



Horsham District Council
Parkside
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

Our ref: 14036
Date: 12 February 2026

For the attention of: Daniel Holmes

Application ref: DC/25/2114
Location: Land at 519396 111237 Church Farm Walk Upper Beeding
West Sussex
Proposal/Description: Erection of 4 No. detached dwellings with associated amenity space, car parking spaces, detached carports, access road and other associated infrastructure.

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	☐

1.0. Site Context

- 1.1. The Site is located to the north of Upper Beeding, at the northern end of Church Lane. Countryside Farm Caravan Park is located to the east edge of the site and Grade II* St Peter's Church is located west of the site. The north of the site is defined by open countryside including arable fields, grassland fields, and the valley floor of the River Adur. The South Downs National Park is located south of Upper Beeding village.
- 1.2. The site falls forms part of the River Adur Water Meadows and Wyckham Wood Site of Nature Conservation Importance, described as "*H42 Floodplain woodland with notable rarity and heronry, neutral grassland water meadows with ornithological interest and ditches with botanical interest*".



2.0. Planning Policy Context

Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) (2015)

- 2.1. Policies considered relevant to this application include: Environmental Protection (Policy 24), District Character and the Natural Environment (Policy 25) Countryside Protection (Policy 26) and Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity (Policy 31).

Upper Beeding Neighbourhood Plan (Made 2021)

- 2.2. Policies considered relevant to this application include: Spatial Plan for the Parish (Policy 1) and Design Standards for New Development (Policy 8).

SHELAA Report (December 2018)

- 2.3. The Site is identified as Site SA629 'Land north of Church Farm Walk':
- The site is located within Archaeological Notification Area and Local Wildlife Site.
 - It is assessed as 'Not Currently Developable'.

Review of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment:

- 2.4. The application has been accompanied by the submission of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) by CSA Environmental, dated December 2025.
- 2.5. No table has been submitted within the methodology demonstrating how sensitivity and magnitude of change judgements are combined to form the overall effects.
- 2.6. Para M8 states that *"to avoid making this process overly formulaic, the assessment of landscape / townscape sensitivity includes a degree of professional judgement and where necessary this is explained in the narrative text within the report"*. We would however have found an assessment of susceptibility and value to be useful for understanding how each of the receptors sensitivity is judged,

Landscape Character

- 2.7. The Site is located within Landscape Character Area (LCA) O3 Steyning and Henfield Brooks. Key characteristics of this LCA which are relevant to the site include: River Adur floodplain, small fields of unimproved and semi-improved grassland divided by drainage ditches, raised embankments around the river, occasional patches of scrub, isolated trees and groupings of trees following ditches, arable valleysides, fragmented hedgerows and small isolated woodlands, and a largely tranquil undeveloped character.

- 2.8. The LCA states that this landscape has a **high sensitivity** to change, due to its openness and intrinsic landscape qualities.
- 2.9. The assessment (Table on Page 85) states that effects on The Site are judged to be **substantial to moderate adverse**. We do not disagree with this judgement.
- 2.10. Upper Beeding is located on a locally elevated area within the wider River Adur valley floor. In the wider landscape, the immediate surroundings are assessed to have a **moderate adverse** effect. We note that the surrounding landscape character outside of Upper Beeding within the River Adur valley floor is largely undeveloped. From the north, the current perception of development within the valley at Upper Beeding is limited.
- 2.11. However, we do not disagree with the **moderate adverse** judgement provided.

Visual Effects

- 2.12. We consider the included viewpoint photography to be taken from representative locations surrounding the site. Viewpoint Photographs were undertaken in September 2025, when vegetation was largely in full-leaf, therefore not representing the worst-case scenario. There is very little reference to this being a constraint of the assessment, where we would have expected the methodology to state that the worst-case scenario is being appraised throughout.
- 2.13. Para 4.7 states that the site is well-contained. Whilst from Upper Beeding, the site is contained by existing vegetation and Countryside Farm Park, the northern edge of the site is open and allows views from the wider open landscape which has a number of PRowS. We therefore disagree that the site is considered well-contained.
- 2.14. Views from Church Lane (Table on Page 88) are assessed to have **medium sensitivity, moderate magnitude of change** and an **overall moderate adverse** effect. We acknowledge that this is not a well-trafficked area, however we note that views from the entrance to this site are currently panoramic and of the river valley associated with the River Adur. These scenic views across the valley will be completely obscured by the development proposals in this elevated location, which would be a disappointing loss. Notwithstanding this, we do not disagree with the judged effects from Church Lane as a receptor.
- 2.15. The proposed houses are visible from PRow 2776 located to the north of the site. At present, views from this PRow are of the vegetation surrounding the Church and Priory, and also of the Countryside Farm Park located to the east. The LVIA (Page 88) assesses visual effects from this PRow as **high sensitivity, moderate magnitude of change** and **moderate significance of effect**. We do however judge that this combination of

judgements could result in a **substantial to moderate adverse** effect.

