



Horsham
District
Council

HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Lock House, Lock, Partridge Green
DESCRIPTION:	Erection of a holiday cottage (Full Planning)
REFERENCE:	DC-26-0924
RECOMMENDATION:	Advice / Objection / Withdrawal / Modification / Refusal
SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION:	
The existing site usage/dwelling proximity has led to a relatively recent rapid decline in adjacent Ancient Woodland (AW) condition. Increased habitable build at the site in relatively close proximity to the AW will incur a foreseeable additional future pressure to maintain the denuded woodland without understorey or replacement of felled/removed trees. If acceptable in other planning terms, I recommend that the applicant re-sites the building further away from the woodland and fully complies with the buffer requirements proposed by Natural England (NE). If the current/similar siting is to be pursued, I recommend the applicant seeks to provide a Forestry Commission approved woodland management plan for the adjacent Grants Wood AW to support their application for development. The plan should include a 25 year scheme for the replacement of trees and associated understorey at the site, to avoid deforestation and conserve the site, recognised as being an irreplaceable habitat, having being continually wooded since at least 1600AD. Otherwise, in my view the development would foreseeably lead to further/increased pressure to denude a recognised irreplaceable landscape habitat contrary to the ethos of the NPPF.	
MAIN COMMENTS:	
The submitted location plan appears to exclude the application site for the building. No blue line of land ownership has been included.	

The application form states that there are no trees on or adjacent to the site that could influence the development or might be important as part of the landscape character however the D and A statement acknowledges the presence of AW and its influence on the proposed siting of the building.

The former approval for a stable block in similar build position (Ref: DC/14/2134) did not appear to consider the impacts of the development on the designated AW.

The siting of the building is immediately North of the access drive to the main house, just after a significant bend in the drive where the PROW continues North. The drive heads West as one approaches into the site.

To the North of the drive immediately adjacent to the proposed siting of the building is Grants Copse Ancient Woodland (AW). The woodland forms the southern section of a larger AW parcel including Hookshile Wood. Together the woodland parcel is circa 7.3Ha in size.

The AW is comparatively isolated from other woodland blocks. However, due to the rural location and limited recent landscape change in the Adur valley and surrounding farmlands there remains a relatively good landscape connection of hedgerows and shaws/small copses.

Aerial images indicate that the woodland adjacent to the drive has become denuded of trees within a few preceding years. The Forestry Commission have no records of applications for felling licences or woodland grant schemes associated with the changes.

The NE mapping system catalogues the AW as broadleaf and Yew Semi-natural woodland. From my own observations, the extent of mature planted conifers remaining suggests that the woodland within the site ownership has been planted with ornamental specimens for some period of time and is probably part Plantation Ancient Woodland (PAWS).

The understorey has been stripped out and the limited extent of remaining trees following the felling of broadleaves (possibly ash that have succumbed to disease) has enabled non-woody vegetation to be cut on rotation. However, the woodland has principally remained tree'd. The current condition of an AW is not a contributory factor in assessing acceptability of development proposals. With appropriate management the woodland can be rejuvenated to provide important indigenous biodiversity.

The Eastern boundary of the AW is denoted by a very distinct ditch/stream (currently dry). The submitted block plan indicates that a buffer of 15m to the ditch is to be maintained to the proposed coach house build line in order to comply with the minimum recommendations of the NE guidance for new development in this respect.

Due to the orientation of the building and the clear intention for the Eastern flank to be the main recreational area/formal landscape garden associated with the building, it does not comply with this minimum requirement for a semi-natural vegetated buffer to the AW.

The Government guidance in respect of indirect effects of development that can cause the loss or deterioration of the irreplaceable resource and thus require consideration in the planning assessment include the following:

- breaking up or destroying working connections between woodlands, or ancient trees or veteran trees - affecting protected species, such as bats or wood-decay insects
- reducing the amount of semi-natural habitats next to ancient woodland that provide important dispersal and feeding habitat for woodland species
- reducing the resilience of the woodland or trees and making them more vulnerable to change
- increasing the amount of dust, light, water, air and soil pollution
- increasing disturbance to wildlife, such as noise from additional people and traffic
- increasing damage to habitat, for example trampling of plants and erosion of soil by people accessing the woodland or tree root protection areas
- increasing damaging activities like fly-tipping and the impact of domestic pets
- increasing the risk of damage to people and property by falling branches or trees requiring tree management that could cause habitat deterioration
- changing the landscape character of the area

In my view, it would be reasonable to require a buffer of greater distance than 15m due to the current denuded nature of the adjacent AW and the potential for more intensive maintenance and recreational access to damage its biodiversity potential further. In any event, the submission does not comply with the minimum 15m buffer requirements in terms of the intensification of access and recreational use proposed within it.

ANY RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS:

N/A

NAME:	ANDY CLOUT – ASST. ARBORICULTURAL OFFICER
DEPARTMENT:	STRATEGIC PLANNING - SPECIALISTS
DATE:	26/08/26