



Horsham District Council
Parkside
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

Our ref: 13601
Date: 26 January 2026

For the attention of: Shazia Penne

Application ref: DC/26/0010
Location: Land North of Girder Bridge, Gay Street Lane, North Heath
RH20 2HW
Proposal/Description: Use of land for the stationing of 6 static caravans for residential purposes (to be occupied by Gypsies and Travellers) and associated landscape works.

Thank you for consulting with Place Services on the above Full 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. The site is within the Landscape Character Area J1: Billingshurst & North Heath Farmlands. Key characteristics relevant to the site are gently undulating landform, small to medium size fields enclosed by frequent hedgerows, copses and small to medium sized woodland blocks, mature field trees following hedgerows and lanes.
- 1.2. The sensitivity to change overall is moderate reflecting moderate intervisibility and moderate intrinsic landscape qualities. Key sensitivities are:
 - Any large scale housing or commercial development
 - Small scale incremental changes eroding character, e.g. increase in horse paddocks.



2.0. Review of the proposal

- 2.1. The proposal is for the use of the land for the stationing of a six static caravans for residential purposes for a gypsy traveller family, hardstanding areas and associated landscaping.
- 2.2. Planning and land management guidelines for the LCA include:
 - 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.
- 2.3. The proposed development is considered to be of small nature and scale, and it proposes to retain the existing site boundary vegetation, to the exemption of one single tree within the site.
- 2.4. The site sits alongside the railway line and there is minor presence of development to the southwest. The site appears to be well enclosed by existing vegetation to all boundaries, limiting visibility from nearby properties and users of the Public Rights of Way to the northwest, north and east. In terms of visual impacts, these are anticipated to be neutral meaning there will be no discernible visual change from nearby receptors.
- 2.5. A key sensitivity for the LCA J1 is “Small scale incremental changes eroding character”. The proposals will introduce further development within the countryside, and therefore there will be a change in the landscape character at local level. However, the proposal would respect the existing landscape structure by retaining the boundary vegetation and strengthening the existing hedgerows, resulting in only a very minor loss or alteration of key landscape characteristics, primarily associated with the change from open land to built form.
- 2.6. One oak tree (T1) is proposed to be removed to accommodate the proposed static caravans. We recommend that this tree is retained as it will assist to soften the proposed regular layout arrangement and better integrate the proposals within the site.
- 2.7. The space to the north is labelled as ‘retain and enhance existing habitat as per BNG report. The submitted Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment refers to this in para 3.10 “retention of parts of the scrub and modified grassland habitat. This habitat that is to be retained will be enhanced to obtain a ‘good’ condition through management prescriptions (which would be detailed within a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP)”. While we assume this relates to the northern part of the site, there is no indication of the extent of the scrub planting area proposed for enhancements within the Block Plan (2502GI_R2_001). Further details should be provided and secured by condition.

- 2.8. The combination of post and rail fencing with hedgerow planting is welcomed. We note that the end plot to the south does not have hedgerow along the proposed fencing line. We would recommend this is included to provide some privacy.
- 2.9. While we welcome the management notes within the planting specification for the proposed planting, it is not clear at what height the new hedgerow should be maintained.
- 2.10. The access track is proposed as a permeable surface, comprising an MOT Type 3 sub-base to a depth of 300 mm, overlaid with permeable pea shingle. While it is assumed that the same surfacing material and construction approach is intended for the parking areas, this should be clearly confirmed and annotated on the relevant plans.

3.0. Summary

- 3.1. The proposed development is small in scale and largely contained within an already well-enclosed site. The retention of existing boundary vegetation, with the exception of one oak tree, ensures that the proposals remain visually well screened, with neutral visual effects anticipated for surrounding receptors due to limited visibility.
- 3.2. While the introduction of built form will result in a minor localised change to landscape character, consistent with the LCA's sensitivity to incremental development, the scheme broadly aligns with landscape guidelines by conserving existing vegetation and reinforcing hedgerow structure.
- 3.3. Further clarification is required regarding the extent of habitat enhancement to the north of the site and location and maintenance prescriptions for new planting.
- 3.4. The proposals should consider the opportunities to strengthen integration through the retention of the oak tree (T1) and additional hedgerow planting along the southern plot boundary.
- 3.5. Overall, landscape effects are expected to be limited and can be appropriately mitigated through refinement of the proposed landscaping and management measures.

4.0. Recommended Condition(s)

- 4.1. As part of the BNG strategy, a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) is proposed to be submitted. We request that the HMMP includes detailed information on the maintenance operations for the proposed landscaping during both the establishment period and the long-term management phase.
- 4.2. If the application is 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 fencing. 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.

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.