



Horsham District Council
Parkside
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

Our ref: 18150
Date: 29 May 2026

For the attention of: Hannah Darley

Application ref: DC/26/0638
Location: New Orchard New Hall Lane Small Dole Henfield West
Sussex BN5 9YH
Proposal/Description: Permission in Principle for demolition of existing polytunnel
and removal of hardstanding, and the erection of up to 9no.
dwellings.

Thank you for consulting with Place Services on the above 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 located within Small Dole, accessed from A2037 Shoreham Road via The Beeches. The land sits to the rear of properties along Shoreham Road. Residential plots are located to the east and south of the Site, and rear gardens and small fields are located to the north and west. The Site itself comprises a polytunnel, sheds and other surfacing associated with the nursery.

2.0. Planning Policy Context

Horsham District Planning Framework (Adopted 2015)

2.1. Relevant policies include:

- Policy 25: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
- Policy 26: Countryside Protection
- Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

Henfield Neighbourhood Plan (Made 2020)

2.2. Relevant policies include:

- Policy 10: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

3.0. Review of the proposal/submitted information:

3.1. The Site is located within Landscape Character Area D2 Henfield and Small Dole Farmlands of the Horsham Landscape Character Assessment (2003). Key characteristics which are relevant to the site include: small irregular fields with a variable hedgerow pattern and small springline settlements. A key sensitivity to change includes the cumulative impact of small-scale incremental change i.e. suburbanisation.

3.2. The Site is identified as Site S Highdown Nursery within the Henfield Neighbourhood Development Plan Sustainability Appraisal (June 2019). The Summary states:

“This site contains a former plant nursery, including a number of glasshouses. The site would have a positive impact on Objective 4 through the provision of housing. However, as the site is in Small Dole it would have a likely negative impact on Objective 3. Overall impacts on the objectives are considered to be relatively neutral on this site.”

Location

3.3. The Site is located adjacent to the settlement edge of Small Dole, where the surrounding landscape is characterised by other residential development and small-scale fields to the north. The Site is well-contained from the surrounding area, owing to the enclosure of existing trees and vegetation, and also the existing dwellings on The Beeches, Shoreham Road and New Hall Lane.

3.4. The Site is located outside the built-up area boundary (BUAB) of Small Dole, as shown in Policy Map 1b of the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan. Notwithstanding this, the Site comprises a small and contained parcel of land that relates closely to the existing settlement edge.

- 3.5. Access is currently gained via The Beeches, a private residential road serving five single-storey dwellings. The road is narrow, gated near its junction with Shoreham Road, and is not adopted. It is recommended that a highways specialist provides further advice regarding the suitability of this access.
- 3.6. Construction traffic would also be required to utilise The Beeches. Given its constrained width, gated access, and private nature, there are concerns regarding its suitability to accommodate construction vehicles and other larger vehicular movements (e.g. refuse collection).

Land Use

- 3.7. The proposed residential use would be broadly consistent with the surrounding residential area of Small Dole and would therefore not be out of character.
- 3.8. The Site comprises a former nursesey and is therefore previously developed (brownfield) land. The Site is currently hard-surfaced, which reduces its contribution to landscape character and lowers its sensitivity to change.
- 3.9. Existing trees and vegetation along the Site boundaries contribute to the local landscape structure and contribute to visual containment. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) should be provided in following submissions to demonstrate the retention and protection of these features.

Amount of Development

- 3.10. The submitted layout is indicative only and demonstrates the potential to accommodate 9 dwellings.
- 3.11. There are some concerns regarding whether this quantum of development can be accommodated without resulting in an over-intensive form of development, particularly when accounting for access, visitor parking, refuse storage, and circulation requirements.
- 3.12. The Beeches private residential road may also be inadequate for 9no. proposed dwellings, given its width and surface treatment.
- 3.13. Whilst detailed layout is not for consideration at the Permission in Principle stage, it is noted that retention and reinforcement of boundary vegetation would be important in integrating development and maintaining a well-defined settlement edge.
- 3.14. The indication of predominantly single-storey dwellings reflects the character of The Beeches and would help to reduce potential visual effects of development in the wider landscape.

4.0. Summary

- 4.1. From a landscape perspective, we judge that in isolation the Site itself has capacity for some development, owed to its settlement edge location and previous land use.
- 4.2. Notwithstanding this, there are several constraints which may deem this site inappropriate for development. We consider that it may be difficult to accommodate 9no. dwellings whilst accounting for access, visitor parking, refuse storage, and circulation requirements. We have concerns regarding the proposed access to the Site via The Beeches private road. Further evidence which addresses these issues will need to be presented.

5.0. Recommended Submission Document(s):

- 5.1. If minded for approval, we advise the below documents are submitted:
- Hard and Soft Landscape Plan
 - Landscape Management Plan

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.