



Horsham District Council
Parkside
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

Our ref: 20165
Date: 21 July 2026

For the attention of: Sam Whitehouse

Application ref: DC/26/0826
Location: Toat Cafe Stane Street North Heath West Sussex
Proposal/Description: Outline Planning Application for up to 100 residential dwellings (including 35% affordable), pharmacy, shop/cafe and open space, all matters reserved except access.

Thank you for consulting with Place Services on the above Outline 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. Toat Café, Stanes Cottage and Stanes Farm are located outside of Pulborough village to the northeast, off of the A29. The site is comprised of several buildings, a large concrete hard standing area, multiple grassland fields, hedgerows, scrub and mature trees. South Downs National Park is approximately 525m to the northwest. And Mill House Grade II Listed Building is to the southeast of the site, across Stane Street (A29).
- 1.2. The site is mostly enclosed by vegetation to the exemption of part of the eastern boundary along the A29. Within the site, existing vegetation including mature trees act as green/habitat corridor through the site connecting to the site boundary vegetation.

- 1.3. Public footpath PUL-1986 runs along the northeastern site boundary turning west towards Black Gate Lane. Views of the site from the public footpath are limited to glimpse views through gaps in the vegetation. Views of parts of the site, Toat Café and Car Wash area are available from footpath along the A29.
- 1.4. The Horsham Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) identifies the site within J1 Billinghamurst and Heath Farmlands character area. The key characteristics are 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, semi enclosed landscape, Toat Monument as important landmark. Away from A29, the area has a strongly rural undeveloped character. The sensitivity to change is identified as moderate, one of the key sensitivities been to any large scale housing.
- 1.5. The planning and management guidelines for this landscape character area include:
 - Conserve the mostly rural character of the area.
 - 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.
 - Conserve existing woodlands, shaws and mature hedgerow trees.

2.0. Planning Policy Context

- 2.1. The site sits outside Built-Up Area boundary should have regards to Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF). Other relevant policies are Policy 2: Strategic Development, Development Hierarchy and Settlement Expansion - Policy 3 and Policy 4 - Strategic Policy: Settlement Expansion.
- 2.2. The adopted Pulborough Neighbourhood Plan (PNP) identifies the site within their Policy 8: Land formerly known as the Toat Café, Stane Street, Pulborough (PPNP27) for redevelopment comprising the following uses to include commercial, (class B2, B8, C1, E, F1, F2) and motor sales showrooms and leisure parkland.

3.0. Review of the proposal/submitted information

Amended Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)

- 3.1. We acknowledge the submission of the LVIA Addendum which establishes that the LVIA has been produced in accordance with best practice guidance, the “Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition) (GLVIA3).
- 3.2. We note the narrative provided on landscape susceptibility and landscape value and we concur with the conclusion of “overall moderate landscape sensitivity” for the site. We

acknowledge the detractors features within the surrounding area and within the site itself, owed to the existing commercial building, infrastructure and hard surfacing.

- 3.3. We generally agree with the overall judgements on significance, with just some minor queries in relation to the landscape effects of the proposed roundabout as part of the new access arrangement.
- 3.4. While we broadly find the proposed viewpoints appropriate, the submitted photography does not follow best practice as set out within the TGN 06/19. We welcome the narrative provided for each viewpoint.

The proposals

- 3.5. The proposal is for the removal of all of the existing buildings on site and the erection of up to 100 residential dwellings (including 35% affordable), pharmacy, shop/cafe and open space.
- 3.6. While this application is at outline stage, with all matters reserved except access, we would like to highlight several key principles relating to the existing and proposed green infrastructure corridors that should be considered as part of the detailed design of any future application should the outline application be approved. Some of these reflect comments previously made at the pre-application stage.
 - 3.6.1. The site is allocated in the adopted PNP for use class B2, B8, C1, E, F1, F2. The proposed residential element falls outside the allocated uses and does not align with the intended vision for the site. In landscape terms, residential development would appear out of character with the existing built form and surrounding context.
 - 3.6.2. We are generally concern by the approach of locating rear garden boundaries adjacent to existing vegetation, particularly where these features have been identified as valued or important landscape elements. This includes the trees adjacent to proposed Plots 22 and 24-26, Plot 47, the north-eastern boundary vegetation, and the vegetation associated with the existing ditch corridor.
 - 3.6.3. Section 3.4 of the LVIA acknowledges the site's key landscape constraints, noting the "hedgerow structure and mature trees, which contribute significantly to local landscape character and visual amenity." Policy 32 of the HDPF seek development to "Contribute a sense of place both in the buildings and spaces themselves and in the way they integrate with their surroundings..." While the existing landscape structure would be retained and enhanced with additional planting, it is largely positioned behind the rear gardens of the proposed development. Greater consideration should be given to delivering multifunctional green corridors as an integral part of the scheme. An active frontage development

onto this corridor would provide a more effective means of integrating it into the development.

