Horsham District Council

# DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:
DC/25/1134
Schroders Business Campus, Langhurstwood Road, Horsham, RH12 4QP

DESCRIPTION:
Alterations to and part replacement of boundary fencing.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:
None directly relevant to this application.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE
The application site comprises the Schroders Business Campus located on the north side of Langhurst Wood Road, approximately 4 miles north of Horsham town centre. The wider campus measures approximately 6.8ha and is currently occupied by two large office buildings, Holmwood and Ashurst, both of which are four storeys in height and constructed predominantly of red brick with terra-cotta detailing. The site is bound by mature hedging and established trees on all sides, with access and egress from Langhurst Wood Road to the south. The northern boundary is delineated by Boldings Brook, which lies below an embankment. The wider area is semi-rural in character, with employment and industrial uses to the east and west and Langhurst Wood to the south.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION
The application seeks full planning permission for alterations to and the part replacement of boundary fencing around the campus. The proposals cover four key areas:

- Galvanised palisade fencing – replacing a section near the riverbank with a fan end.
- Post reset – reinstating a displaced fence post to its original position.
- Chestnut cleft rail fencing – replacing a section to match existing fencing.
- Prison mesh security fencing – replacing existing deteriorated chain-link fencing along the front boundary with higher security mesh fencing, 2.4m in height.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES
**The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

**Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)**:
Policy 7 - Strategic Policy: Economic Growth
Policy 9 - Employment Development
Policy 10 - Rural Economic Development
Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
Policy 38 - Strategic Policy: Flooding

**Neighbourhood Plan:**
North Horsham Neighbourhood Plan area was designated, then the area voluntarily withdrew the designation.

**Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19)**:
Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development
Strategic Policy 2: Development Hierarchy
Strategic Policy 3: Settlement Expansion
Strategic Policy 8: Sustainable Design and Construction
Strategic Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Strategic Policy 14: Countryside Protection
Strategic Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality
Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles
Policy 28: Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation
Strategic Policy 29: New Employment
Strategic Policy 30: Enhancing Existing Employment
Policy 31: Rural Economic Development

**Supplementary Planning Guidance**:
Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD (2017)
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2017)

**Planning Advice Notes**:
Facilitating Appropriate Development
Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES
Where consultation responses have been summarised, it should be noted that Officers have had consideration of the full comments received, which are available to view on the public file at www.horsham.gov.uk

Consultations:
**HDC Arboricultural officer**: No Objection - No Arboricultural concerns are raised with the proposed alterations to and part replacement of boundary fencing; subject to the works being completed in a manner that will not adversely impact the mature tree in the area. Subject to conditions.

**Nature Space**: No Objection - It is considered that the proposed development would present a low risk to great crested newts and/or their habitats. However, as the development is within the red Impact Risk Zone, as modelled by district licence mapping, and because of the nearby pond within close proximity to works, recommended informative should be attached to planning consent.

Representations:
None Received

Parish Comments:
**North Horsham Parish Council**: No Objection

Member Comments:
None received

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY:
The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out a person's rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of the same Act, which sets out their rights in respect to private and family life and for the home. Officers consider that the proposal would not be contrary to the provisions of the above Articles.

The application has also been considered in accordance with Horsham District Council's public sector equality duty, which seeks to prevent unlawful discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people in a diverse community, in accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In this case, the proposal is not anticipated to have any potential impact from an equality perspective.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

**Principle of Development**:

The application relates to the alteration and replacement of boundary fencing within the established Schroders Business Campus. The site lies outside of a defined built-up area boundary and is therefore countryside in policy terms; however, the proposals do not involve new built form or the expansion of the site footprint. Instead, they comprise the maintenance, repair and upgrading of existing boundary treatment to improve security and functionality. These are modest works that are directly associated with the continued operation of an established employment use. As such, they align with the aims of Policies 7 and 9 of the HDPF.

**Design and Appearance**:

Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF require all development to be of a high standard of design that respects local character and results in an attractive, functional environment, whilst Policy 26 seeks to ensure that countryside character is conserved.

