HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Wiltshires Farm Pickhurst Lane Pulborough West Sussex
DESCRIPTION:	Conversion and extension of buildings to form a single dwelling
REFERENCE:	DC/25/0505
RECOMMENDATION:	Advice / Modification

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION:

Should the principle of development be found acceptable in the countryside location, the proposals are not considered to give rise to unacceptable landscape character and visual adverse effects, given the retention of existing landscape features and sensitive design. While the retention of the hedgerow is clear within the updated Site Plan, it remains proposed for removal in the other submitted documents, including the AIA. Please update these plans accordingly to ensure its retention as this hedgerow is a key character feature, representative of the published landscape character area and key to the acceptability of the scheme on landscape grounds.

Please note, given the high degree of visibility and proximity to Ancient Woodland (AW), light spill must be prevented in order to retain the rural character of the local landscape. These details may be secured via condition. See details below.

MAIN COMMENTS:

Site description & context

1. The proposed site is located to the north of the hamlet of Codmore Hill, outside of the defined Built-Up Area Boundary (BUAB), in a countryside location. The site comprises two agricultural buildings, one shed, grassed field and vegetation.
2. The northern and eastern boundaries are defined by hedgerow, while the southern and western boundaries, which abut grassed field, are undefined.
3. The immediate site context holds rural qualities, predominately composed of wooded and agricultural landscape features. Agricultural fields surround the site on all sides, comprising a strong and well-defined field pattern by hedgerow and hedgerow trees interspersed by shaws, sporadic dwellings and farmsteads. AW and a small stream can be found to the north-east, comprising part of a larger woodland block that sprawls further north-west.
4. Two dwellings can be found immediately to the north and south of the site which are reflective of the local agricultural vernacular and are therefore not experienced as urbanising features or detractors to the countryside setting.

5. The site's wider landscape context is heavily wooded and is both quiet and remote in nature, positively contributing to its rural qualities. The area is largely undeveloped with few residential and urbanising detractors. The closest settlement is the hamlet of Codmore Hill and there are no larger settlements in proximity. A number of horse paddocks and areas of equine related development sit within the wider context.
6. Multiple public rights of way (PRoW) are located in the surrounding area, providing access and enjoyment of the countryside to sensitive receptors. These include but are not limited to PRoW 1983, which runs north-south along the eastern boundary, and PRoW 1989, which runs north-west to south-east to the south of the site. Views of the proposals from the footpath network are available from these routes and are experienced by receptors within the countryside, read in line with the wooded and rural context of the surrounding area. Views onto site should positively contribute to the rural character and landscape setting.
7. Access to the site is from PRoW 1983, an agricultural track that connects further north with Pickhurst Lane, itself a narrow, verdant road bounded by dense vegetation.

Landscape character

8. At a local level, the proposed site falls within J1 Billingshurst and North Heath Farmlands Landscape Character Area (LCA) as defined by 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 landform; small to medium size fields enclosed by frequent hedgerows, copses and small to medium sized woodland blocks; many mature field trees following hedgerows and lanes*; and *semi enclosed landscape with some longer range views*.
10. Sensitivity to change is moderate, with key sensitivities to: *small scale incremental changes eroding character, e.g. increase in horse paddocks*.
11. Relevant planning and land management guidelines state to:
    a. *Conserve the mostly rural character of the area.*
    b. *Ensure any appropriate new development responds to the historic settlement pattern and local design and materials. Such development should be well integrated with the surrounding landscape by setting it within the existing pattern of small native woodlands, hedgerows and shaws.*
    c. *Conserve existing woodlands, shaws and mature hedgerow trees.*
    d. *Conserve small irregular field patterns.*

