



HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Chase Farm Shaws Lane Southwater West Sussex
DESCRIPTION:	Change of use of part of a field and farm yard for four camping pods and one spa treatment pod (Retrospective)
REFERENCE:	DC/25/0568
RECOMMENDATION:	Advice / More Information
SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION: Given the fallback position established under DC/20/1256, the principle for the change of use and the sitting of five pods within Chase Farm is already accepted. However, due to the proposed relocation of the pods, further away from the existing farm cluster, further information is required to assess the likely effects on existing landscape features, including the tree line. This will also help identify appropriate mitigation measures to ensure the rural character of the site and the area is retained.	
MAIN COMMENTS: <u>Site description & context</u> 1. The proposed development is located outside of the defined Built-Up Area Boundary (BUAB) of Southwater, in a countryside location. It comprises five individual locations for the sitting of pods, adjacent to agricultural field boundaries defined by treelines and hedgerow, sitting within the wider farm site. 2. The site and its immediate context holds predominately rural and agricultural qualities on account of the surrounding, undeveloped fields and agricultural features, including the presence of farm buildings found to the north-east and south, which are reflective of the local agricultural vernacular. A few dwellings can be found to the east of the proposed sites which are characteristic of country houses set within large grounds. The area is notably quiet and tranquil, positively contributing to its rural qualities. 3. The wider landscape context is mixed in character. There is a predominance of undeveloped, agricultural fields defined by hedgerow and shaws, as well areas of Ancient Woodland (AW) found to the south, east and west. However, there are urbanising influences due to the proximity of Southwater further east. 4. The presence of future development to the east is also noted, as it is anticipated to change the landscape character baseline conditions with the introduction of built form and urbanising features within the countryside setting, detracting from the current rural character.	

5. Multiple public rights of way (PRoW) are located in the surrounding area, providing access and enjoyment of the countryside to sensitive receptors. These include the following:
 - a) PRoW 1890 to the south, running in a northwest direction
 - b) PRoW 2929/Shaw's Lane to the east, running south
 - c) PRoW 1652 to the north, running in a southeast direction
6. Views of the proposals from the footpath network are limited due to intervening vegetation. However, partial views are possible from PRoW 2929/Shaw's Lane, which are experienced by receptors within the countryside, read in line with the wooded and rural context of the surrounding area. The site's undeveloped nature positively contributes to the recreational enjoyment of the users of this footpath.
7. Access to Chase Farm is via PRoW 2929/Shaw's Lane; a narrow, verdant lane characterised by dense vegetation, which also contributes to the rural character. However, suburban features, such as laurel, are experienced as an urbanising detractor.

Landscape character

8. The proposed site falls within G4 - Southwater & Shipley Wooded Farmlands (LCA) as defined in the Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment (2003).
9. The site and the surrounding contextual landscape are deemed representative of the local landscape character area, exhibiting some of the key characteristics identified, including: *gently undulating, strongly wooded landscape; and small hamlets and isolated farms.*
10. The overall character is, '*surprisingly remote*' with relevant key issues including, '*potential pressure for urban development around Southwater*'. The overall landscape condition is good.
11. The overall sensitivity to change is high, reflecting the area's many intrinsic landscape qualities, with key sensitivities to, '*small scale incremental changes*'.
12. Relevant Planning and Land Management Guidelines state to:
 - a) *Conserve the rural mostly undeveloped character of the area.*
 - b) *Restore hedgerows where they have been lost.*

Assessment

13. While we note that the site benefits from a fallback position, the proposed development is considerably different from the original DC/20/1256 application, not only in its scale and facilities, but also distribution across the farm. Critically, the proposed pods have been repositioned away from the farm building cluster and further into the undeveloped countryside.
14. The proposed site reflects some of the characteristic features of the LCA, and due regard must therefore be given to the protection of the landscape features that are intrinsic to this area. In our professional judgement, the relocation of the pods further into the open countryside alongside the overall nature of a glamping/holiday accommodation development, is likely to result in adverse effects on the character of the area, given the existing rural character and increased magnitude of change.
15. That said we recognise the proposal contributes to recreation based rural diversification and the wider rural economy and therefore the principle of the increased size of pods is generally supported. Further, the proposed style and profile of the pods, of predominantly timber clad and slate metro tile roofing, is welcomed and is considered to contribute in some way to mitigate the visual adverse effects on users of PRoW 2929/Shaw's Lane.
16. Nevertheless, the submitted information is limited in demonstrating the relationship of the proposed pods and associated access with the existing treeline, and therefore concern is raised with the long-term retention of the existing trees that positively contribute to the character of the area. Structures and hardstanding within the trees root protection areas (RPAs) places them at considerable risk of decline and deterioration, as well as future pressure for lopping or felling. The loss of these trees and hedgerow would significantly erode the site's landscape character and amenity value.

17. The submitted site plan provides only a basic indication of the location of the 5 glamping pods and the access route. However, it lacks detail regarding key elements such as car parking, cycle parking, the full extent of outdoor seating areas, utility services and any other built in features typically associated with this type of development. This level of detail is necessary to fully understand the likely landscape and visual effects, and to assess the overall impact and integration of the scheme within its rural setting.
18. As a result, we cannot be confident that the proposals meet Policies 25, 31 and 33 (6) of the HDPF, given the uncertainty surrounding their ability to protect, conserve or enhance landscape character and possibly weaken the green infrastructure network.
19. We continue to recommend that the proposed glamping pods are located closer to Chase Farm, in line with the fallback position, to minimise the adverse effects on the landscape character. However, should further information be submitted that demonstrates that the proposals will not result in harm to the existing landscape features and rural qualities currently experienced within the local landscape, this may help address our concerns.

Considerations

20. In order to mitigate adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity, and to comply with HDPF Policies 25, 31 and 33 (6), existing vegetation must be protected, conserved and enhanced. In order to safeguard the existing mature trees, proposals must avoid development within RPAs and demonstrate compliance with BS 5837:2012 5.3.1.
21. As such, a tree survey and tree impact assessment (AIA) is required to accurately assess the likely effects of proposals.
22. In addition, we request a plan detailing existing and proposed services above and below ground, such as drainage, power, communications cables and pipelines, to demonstrate the proposals do not conflict with existing and proposed landscape features.
23. Hard landscaping details must also be provided, noting that the proposed treatment should be both permeable and sympathetic to the rural surrounds.
24. Given the rural character of the location, existing landscape features and proximity to AW, all of which can be lost or deteriorated due to increasing levels of light pollution, light spill must be considered sensitively so as not to cause potential adverse effects on the landscape character.

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:

- a) 3000Kelvin or warmer
 - b) 500 Lumens or below
 - c) 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.
 - d) Horizontally mounted luminaires with no light output above 90° and/or no upward tilt.
25. Information regarding boundary treatments is requested. We recommend the use of post and wire fencing to ensure dogs are not able to roam freely.
 26. As per point 12b, we recommend that gaps along field boundaries are restored via the planting of native hedgerow, which will also help to soften the appearance of urbanising features as a result of the proposals from the wider footpath network.

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.

NAME:

Elly Hazael

	Trainee Landscape Architect (Planning)
DEPARTMENT:	Specialists Team - Strategic Planning
DATE:	18/08/2025
SIGNED OFF BY:	Inês Watson CMLI Specialists Team Leader (Landscape Architect)
DATE:	26/08/2025