The works proposed are limited to the replacement or repair of fencing in four sections of the site. The most notable change involves the replacement of a 2.2m high chain-link fence with a 2.4m mesh security fence along the site frontage. Other components of the application include reinstating a displaced post, the use of chestnut cleft rail fencing to match existing rural-style fencing, and a short section of galvanised palisade fencing in a screened location.

It is considered that given the existing surrounding landscaping, including tree cover and mature boundary vegetation, the visual impact of the new and altered fencing would be limited, and the proposals will not disrupt the site's established context. The choice of materials and scale of alterations are functional but appropriate for a commercial campus within a semi-rural location. The development therefore achieves an acceptable balance between meeting operational needs and respecting the surrounding environment. The design and appearance of the proposals are therefore considered acceptable and in accordance with the above policies.

**Trees and Landscaping**:

Policy 25 of the Horsham District Planning Framework seeks to protect the natural environment and ensure that development conserves and enhances landscape character, while Policy 31 requires the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure and biodiversity.

The application site is well enclosed by mature trees and hedgerows on all boundaries, which provide substantial screening from the surrounding countryside. No trees are proposed for removal as part of the development, and the existing landscaped setting of the campus will remain unaltered.

The proposed fencing works have been designed to avoid harm to established trees and their root protection areas, with specific construction measures proposed to ensure that posts are installed without severing roots and that any excavation is undertaken using hand tools. Where roots are encountered, protective measures such as the use of non-permeable linings and loose backfill materials are proposed to safeguard tree health. These measures can be secured by condition.

The proposal is therefore considered acceptable with respect to trees and landscaping, in accordance with HDPF Policies 25 and 31.

**Residential Amenity**:

Policy 33 of the HDPF requires development to be designed to avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of surrounding occupiers, including through overlooking, overshadowing, noise or disturbance.

The works will not increase levels of noise, traffic or general disturbance beyond the existing baseline associated with the established office campus. The replacement fencing, including the modest height increase of 0.2m on the frontage boundary, will not result in any loss of light, outlook or privacy to neighbouring residential properties, which are separated from the site by mature landscaping and by Langhurst Wood Road to the south. The works are therefore considered to have no unacceptable impacts on amenity in accordance with the above policy.

**Water Neutrality**:

The application site falls within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone as defined by Natural England which draws its water supply from groundwater abstraction at Hardham. Natural England has issued a Position Statement for applications within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone which states that it cannot be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in this zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites.

Natural England advises that plans and projects affecting sites where an existing adverse effect is known will be required to demonstrate, with sufficient certainty, that they will not contribute further to an existing adverse effect. The received advice note advises that the matter of water neutrality should be addressed in assessments to agree and ensure that water use is offset for all new developments within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone.

There is no clear or compelling evidence to suggest the nature and scale of the proposed development would result in a more intensive use of the wider site which would necessitate an increased consumption of water that would result in a significant impact on the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. The grant of planning permission would not therefore adversely affect the integrity of these sites or otherwise conflict with policy 31 of the HDPF, NPPF paragraph 180 and the Council's obligations under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

**Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):**

Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) mandates that every development must achieve at least a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) unless the development qualifies as exempt under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

- The development qualifies as 'de minimis' under Regulation 4 of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024

**Conclusions**:

The application is considered to accord with relevant local and national planning policies, and is recommended for approval.

**Recommendation: Application Permitted**

Conditions:

2 **Standard Time Condition**: The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3 **Regulatory Condition**: No part of the fence or the fence posts hereby permitted shall be located within the root plate area of existing trees at the site, and nor shall any part of the fence of fence posts touch or be attached to existing trees at the site. The fencing and fence posts shall be erected in the manner sequence set out below, to ensure no above or below ground roots are severed, and where above-ground roots are present the fence shall go around or over them.

