



Horsham District Council
Parkside
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

Our ref: 22053
Date: 9 September 2026

For the attention of: Tamara Dale

Application ref: DC/26/1003
Location: Swains Farm, Brighton Road, Henfield, West Sussex
BN5 9RP
Proposal/Description: Demolition of existing and erection with 4no. dwellinghouses
and associated landscaping 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, and with previous knowledge of the site. Our Landscape comments are as follows:

1.0. Site Context

- 1.1. The application site is located to the southeast of Henfield. The southern boundary is defined by vegetation. The remaining boundaries are open to the wider agricultural landscape. Topographically, the site is located on a plateaued farmyard elevating sharply to the north and west.
- 1.2. There are a number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) surrounding the site. Notably, footpath HEN 2531_1, which follows the route of the access track that serves the farmyard including the listed building. The application site is on the western side of the PRoW while the listed building is located to the east. Footpath HEN 2547 located to the northwest, extends north and west and connects to the wider PRoW network including HEN 2552 and



HEN 3205, which circulate the western landscape and returns back to the southern boundary of the site.

- 1.3. The site currently comprises a farmyard and barn associated with Grade II Listed Building, 'Swains Farmhouse' (1027120). Henfield conservation area is located approx. 400m to the west. The South Downs National Park is located approximately 1.6km south. The High Weald National Landscape is approximately 8km north of the site.

2.0. Planning Policy Context

- 2.1. The application site has been subject to previous planning applications which have been refused, Ref. DC/24/1164 and DC/25/0781.

Horsham District Planning Framework

- 2.2. The Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) (HDPF) Proposals Maps identifies the site as being located outside the Defined Built-up Area Boundary and therefore designated as countryside.
- 2.3. Policy 25: 'The Natural Environment and Landscape Character' sets out that development proposals will be required to protect, conserve, and enhance the landscape character, taking into account areas identified as being of landscape importance, the individual settlement characteristics, and maintains settlement separation.
- 2.4. Policy 26: Countryside Protection sets out a presumption against development unless for agriculture, forestry minerals, quiet informal recreation or ensures the sustainable development of rural areas. The Policy also states that development permitted must be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character location and must not lead, either individually or cumulatively, to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside and/or conserves, and / or enhances, the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located.
- 2.5. Policy 31: 'Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity' requires development to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity and should also be compliant with Policy 33: Development Principles, which states that proposals should be distinctive in character, respect the character of the surrounding area (including its overall setting, views and green corridors) and, where available and applicable, take account of the recommendations/policies of the relevant Design Statements and Character Assessments.

Henfield Neighbourhood Plan (2017-2031)

- 2.6. The Henfield Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) was adopted in May 2021 and set out policy to protect the rural nature of the village including its fields, hedges, woods and the views to the South Downs from Parish footpaths and bridleways.
- 2.7. A strength of the village is noted as:

“The surrounding countryside which includes part of the South Downs National Park, provides a good environment for residents to enjoy and enhance social pursuits with a number of open commons and an extensive network of public footpaths.”

2.8. Policy 10: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity states that:

“P10.3 Development proposals will be supported, provided their layout and landscape schemes comply with the following principles as appropriate:

- a. the amenity value of the existing landscape including hedgerows, scrub, trees and ponds is maintained; and the proposals result in positive visual and landscape impact*
- b. the amenity value of trees is maintained including those trees without Tree Preservation Orders and trees outside the Henfield Conservation Area*
- c. landscape schemes enhance the site and its surroundings, and positively contribute to the landscape character of the area, including providing for their ongoing maintenance and utilise native plants especially in public areas and on boundaries*
- d. the views identified in paragraph 5.81 of this Plan into and out of the area of the Parish, with particular regard to Henfield and Small Dole villages in particular, are preserved.”*

3.0. Review of the proposal/submitted information

3.1. Following the refusal of previous applications, a new application has been submitted with a revised proposed layout which seeks to address the Reason for Refusal 2 of application DC/25/0781 which reads:

“The proposal would entail a scale, design and form of development which fails to reflect the rural character of the site and surrounding area, appearing unduly suburban and representing an incongruous form of development which would fail to preserve the character and appearance of this relatively open rural location. The proposal therefore represents an inappropriate form of development that would be contrary to policies 25, 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and Policy 12 of the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan (2021).”