- 2.16. Overall, whilst we judge that the views from the north towards the site are the biggest visual constraint, the submitted LVIA is largely accurate in its judgements, despite some minor difference in professional judgement. Mitigation measures could however be enhanced to resemble the surrounding character further.

3.0. Review of Proposals:

- 3.1. The Site is located within Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) River Adur Water Meadows and Wyckham Wood. This is a primary constraint of developing the site, where the designation should be protected. However, the SNCI designation is an ecology designation and therefore we advise that an Ecological Consultant provides advice on this matter.
- 3.2. The Site also forms the setting of Grade II* listed The Parish Church of St Peter and Grade II listed The Priory, which are located west of the site. Advice should be sought from a historic environment consultant on the impact of the proposed development on the setting of these designated heritage assets.
- 3.3. The Church and Priory can be seen from a wider area to the north and west of the site, owed to their location on elevated landform and the surrounding expansive open character of the River Adur valley floor which contains a number of PRowWs. The proposed development would be viewed adjacent or in the foreground to these features from various viewpoints from the river valley.
- 3.4. With the exception of the Countryside Farm Park, there are very few built features within Upper Beeding which are visible in the wider landscape from the north. Development is largely contained behind existing vegetation located on the northern edge of Upper Beeding. As pedestrians traverse south along the footpath adjacent to the River Adur and west of Upper Beeding more dwellings become visible.
- 3.5. The proposed development therefore breeches this natural northern edge of Upper Beeding and extending on to the valley side of the River Adur. At present, development is contained to the north by existing field boundaries, reducing the visual presence of built development from the river valley. The introduction of the proposed dwellings would however bring development into the river valley.
- 3.6. The park homes are visible from the north; however, these are much lower in building height and are therefore less visible above any surrounding vegetation. The proposed buildings will therefore have a higher magnitude of change on the visual receptors than

these features and are more difficult to mitigate.

- 3.7. Within the 2018 SHELAA report, the Site SA629 is identified as 'Not currently developable', partly owed to its location within a LoWS. The development application also extends beyond the boundary of the site identified within the SHELAA report, wrapping further around the north of the woodland.
- 3.8. We note that very few trees are proposed for removal to facilitate the development, which is welcomed. However, we would advise that the proposed planting contributes to the characteristic features of the LCA, including introducing some small woodland planting and patches of scrub planting. This should however not obstruct the long-distance views available from Church Lane towards the north.
- 3.9. Notwithstanding this, the views north from Church Lane should be retained. At present, a garage is located within the centre of the view and obstructs any longer distance views into the wider landscape. Any mitigation planting on the northern boundary, such as trees, would also obscure views from Church Lane to the wider landscape. We therefore advise that any built features, and also any tree planting is not located within the view north from Church Lane.
- 3.10. The park homes are visible in the landscape from the north, however these are lower in elevation than the proposed buildings which are 2-storeys.
- 3.11. The proposed hedgerow and native thicket on the northern boundary is read as overly linear and will appear as unnatural compared the existing vegetation around the Church and into the valley. Softening the alignment would contribute to assimilating the proposals into the landscape.
- 3.12. In terms of landscape, development located between the woodland and the Caravan Park is less sensitive. Development of the site is more sensitive towards the north as it wraps around the north of the woodland, owed to its exposure from visual receptors to the north, enclosing the woodland habitat from the wider GI network, and breaking the ridgeline with built development.
- 3.13. Every effort should be made to minimise the urbanising influences (i.e., kerbing, widening, domestic paraphernalia) to ensure that the proposals are sympathetic to the rural surroundings. The proposed surfacing should also be considered and opportunities for block paving across the development would help to create a characterful approach from the public highway.

4.0. Summary:

- 4.1. Overall, we consider there are significant constraints associated with the site, notably its location within a LoWS and SNCI, and also proximity to the Church and Priory listed buildings.
- 4.2. There are some differences in professional judgement throughout the submitted LVIA, these differences are not deemed substantial.
- 4.3. We have concerns regarding the visual impact of the proposals from the north within the River Adur valley. The proposed development would visually breach the north edge of Upper Beeding beyond the existing vegetative containment of the village. While we accept that there is some built form currently visible from this direction, the proposal is for 2 storey substantial buildings of significantly more height and mass than the adjacent single-storey park home site.
- 4.4. Long-distance views to the north are available from Church Lane, which is not considered within the design proposals. Both proposed garages and proposed trees compromise the availability of these views.
- 4.5. The land towards the south of the site (between the woodland and the park home) is less sensitive to development than the land that extends around the edge of the woodland. A scheme which limits the developable area would be more acceptable.
- 4.6. Further amendments are required to the mitigation scheme proposed.

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.