Assessment

12. While the proposed development is not essential to the countryside location, the proposals are considered of a scale appropriate to the countryside character location and are unlikely to lead to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside, and are therefore largely compliant with the second part of Policy 26 of the HDPF.
13. We echo comments made by HDC's Arboriculturalist in regard to the retention of the hedgerow on the northern boundary, which will as a result adhere to the LCA planning and management guidelines under point 11 as well as Policies 25, 26 and 33 of the HDPF.
14. While it is regrettable that various existing trees have been removed from the site in recent years, thus partly eroding the landscape character, the existing vegetation groups G1 and G2 are proposed to be retained in the latest revision of the Proposed Site Plan (Drawing No. 1503/P04E), thereby maintaining the green infrastructure network and the field pattern.
15. In addition, proposals have been sensitively designed to minimise the appearance of urbanising form as experienced from PRoW 1989.
16. The addition of three new trees and extended scrub is welcomed, as is the addition of post and rail with hedging, the details of which can be secured via condition.

17. For avoidance of doubt, we expect the provision of an updated AIA and block plan that demonstrates the retention of the hedgerow along the northern boundary prior to determination.

Considerations

18. Due to the proximity of existing landscape features, as well as the high degree of visibility afforded given its position within the undulating landform and PRoW 1983 and 1989, any lighting design must be sensitive. Lighting details must ensure that light spill is prevented in order to retain the rural character of the local landscape and prevent indirect deterioration of key landscape features.

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS:

Hard and Soft Landscaping Scheme
Pre-Occupation Condition: Prior to the first occupation of any part of the development hereby permitted, full details of all hard and soft landscaping works shall have been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include plans and measures addressing the following:

- Planting and seeding plans, including a schedule specifying plant numbers, sizes, densities and species in Latin names
- Coordination of planting plans with ecological enhancement measures set out in the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment by AEWC, dated April 2025.
- Supplier information for plant stock – only locally-sourced planting stock should be used in proximity to Ancient Woodland and only certain tree nurseries are suppliers of accredited UK Sourced and Grown stock
- Tree pit and staking/underground guying details, including details for sloping ground and position of root barriers if required
- Details of all hard surfacing materials and finishes
- Details of all boundary treatments - such as walls, fencing and railings - including location, type, heights and materials
- Details of minor artefacts and structures – such as bin stores, cycle stores, street furniture, play equipment and signage – including location, size, colour and specification
- Proposed and existing functional services above and below ground – such as drainage, power, communications cables and pipelines – including lines, manholes, supports and other technical features
- Details of all external lighting

The approved landscaping scheme shall be fully implemented in accordance with the approved details within the first planting season following the first occupation of any part of the development. Unless otherwise agreed as part of the approved landscaping, no trees or hedges on the site shall be wilfully damaged or uprooted, felled/removed, topped or lopped without the previous written consent of the Local Planning Authority until 5 years after completion of the development. Any proposed planting, which within a period of 5 years, dies, is removed, or becomes seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory development that is sympathetic to the landscape and townscape character and built form of the surroundings, and in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

External Lighting/Floodlighting

Pre-Occupation Condition: No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until a detailed lighting scheme shall has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The lighting scheme shall be in accordance with the Institute of Lighting Professional's Guidance notes for the reduction of obstructive light and shall have been designed by a suitably qualified person in accordance with the recommendations.

In addition, the design shall be based on guidance from SDNP Dark Skies Technical Advice Note Version 2 and The Bat Conservation Trust guidance note 08/23, and include the following:

- 3000Kelvin or warmer
- 500 Lumens or below
- 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.
- Horizontally mounted luminaires with no light output above 90° and/or no upward tilt

The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved scheme and thereafter retained as such.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the site and surrounds in accordance with Policies 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

INF14 - Ancient Woodland

For plant stock used in proximity to Ancient Woodland, please ensure only locally sourced planting stock is used from suppliers of accredited UK Sourced and Grown stock, in accordance with Woodland Trust guidance. Supplier information must be made available upon request.

Chemical fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides including glyphosate are not to be applied at any time due to impacts on AW and the protection of its ecological features.

NAME:	Elly Hazael Trainee Landscape Architect (Planning)
DEPARTMENT:	Specialists Team - Strategic Planning
DATE:	28/08/2025
SIGNED OFF BY:	Inês Watson CMLI Specialists Team Leader (Landscape Architect)
DATE:	28/08/2025