- Any excavations within the RPA should be undertaken carefully, using hand-held tools.
- If any roots are exposed during the work, they should immediately be wrapped or covered to prevent desiccation and protect them from rapid temperature changes. Any wrapping should be removed before backfilling, which should take place as soon as possible.
- Before backfilling, any retained roots should be surrounded with topsoil or uncompacted sharp sand (builders' sand should not be used because of its high salt content, which is toxic to tree roots), or other loose inert granular fill, before the soil or another suitable material is replaced. This material should be free of contaminants and other foreign objects potentially injurious to tree roots.
- The post holes should be lined with a non-permeable material or sheath, i.e. a plastic membrane, to protect the soil and any adjacent roots from the potentially toxic effects of uncured concrete.

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 Policies 31 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

4 **Regulatory Condition**: The materials to be used in the development hereby permitted shall strictly accord with those indicated on the application form and approved plans.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to control the development in detail in the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

NOTE TO APPLICANT

**Great Crested Newts**
The applicant is reminded that, under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), it is an offence to (amongst other things) deliberately capture, disturb, injure, or kill great crested newts; damage or destroy a breeding or resting place; intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a resting or sheltering place. Planning permission for a development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this legislation. Should great crested newts be found at any stage of the development works, then all works should cease, and a professional and/or suitably qualified and experienced ecologist (or Natural England) should be contacted for advice on any special precautions before continuing, including the need for a licence.

To minimise the potential for harm it is recommended that: -

- All vegetation within the works area be maintained at a maximum height of 30mm until construction is completed through regular mowing or grazing, in order to discourage great crested newts from using the site.
- Any demolition materials should be stored in skips or similar containers rather than in piles on ground.

- Any trenches left overnight should be covered or provided with ramps to great crested newts from becoming trapped.
- Any building materials such as bricks, stone etc. should be stored on pallets to discourage great crested newts from using them as shelter.

If at any point during construction works any great crested newts are identified, then the following instructions must be strictly adhered to:

- Stop all works immediately and leave the area.
- Inform an ecologist immediately who will provide further guidance / instructions.
- Do not resume construction works until advised it is safe to do so by an ecologist.

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

Statement pursuant to Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received, in order to be able to, where possible, grant permission.

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**Plans list for: DC/25/1134**

(The approved plans will form Condition 1 on the Decision Notice of all Permitted applications)

Schedule of plans/documents **approved**:

| Plan Type | Description | Drawing Number | Received Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| Location & Site plan | | 0620975-02-2 REV A | 08.07.2025 |
| Site plan | Proposed | 0620975-02-1 REV A | 08.07.2025 |
| Elevation plan | Proposed | 0620975-04-4 REV A | 08.07.2025 |
| Elevation plan | Proposed | 0620975-04-3 REV A | 08.07.2025 |
| Elevation plan | Existing and proposed | 0620975-04-2 REV A | 08.07.2025 |
| Elevation plan | Proposed gate | 0620975-04-1 REV A | 08.07.2025 |
| Site plan | | 0620975-01-4 REV A | 08.07.2025 |
| Site plan | | 0620975-01-3 REV A | 08.07.2025 |
| Site plan | | 0620975-01-2 REV A | 08.07.2025 |
| Site plan | | 0620975-02-3 REV A | 08.07.2025 |
| Location plan | | 0620975-00-1 REV A | 08.07.2025 |
| Site plan | | 0620975-01-1 REV A | 08.07.2025 |
| Elevation plan | | 0620975-03-4 REV A | 08.07.2025 |
| Elevation plan | | 0620975-03-3 REV A | 08.07.2025 |
| Elevation plan | | 0620975-03-2 REV A | 08.07.2025 |
| Site plan | | 0620975-02-4 REV A | 08.07.2025 |
| Elevation plan | Existing | 0620975-03-1 REV A | 08.07.2025 |
| Supporting Statement | Cover letter | NONE | 08.07.2025 |

**DELEGATED**

Case Officer sign/initial Shazia Penne Date: 23.09.2025

Authorising Officer sign/initial Guy Everest Date: 24.09.2025