HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Pinkhurst Pinkhurst Lane Slinfold West Sussex
DESCRIPTION:	Erection of a mixed-use building for stabling and storage and the creation of a sandschool.
REFERENCE:	DC/26/1359
RECOMMENDATION:	Advice / More info / Modification

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION

The application has not been supported by any detailed arboricultural information. As such, the comments and conclusions set out below have been formed from a review of the submitted plans and documents, online resources, together with observations made during a site visit.

The wooded area to the north of the sand school and barn is identified within the DEFRA MAGIC Maps Priority Habitat Inventory as Deciduous Woodland. As such, it is recognised as a Habitat of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, and any direct or indirect impacts upon it are therefore a material consideration in the assessment of the application.

MAIN COMMENTS:

The Proposed Block Plan (Drawing No. 2024.447.02) shows that the proposed stable building would be located approximately 7.70m from the northern site boundary and the adjacent woodland. The proposed sand school would be located approximately 5.80m from the site boundary and woodland edge. In the absence of arboricultural information, it is not possible to adequately assess the likely impacts of the proposed development on the woodland trees or to determine whether the development can be accommodated without encroachment into root protection areas; given the size of the trees on the woodland edge, at present, this does not appear to be achievable.

It is also noted that a mature oak tree is located within the site adjacent to the proposed access track. Whilst this tree is not shown on the submitted location plan, Drawing No. 2024.447.01 indicates that the access track would pass in close proximity to it. Given its size and maturity, the tree appears to make a positive contribution to the character of the site.

Based on observations made during the site visit and having regard to the size and maturity of the woodland edge trees, it appears likely that parts of the proposed stable building and sand school would fall within the root protection areas of trees forming part of the adjacent Priority Habitat woodland. Whilst the extent of any conflict cannot be quantified in the absence of a tree survey and calculated root protection areas, it appears that these impacts could potentially be avoided through repositioning the development further within the site, potentially by approximately 11-12m, subject to detailed arboricultural assessment.

The proximity of the proposed stable building and sand school to the woodland edge may also give rise to future pressure to prune overhanging branches, particularly given the extent of canopy encroachment and the proposed equestrian use of the site, noting that acorns from oak trees can be toxic to horses if consumed, potentially creating future management pressures on the adjoining woodland.

Similarly, whilst the overall route of the proposed access track appears acceptable in principle, amendments are likely to be required where it passes adjacent to the mature oak tree to ensure impacts upon its rooting environment are avoided. The construction methodology of the access track in this location would require careful consideration and may necessitate a no-dig or other specialist construction solution.

Consequently, at present insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that the proposal would not result in unacceptable impacts upon the adjacent Priority Habitat woodland or the mature oak tree within the site.

A BS5837:2012-compliant tree survey, arboricultural impact assessment, arboricultural method statement and tree protection should be provided. This should identify the affected trees, calculate root protection areas, assess development impacts and set out any required protection and construction measures. Until such information has been submitted, it has not been demonstrated that the proposal can be implemented without harm to the adjacent woodland or the mature oak within the site.

ANY RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS: None at this stage

NAME:	Andy Bush Arboricultural officer (Planning)
DEPARTMENT:	STRATEGIC PLANNING - SPECIALISTS
DATE:	20/10/26