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Horsham District Council
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Our ref: 23866
Date: 27 October 2026

For the attention of: Bethan Tinning

Application ref:	DC/26/1335
Location:	Land South of Sunningdale Horsham Road Steyning West Sussex BN44 3AA
Proposal/Description:	Erection of a detached 5-bedroom dwelling with a detached garage, swimming pool, vehicular access and associated works.

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	☐

1.0. Site Context

1.1. The Site is located to the north of Steyning and accessed via Horsham Road which runs along the western site boundary. Other individual dwellings and small farmsteads are located in the parcels to the north and south of the site. The wider landscape comprises grassland and arable farmland.

2.0. Planning Policy Context

2.1. Within the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) (2015) the following policies are considered relevant:

- Policy 24 - Environmental Protection
- Policy 25 - District Character and the Natural Environment
- Policy 26 - Countryside Protection

2.2. Within the Steyning Neighbourhood Development Plan (2019-2031) the following policies are considered relevant:

- SNDP1 Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
- SNDP2 Responsible Environmental Design

3.0. Review of the proposal/submitted information:

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)

3.1. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) (Dwg no. DPLC/471/LVIA) has been submitted by DPLC dated 10th June 2026. Overall, we are largely satisfied with the Methodology included within Appendix D.

Landscape Character

3.2. The Site is located within the Wiston Low Weald Landscape Character Area (LCA) of the West Sussex Landscape Land Management Guidelines. Key characteristics of this LCA include; gently undulating landform, small to medium-sized pasture fields, enclosed by woodlands, shaws and hedgerows, isolated trees in pasture, local concentrations of horse grazed paddocks, dense cover of ancient broadleaved woodlands and conifer plantations, scattered, traditional Wealden farmsteads, cottages and a few linear villages.

3.3. Para 115 of the LVIA assesses that the Wiston Low Weald LCA consists of a "*moderate enhancement with no harm registered*". The assessment of effects should have remained consistent with the Methodology included within Appendix D, instead of referring to terminology such as *enhancement* and *harm*, which are not defined or used within the assessment of landscape and visual effects.

3.4. The assessment of landscape character has also not been as robustly reviewed as the assessment of visual effects within the submitted LVIA.

3.5. The assessed sensitivity, magnitude of change and the overall effects of the scheme cannot be ascertained from the submitted LVIA given the divergence from the methodological approach in Appendix D. However, given the scale of the proposals, we have considered the effects of the scheme based on our professional judgement.

3.6. Based on the methodology, we consider that the effects on the Wiston Low Weald LCA would be a low significance.

3.7. The Site and Immediate Context should also have been included within the submitted LVIA, to reflect the localised effects on the landscape character. Based on the submitted methodology, we consider that the effects The Site receptor would be significant.

Visual Effects

3.8. Viewpoint locations are included on Page 17 of the LVIA. We do not disagree with the selected locations for viewpoint photography.

3.9. However, we question the omission of viewpoint photography taken from further south along Public Right of Way (PRoW) STE-2600 which runs to the east of the site. Other viewpoints taken along this PRoW are considered high sensitivity (Page 44), and therefore we consider it important that photography is included along its length.

3.10. We do however note that the site is screened from views from Viewpoints 1-3. Whilst we would have expected the LVIA to demonstrate whether any available views are available further south, we consider that the extent of vegetation along the site's boundary is likely to screen the development proposals.

3.11. We do however not disagree with the effects assessed for other receptors included within the surrounding landscape.

Review of Proposals

3.12. The Site sits within the rural, gently undulating countryside that is characteristic of this LCA. The field in which the site is located is currently undeveloped, although other individual dwellings, farmsteads and farmyards are located to the north and south of the site and spread along Horsham Road.

3.13. Policy 26 Countryside Protection of the HDPF protects areas outside the built-up area boundary (BUAB) from inappropriate development. The Site does not adjoin the edge of Steyning and is within the rural countryside. On principle, development within an undeveloped parcel in the countryside is not generally supported from a landscape perspective.

3.14. In this instance, the proposed site is situated between other residential dwellings to the north and south, both accessed from Horsham Road. The proposed development type is therefore not incongruous with other development in the surrounding area, which reduced the sensitivity to residential development of a singular dwelling. The built form is also proposed close to the western edge of the site which minimises the encroachment on to the countryside to the east.

3.15. The submission of an LVIA is a more extensive approach than typically required for a development of this scale and nature. Given the site's countryside location and sensitivities associated with the rural setting, the LVIA assists in demonstrating that the potential landscape and visual effects have been fully considered and appropriate mitigation is proposed.

3.16. We recognise that the proposed development is largely screened from the surrounding area, given the extent of vegetation and other built forms which reduce opportunities to reduce views of the proposals.

3.17. The submitted Design and Access Statement (DAS) provides robust evidence and explanation of the design process, neighbouring examples of development and consideration for mitigating all constraints associated with the proposals, for example, the detailed 10-year Plan for Boundary Screening. We welcome this approach which provides detailed evidence of the design process and how this has aided the resulting well-considered proposals.

3.18. We also welcome the intention to define the edge of the domestic curtilage within the site, to reduce the effects of the proposals on the wider countryside character to the east.

3.19. All cut material is proposed to be retained on site, which is welcomed. Whilst the DAS provides considerable information on the proposed design and cros- sections across parts of the site, we request that several cross sections are submitted which cover the entire width of the site, demonstrating the full levels changes. This should also include the mounding proposed to the east of the site, to ensure this is not out of character with the surrounding landscape.

3.20. We welcome the submission of the Tree, Shrub and Seed Plan on Page 56 of the DAS. We advise that this plan is submitted separately in a higher resolution for ease of use by the LPA and any contractors using this plan to implement the works. The specifications should also be submitted alongside.

3.21. Whilst information is provided on the Hard Landscaping, we also advise that a separate Hard Landscape Plan is submitted separately alongside specifications.

3.22. We have therefore included a recommended Hard and Soft Landscaping condition below which includes all required information. We advise that this condition is considered.

4.0. Summary

4.1. From a landscape perspective, we consider that the proposed development can be accommodated on this site given the surrounding land uses, the containment from the wider landscape and the well-considered design approach used to information the proposals.

4.2. Whilst adverse landscape and visual effects are localised, the principle of development in this countryside location is subject to the requirements of Policy 26.

4.3. If minded for approval, we advise that our recommendations are taken into consideration within the design proposals and the below conditions are considered.

5.0. Recommended Condition(s):

5.1. If minded for approval, we would recommend the following conditions for your consideration:

5.2. 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 and built features. 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 lost due to the development and/or its construction. If agreement was sought at any later stage, there is an unacceptable risk of lost 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

This advice has been provided by Place Services 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.

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