



Horsham District Council
Parkside
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

Our ref: 16652
Date: 21 April 2026

For the attention of: Jacques Burrowes

Application ref: DC/26/0462
Location: Mill Farm, Mill Lane, Itchingfield, West Sussex RH13 0NP
Proposal/Description: Demolition of redundant agricultural buildings and the erection of two dwellings; change of use of land from agriculture to residential gardens.

Thank you for consulting with Place Services on the above 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 without a site visit. Our Landscape comments are as follows:

1.0. Site Context

- 1.1. The site is located to the south of Broadbridge Heath, outside of a settlement boundary and within a rural setting. It comprises two agricultural buildings set within areas of bare ground and grassland paddocks. An area of Ancient Semi-natural Woodland lies to the north-west of the site, with modern barn type residential dwellings located to the north and east. The surrounding landscape is predominantly characterised by a mix of pasture and paddocks, arable farmland and occasional blocks of woodland.
- 1.2. The Arboricultural Report identifies a hedgerow with ash trees within the site and, a line of mature oak trees along the south-eastern corner of the site.

2.0. Review of the proposal/submitted information

- 2.1. The proposals are for the demolition of the existing agricultural buildings and the construction of two new dwellings, set slightly back and away from adjacent ancient woodland to the north-west. Access into the site is proposed to remain as existing.

Landscape impacts

- 2.2. The site is in close proximity to an ancient woodland. The location of the new buildings has been reviewed to sit outside of the minimum 15m ancient woodland buffer. While this is welcomed, we have concerns regarding the construction operations that will happen within this buffer and any associated activities such as storage of materials.
- 2.3. The existing western barn sits within the ancient woodland buffer and it is proposed to be demolished. Care should be taken during demolition works to reduce impacts on the ancient woodland and RPAs.
- 2.4. Although the Tree Constraints Plan shows a tree protective barrier to the ancient woodland to the north-west, we would request this is moved further out to follow the edge of the access track to stop vehicles parking or trampling over the verges during construction works.
- 2.5. While we note the mitigation recommendations within the Ecological Impact Assessment (para 7.8) to ensure no harm to the adjacent woodland and off-site trees and hedges occur, these are basic protection measures and we would advise more tailored protection measures are discussed and agreed with the LPA Arboricultural officer.
- 2.6. The Arboricultural Impact Assessment indicates the removal of the entire hedge with trees (H01 and TL02) to accommodate the development. Replacement planting is proposed to compensate for vegetation loss and improve connectivity between green corridors. The removal of existing vegetation to accommodate the western new building is not opposed. However, we are unsure of the retention of the remaining extent of the hedge, as this is not showing on any of the plans as a retained feature. Clarification is needed and the remaining the hedge incorporated in the drawings and labelled appropriately.

The proposals

- 2.7. The site is within Landscape Character Area H1: Southwater & Christs Hospital Farmlands. From the Horsham LCA Relevant key characteristics are largely open character and relatively few woodlands and hedgerows. There are a few historic farmstead, mostly brick and tile hung disperse along lanes. The landscape condition was considered in decline due to loss of woodlands and hedgerows.
- 2.8. The sensitivity to change for this landscape was assessed as moderate and sensitive to small incremental change. Within the Planning and Land Management Guidelines the following should be considered as part of the proposals:

- Ensure any new development responds to historic settlement pattern and local design and materials, and is well integrated by new woodlands and hedgerows.
- Conserve existing hedgerows and field trees.

- 2.9. As mentioned above, we seek clarification of the extent of retained hedge.
- 2.10. The proposed buildings have been designed to reflect the existing barn/farmstead buildings immediately to the north and east of the site. While weatherboard barns are a feature, brick is also a typical material for farmstead buildings. We note that the proposed buildings have corrugated metal roofs, while local stone or tiles roofs are more traditional rural vernacular of the area.
- 2.11. There is a PRoW TC-1630 to the west of the site. Potential views of the site from some sections of this footpath, particularly during winter months may be available. However, we note the new field boundary proposed to the southern boundary formed of native hedgerow and trees will aid managing any views into the site.
- 2.12. It is not clear of what planting is proposed within the 'Area for BNG'. Para 6.21 of The Design and Access Statement refers to enhancement of existing modified grassland area or a "higher-distinctiveness habitat such as mixed scrub, traditional orchard or neutral grassland." The Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment suggest this area of modified grassland will be enhanced to moderate condition. The site and immediate landscape surrounding is quite wooded and some areas of woodland would be a positive landscape feature and appropriate in landscape character terms. This could be considered and explored.
- 2.13. The enhancement of existing modified grassland is proposed by in-seeding with a flowering lawn or meadow mix. We recommend that a soils analysis is carried out to identify the current soil type and either target the best seeding mix or carry out the necessary operations to ensure the soils will be capable of supporting the proposed habitat enhancements.
- 2.14. The intention to define boundaries with "post-and-wire fencing and native planting in order to avoid any suburbanising effects" is welcomed but this could be improved further by using post and timber fencing and native hedge planting instead.
- 2.15. Hard surfaces are proposed in natural, permeable materials reflecting the surrounding rural character. This is considered appropriate in landscape terms but we will seek detailed plans to show the location and extent of these and secured by condition.
- 2.16. Although the new buildings follow similar footprints, the proposal is extending further south into the open field to the south. This and the increase of residential use into the site area could be considered as small incremental landscape change. Managing this change appropriately will be key to ensure the proposals is embedded into the existing landscape character without detrimental effects.

3.0. Summary

- 3.1. Overall, the principle of development is not opposed and the repositioning of the proposed dwellings outside the minimum ancient woodland buffer is welcomed. However, the site's close relationship with the ancient woodland and existing vegetation means that careful consideration must be given to landscape impacts, construction activities, and long-term integration into the surrounding rural landscape.
- 3.2. Clarification is required regarding retained hedgerows, Biodiversity Net Gain planting proposals, and detailed boundary treatments.
- 3.3. In addition, enhanced and site-specific Arboricultural and habitat protection measures should be agreed with the LPA, particularly to manage demolition and construction works within or adjacent the ancient woodland buffer.
- 3.4. Subject to these matters being satisfactorily addressed and secured by condition, the proposals have the potential to be appropriately assimilated into the local landscape character without unacceptable harm.

4.0. Recommended Condition(s)

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. 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.

ACTION REQUIRED PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT: LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN (LMP)

No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority a landscape management plan for a minimum of 5 years. This should include:

- a) Drawing/s showing the areas to which the LMP applies.
- b) Written Specification detailing:
 - All operation and procedures for soft landscape areas; inspection, watering, pruning, cutting, mowing, clearance and removal of arisings and litter, removal of temporary items (fencing, guards and stakes) and replacement of failed planting.
 - All operations and procedures for hard landscape areas; inspection, sweeping, clearing of accumulated vegetative material and litter, maintaining edges, and painted or finished surfaces.
 - Furniture (Bins, Benches and Signage) and Play Equipment.
 - All operations and procedures for soft landscaping to SuDS features; inspection of linear drains, basins and swales, removal of unwanted vegetative material and litter, including inlets and outlets.
- c) Maintenance task table which explains the maintenance duties across the site in both chronological and systematic order.
- d) Mechanism for monitoring and review of the management plan and operations.

Reason - To support plant establishment and ensure appropriate management is carried out and to maintain functionality and visual aesthetic.

Please contact us if you have any queries in relation to this advice.

Place Services – Landscape Team

Email: landscape@essex.gov.uk



Place Services provide landscape advice 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.

