



Horsham District Council
Parkside
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

Our ref: 22614
Date: 25 September 2026

For the attention of: Nicola Pettifer

Application ref: DC/26/1095
Location: Mannings Heath Golf Club, Hammerpond Road, Mannings Heath, West Sussex
Proposal/Description: Erection of a Golfpod Practice Facility with associated hard and soft landscaping.

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. Our Landscape comments are as follows:

1.0. Site Context

- 1.1. The site is located just to the northeast of Mannings Heath (1km distance) off Hammerpond Road. The application site is within Mannings Heath's grounds and located centrally within the ownership curtilage.
- 1.2. The site is currently used for a tennis court and open amenity grassed area. Its location is adjacent to the existing built environment giving easy access from the car park and to the facilities provided at the clubhouse.
- 1.3. There is a Public Right of Way Footpath NUT-1697-3 approximately 300m to the west, and a Bridleway circa 400m to the north-east. The site is generally well enclosed by existing mature vegetation in the wider surrounding and trees and hedges within the immediate

application boundary. The surrounding landscape beyond the site area is characterised by large areas of Ancient Woodlands.

- 1.4. The Horsham Landscape Character Assessment identifies the site within L1: St Leonards Forest Landscape Character Area (LCA). Key characteristics for this character area include confined views, regular pasture of arable fields, large commercial conifer plantations interspersed with beech and oak-birch woodland. This LCA is generally a very densely wooded area with a sense of isolation and remoteness in much of the area despite the suburban modern development along the ridgetop roads.
- 1.5. The site is within the High Weald National Landscape.

2.0. Planning Policy Context

Horsham District Planning Framework

- Policy 25: District Character and the Natural Environment
 - Policy 26: Countryside Protection
 - Policy 30: Protected Landscapes
 - Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
- 2.1. The site sits within the High Weald National Landscape and therefore any applications should consider how the proposals could contribute to the objectives and aims of High Weald Management Plan 2024–2029.

3.0. Review of the proposal/submitted information

- 3.1. The proposals include the replacement of the existing tennis court with a GolfPod practice facility with a netted outfield area, and minor regrading of the grounds.

Landscape Appraisal

- 3.2. We accept that a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for this site is not required given the existing use of the site.
- 3.3. A Visual Impact Appraisal (June 2026) has been submitted accompanying this application. We note that the visual assessment was undertaken during spring months; it is best practice to undertake visual assessment during winter months to consider worst case scenario.
- 3.4. The proposed GolfPod development includes four columns 12m and 15m high (Lattice Stanchions) for net supports for the netted outfield. These are considerable high and will be visible from close and mid-range visual receptors. These prominent structures have the potential to impact on the High Weald National Landscape. We welcome the submitted before and after photomontages to demonstrate that the proposed stanchions will remain contained by the existing surrounding mature vegetation acting as the backdrop to the new

structures. We acknowledge that the visual effects of the proposed stanchions are reduced by the existing landscape fabric and topography of the site. Additionally, these structures are proposed in colour black which is considered acceptable in landscape terms. Therefore, we judge that the remaining residual effects are to acceptable levels. Nevertheless, the proposals are introducing further visual intrusive elements into an already man-made landscape.

- 3.5. The proposed tree planting to the north and south will be beneficial in terms of green infrastructure and biodiversity and would also help in reducing visual effects of the tall structures, however this only be achievable long-term.

Proposed soft landscaping

- 3.6. Some tree removal is proposed as part of the proposals; however we acknowledge the extent of proposed planting acting as mitigation planting. Level changes are also proposed but these would not affect the more significant trees adjoining the site. Vegetation to the western boundary (Group G2) is in close proximity to the proposed re-grading area. The Proposed Contractors Works Plan (0406.05) indicates that excavations are being kept outside of the RPAs of this group, which is welcomed.
- 3.7. Proposed 'Contractors Compound' is located to the south-west part of the site. The Construction Management Plan should include operations for the restoration of this area following completion of the scheme to ensure the ground is properly de-compacted and appropriately restored to fulfil the future use as an attenuation basin and provide suitable ground conditions for the growth of the proposed tree planting.
- 3.8. Overall, the proposed soft landscaping scheme is welcomed. While we acknowledge the submission of the Proposed Landscape Plan (0406.04), a soft landscape works specification is also required. This can be secured by condition.

Proposed hard surfacing

- 3.9. Clarifications are needed to confirm whether the proposed track is constructed as a permeable surface and that runoff will infiltrate through the construction, which will be our preferred approach.

Other matters

- 3.10. Lighting is also proposed as part of this application. From the photos included in the Landscape Appraisal, it appears the tennis court does not have any lighting; therefore it is considered that the level of lighting within the site would increase. The lighting proposals need to satisfy the National Landscape officer.

4.0. Summary

- 4.1. The proposed replacement of the existing tennis court with a GolfPod practice facility is broadly acceptable in landscape terms, and a full LVIA is not considered necessary given the existing recreational use of the site.
- 4.2. Whilst the proposed 12m and 15m stanchions would introduce prominent vertical structures, the submitted visual evidence demonstrates that they would remain largely contained by the mature vegetation around the site and topography, resulting in acceptable residual visual effects.
- 4.3. The proposed woodland planting and other soft landscape enhancements are welcomed and would provide benefits for green infrastructure and biodiversity, although their screening function would only be achieved in the longer term.
- 4.4. Notwithstanding the above, clarification is required regarding the proposed track construction to confirm the use of permeable surfacing. Any Construction Management Plan should secure the restoration of the temporary contractor's compound following completion of the works. In addition, the proposed lighting has the potential to increase the lighting levels on the site and will need to satisfy the requirements of the National Landscape Officer.

5.0. Recommended Conditions

- 5.1. If minded for approval, we would recommend the following conditions for your consideration:

ACTION REQUIRED PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT: HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING SCHEME.

No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatment for the site, which shall include any proposed changes in ground levels and also accurately identify spread, girth and species of all existing trees, shrubs and hedgerows on the site and indicate any to be retained, together with measures for their protection which shall comply with the recommendations set out in the British Standards Institute publication BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction.

The soft landscaping plan should include plant species, number, density, location and sizes of the proposed planting. The planting specification should provide details of tree planting pits, green roofs, planting preparation and establishment operations, including watering. We would recommend an alternative to plastic guards, such as the use of perimeter protective fencing where appropriate, or guards manufactured from 100% biodegradable materials.

The hard landscaping plan should include details of specific materials, colours and finishes of paved or otherwise hard surfaces, built features and street furniture. The plans should clearly show the position of any new fencing and hard surfaces in relation to existing and proposed planting.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area. This condition is required to be agreed prior to the commencement of any development to ensure matters of tree and hedgerow protection are secured early to ensure avoidance of damage or loss due to the development and/or its construction. If agreement was sought at any later stage, there is an unacceptable risk of loss and damage to important trees and hedgerow that would result in harm to amenity.

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.

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