- 3.6.4. Although the proposed pedestrian route alongside the green corridor through the site is welcomed, it is currently positioned behind garden fencing, separated by a narrow buffer strip. This arrangement diminishes the quality and function of the corridor and could undermine connectivity between the corridor and the area of open space to the north.
- 3.6.5. There is also an opportunity to incorporate the green corridor along the north-western boundary within a wider landscape buffer and public open space provision, creating a multifunctional green corridor. This would be better achieved by excluding built development from this area, including proposed Plot 1.
- 3.6.6. The proposed planting along the A29 corridor is welcomed and would help to screen and soften the new built development. However, we remain concerned about the impact of the proposed roundabout on landscape character. The LVIA acknowledges that, although the café and farm buildings introduce a modest built element, the landscape retains a predominantly rural character. The introduction of a roundabout would add further urbanising features to the site frontage, contributing to a more urban character in combination with other existing detracting elements in the surrounding area. Consequently, it is difficult to envisage how the semi-urban frontage character described in Section 6.2 of the LVIA would be retained under the proposed access arrangement.
- 3.6.7. We have concerns regarding the long-term management and maintenance of the existing boundary vegetation. As these features are located outside private plots and appear to have limited management access, it is unclear how, and by whom, ongoing maintenance would be undertaken. To ensure appropriate long-term stewardship, consideration should be given to providing active frontages or introducing wider landscape buffers between development and retained vegetation. This approach would also deliver additional public open space and enhance the multifunctional value of these landscape features, whilst allowing existing trees to mature without pressure for future canopy reduction arising from their proximity to residential properties.
- 3.6.8. The Proposed Site Plan (1726/P-01) indicates that internal plot boundaries would be defined by hedgerow planting. This is a welcomed approach and would encourage this to be carried forward through subsequent design stages, subject to appropriate measures being put in place to secure its long-term retention and management.
- 3.6.9. The majority of the proposed street tree planting appears to be located within private curtilages, which raises concerns regarding their long-term retention.

Consideration should be given to locating a proportion of the proposed tree planting within the public realm to ensure its longevity and continued contribution to place making.

- 3.6.10. Opportunities to strengthen pedestrian connectivity between the proposed open space and the nearby public footpath network should be explored and incorporated into the final design.
- 3.6.11. The indicative location for the proposed community buildings and associated parking area in the north-eastern part of the site, while outside the footprint of the existing café and associated infrastructure, would have a close relationship with the proposed public open space. Careful consideration should be given to its design, layout and landscape integration to ensure it complements the character and function of the adjoining open space.

4.0. Summary

- 4.1. The proposed development represents a departure from the site allocation within the adopted Pulborough Neighbourhood Plan and does not align with the intended vision for the site. From a landscape perspective, residential development appears out of character with the site's existing built form and surrounding context. We also have concerns regarding the urbanising effect of the proposed roundabout access on the semi-rural character of the A29 frontage.
- 4.2. In addition, consideration should be given to securing the long-term retention of proposed hedgerow and tree planting, increasing the proportion of street trees within the public realm, improving pedestrian connectivity to the wider footpath network, and ensuring that the proposed community facilities are appropriately integrated with the adjoining public open space.
- 4.3. Should the outline application be approved, we consider that greater emphasis should be placed on the delivery of a robust and multifunctional green infrastructure as part of the detailed design stages. Existing hedgerows, mature trees and boundary vegetation represent important landscape assets that should be integrated into the development through active frontages, wider landscape buffers and usable public open space, rather than forming rear boundaries to residential plots.

5.0. Recommended Submission Documents

- 5.1. Should the application be approved, the following documents should be prepared and submitted as part of any subsequent reserved matters application:
 - A detailed Landscape Masterplan demonstrating the integration of existing and proposed green infrastructure, public open space, pedestrian routes and landscape buffers.

- A Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan setting out long-term ownership, management responsibilities and maintenance arrangements for retained and proposed landscape features, including boundary vegetation, hedgerows and trees.
- Detailed Arboricultural Information, including an Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan, where required.
- A Detailed Planting Strategy, including street tree planting, hedgerow planting and measures to secure their long-term retention and establishment.
- Detailed Sections and Elevations through key green corridors and landscape buffers to demonstrate their relationship with adjacent development plots and public spaces.

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.