the rural character and landscape setting.

While it is challenging to accurately ascertain the site baseline, satellite imagery indicates that prior to recent works, the site was well treed and benefitted from dense hedgerow and vegetation abutting Marches Road, thereby screening views on to site. The pre-existing surfacing is disputed, but nonetheless was of a green appearance, complimenting and blending in with the countryside surrounds. While glimpse views of 1no. storage container may have been an urbanising detractor, it was seen in the context of agricultural surrounds and did not result in a domestic or residential appearance.

<u>*Landscape character*</u>

At a local level, the proposed site falls within I2 Warnham & Rusper Wooded Ridge Landscape Character Area (LCA) as defined by the Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment (2003). Key relevant characteristics of D2 experienced within the site and contextual landscape include secretive wooded ghylls, a strong pattern of shaws and hedgerows, an intricate patchwork of small pasture fields and mostly rural character. *Key issues affecting this LCA include* localised intrusion from suburban features and poor woodland and hedgerow/shaw management. *Planning and land management guidelines considered relevant to this development state to* conserve the rural wooded character of the area.

<u>*Proposal*</u>

It is considered that the proposal would result in a sense of domestic sprawl to the detriment of the undeveloped character and quality of the local landscape. Due to extensive tree and vegetation removal, the site is now visually open to the wider countryside, therefore it is particularly sensitive to views from the north. The proposal and retrospective works will be at odds with the undeveloped nature of the surrounding area and observed by users of the PRoWs associated with the countryside.

In the absence of an LVA we have made the professional judgement that the proposal will have an adverse impact on visual amenity and an eroding effect on the landscape character, and has not been sympathetically designed with the landscape context in mind. If the conclusions reached are not agreed with, we would recommend that an LVA is provided. This is required to assess the likely effects of the proposal and proposed mitigation measures that demonstrate how the proposal will protect, conserve or enhance the key features and characteristics of its landscape character area. This must be carried out in accordance with the principles set out within the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', Third Edition ('GLVIA3') (2013) prepared by the Landscape Institute (LI) and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA).

Notwithstanding, if the principle of development is found acceptable, more information is needed in order to secure a more considered scheme that includes mitigation measures to reduce the identified adverse effects, noting that design considerations must be sensitive to the rural surrounds and aim to minimise urbanising detractors. Please provide the following:

1. *Tree survey, including trees RPAs to identify vegetation to be removed and retained, as well as to understand the impact of the proposals on existing trees and hedgerows.*
2. *Soft landscape details to include planting plans, planting schedule and tree pit details*
    a. *We require tree and native hedgerow planting to be reinstated on all boundaries, with mature and semi-mature specimens abutting Marches Road in order to soften views.* We note indication of native planting, however this is not sufficient information. As above, tree and hedgerow planting should be proposed and should run the full length of the boundary abutting Marches Road, save for access. Species in Latin names and sizes must also be clearly detailed, as well as planting plans and tree pit details.
    b. *Plants must be sourced from seed or stock from the Region of Provenance 40 in order to ensure resilience and therefore successful establishment.*
3. *Details of all hard surfacing materials and finishes, including layout, colour, size, texture, coursing and levels*
4. *Details of all boundary treatments to include location, type, heights and materials*
5. *Hard and soft landscape specification*
6. ~~*Details of minor artefacts and structures such as bin and cycle stores to include location, size, colour and specification*~~
7. *Proposed and existing services above and below ground such as drainage, power, communications cables and pipelines. Please include drainage ditch levels and location relative to existing trees.*
8. *Details of all external lighting.*
    a. *Ghylls and woodland, which are key characteristics of the local landscape, can be deteriorated due to increasing levels of light pollution, therefore light spill must be considered sensitively so as not to cause potential adverse effects.*
    b. *Given the intrinsically rural setting, outside lighting should be restricted or absent in order to avoid light intrusion. If outside lighting cannot be reasonably avoided, based on guidance from SDNP Dark Skies Technical Advice Note Version 2 and The Bat Conservation Trust guidance note 08/23, we recommend the following to mitigate adverse landscape effects in regard to external lighting in a countryside location:*
        i. *3000Kelvin or lower*
        ii. *500 Lumens or below*
        iii. *Where appropriate, use of motion/proximity sensors and set to as short a possible a timer as a risk assessment will allow. For most purposes, a 1 or 2 minute timer is appropriate.*
        iv. *Horizontally mounted luminaires with no light output above 90° and/or no upward tilt.*

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS: N/A

NAME:	Elly Hazael Trainee Landscape Architect (Planning)
DEPARTMENT:	Specialists Team - Strategic Planning
DATE:	22/08/2025
SIGNED OFF BY:	Inês Watson CMLI Specialists Team Leader (Landscape Architect)
DATE:	26/08/2025