3.2. The submitted Planning Statement states that *“the revised scheme now adopts a form, scale and architectural approach that is near identical to the approved development under DC/25/1661.”* However, it is noted that application DC/25/1661 does not appear to have received planning permission. Clarification should therefore be provided regarding this comparison.

3.3. In landscape character terms, the revised proposal better reflects the existing character of the site, with the existing building proposed to be replaced with a building of broadly similar

scale, massing and appearance. The proposed material palette is considered to be an improvement over to the existing modern barn.

- 3.4. However, further detailed information should be provided regarding the height of the proposed building in comparison with the existing barn. This is particularly important in relation to views of the site and the existing barn from Public Footpath HEN-2547, as well as closer range views from Public Footpath HEN – 2531-1. Comparative elevations clearly showing the relationship between the proposed building and the existing barn should be provided.
- 3.5. Whilst the proposed building is described as being comparable to the existing barn, insufficient information has been provided to verify this claim and to assess whether the development would result in increased visual prominence within the wider landscape, particularly in views from Public Footpaths HEN-2547 and HEN-2531-1.
- 3.6. We note that the proposed building has been repositioned slightly further north within the site. This change will help to increase separation between the proposed amenity spaces and existing vegetation, reducing the potential for future pressure to undertake canopy reductions that could adversely affect the longevity, visual appearance and contribution to the wooded landscape character.
- 3.7. The submitted Block Plan 2603SW_001 identifies broad areas of landscaping, labelled as native hedge, and areas of parking labelled as permeable hardstanding. However, the submitted information does not provide sufficient detail regarding the proposed hard and soft landscaping to enable a full assessment of how the development would integrate within its rural setting.
- 3.8. The Tree Constraints Plan could not be found within the submitted documents to demonstrate how the existing vegetation will be protected during demolition and construction phases. Existing vegetation is present along parts of the eastern boundary of the site; however, this is not shown on the Block Plan 2603SW_001. Further arboricultural information and supporting documentation should be submitted for review.
- 3.9. It is proposed that a 1.2m high post and rail fence will define areas around the proposed buildings. Given the rural character and setting of the site, the proposed fencing is considered unnecessary and out of keeping with the existing boundary treatments to the east of the site. We recommend that boundaries are defined through native hedgerow planting only. An exception may be considered along the southern edge of the development where a 1.2m high post and rail fence could assist in discouraging access into the proposed Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) area and adjacent woodland.
- 3.10. Further consideration should be given to the treatment of the eastern boundary, including the retention of existing vegetation and the continuation of vegetative cover along this boundary to help integrate and soften the appearance of the development.

- 3.11. The extent of hardstanding and concentration of parked vehicles along the northern boundary introduces a suburbanising influence and would appear visually intrusive within this rural setting. Alternative parking arrangements should be explored to reduce the visual prominence and improve integration with the surrounding landscape and setting.
- 3.12. As submitted, insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate compliance with Policy 10 of the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan, and Policy 25 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework.

4.0. Summary

- 4.1. Whilst the revised proposal represents an improvement in landscape terms over the previously refused schemes and more closely reflects the character, scale and appearance of the existing barn, there remains insufficient information to demonstrate that landscape considerations have fully informed the design process or that the development would conserve and enhance the rural character of the site and its setting, in accordance with Policies 25, 26, 31 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and Policy 10 of the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.2. In particular, further information is required regarding the height of the proposed building in relation to the existing barn, including comparative elevations and supporting visual information to enable a proportionate assessment of its potential landscape and visual effects, particularly from Public Footpaths HEN-2547 and HEN-2531-1.
- 4.3. In addition, the submitted landscape proposals lack sufficient detail regarding hard and soft landscaping, tree protection measures and the retention of existing vegetation. Further consideration should also be given to the proposed boundary treatments, reinforcement of vegetation along the eastern boundary, and the layout of parking provision to reduce its visual prominence and better integrate the development within its rural setting.
- 4.4. Accordingly, further information and amendments are required for review prior to the determination of the application.

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.

AI may have been used in the preparation of this response, but its 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.