



Horsham District Council
Parkside
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

Our ref: 18601
Date: 16 June 2026

For the attention of: Alice Johnson

Application ref: DC/26/0556
Location: Land West of Shoreham Road, Henfield, West Sussex
Proposal/Description: Erection of a complex of 4no. buildings comprising of 12no. light industrial units for employment use (office, industrial, storage and distribution uses (B2, B8 & E(g) use)) with associated car parking, access and landscaping.

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 between Small Dole and Henfield accessed via Shoreham Road. The boundaries are well vegetated with internal partitioning hedgerow separating three grass parcels.

2.0. Planning Policy Context

Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) (2015)

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

- Policy 24: Environmental Protection



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

Henfield Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) 2017-2031

2.2. Part of the site is identified within the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan as Employment Development Site Allocation where Policy 3.1 identifies the northern parcel as Site E - Southgrounds, Shoreham Road and part of the southern parcel as Site F - Land north of The Old Brickworks.

2.3. Specifically, Policy 3.1.3: Southgrounds, Shoreham Road (Site E) states:

Southgrounds, Shoreham Road is allocated for employment use, provided the proposal meets all of the following criteria:

- a) The design of the proposal has regard to its countryside location in respect of building scale.*
- b) The design for the proposal demonstrates an understanding of the landscape character which contributes to the character of this part of the neighbourhood area and these inform the design and layout of the site.*
- c) The proposal has regard for visibility from the surrounding countryside and provides for appropriate boundary treatments incorporating landscaping in particular provides screening on the western side.*
- d) The proposal maintains and enhances as much as is practicable of the site's rural character, retaining existing field boundaries and tree belts where appropriate and enhancing with native species.*
- e) The proposal makes provision for suitable access and appropriate associated infrastructure works to the A2037.*
- f) The proposal has regard to the amenities of nearby residential properties.*
- g) The proposal includes an adequate number and positions of electric vehicle charging points to enable businesses to choose to use electric vehicles.*
- h) Any external lighting is designed to minimise light pollution and supports the dark skies policy of the South Downs National Park Authority.*

2.4. Policy 3.1.4: Land north of the Old Brickworks (Site F) states:

Land north of the Old Brickworks is allocated for employment use, provided the proposal meets all of the following criteria:

- a) The design of the proposal has regard to its countryside location in respect of building scale.*
- b) The design for the proposal demonstrates an understanding of the landscape character which contributes to the character of this part of the neighbourhood area and these inform the design and layout of the site.*

- c) *The proposal has regard for visibility from the surrounding countryside and provides for appropriate boundary treatments incorporating landscaping in particular provides screening on the western side.*
- d) *The proposal maintains and enhances as much as is practicable of the site's rural character, retaining existing field boundaries and tree belts where appropriate and enhancing with native species*
- e) *The proposal makes provision for suitable access and appropriate associated infrastructure works to the A2037.*
- f) *The proposal has regard to the amenities of nearby residential properties.*
- g) *The proposal includes an adequate number and positions of electric vehicle charging points to enable businesses to choose to use electric vehicles.*
- h) *Any external lighting is designed to minimise light pollution and supports the dark skies policy of the South Downs National Park Authority.*

Further relevant policies include:

- Policy 10: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
- Policy 12: Design Standards for New Development

3.0. Review of the proposal/submitted information

Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA)

- 3.1. The application is accompanied by a LVA prepared by Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology. The LVA includes a desktop study, an evaluation of the landscape and visual baseline, an assessment of receptors, and a final summary and conclusion. A field survey was carried out in November 2023 when vegetation was limited
- 3.2. Overall, the methodology is difficult to follow, and the supporting diagrams do not clearly aid understanding of the assessment approach. The assessment process is not set out in a clear chronological order, and it begins with 'Effects thresholds' before defining value and susceptibility, neither of which are then used within the main body of the assessment or supporting text.

Landscape Character

- 3.3. Section 3.0 of the LVA has correctly identified the site as being located within:
 - National Character Area 121 Low Weald
 - Landscape Character Area LW11 Eastern Scarp Footslopes
 - Landscape Character Area D2 Henfield & Small Dole Farmlands
- 3.4. Table 4.1 of the LVA provides a clear summary of landscape receptors assessed which include 'Landscape within the site' and 'Landscape context' which has been broken down into sub-receptors. Although the methodology correctly identifies that sensitivity is formed

by combined judgements of value and susceptibility, we cannot identify where or how judgements of susceptibility have been made, and therefore cannot follow and verify the assessment approach.

- 3.5. Para 4.11 of the LVA states that “The application Site is not a valued landscape in relation to Paragraph 174(a) of the National Planning Policy Framework as informed by LI Technical Guidance Note 02-21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations.” However, no justification is provided to explain why the site has been judged not to be a valued landscape beyond its designation status. There is no clear evidence demonstrating how the “Low” value judgement has been derived with reference to TGN 02/21.
- 3.6. Table 1 of the TGN 02/21 sets out a range of factors that should be considered when assessing landscape value, including natural heritage, landscape condition and functional attributes. We consider the site’s landscape features make a meaningful contribution to its overall value and do not agree that the value of this site and its surroundings is Low, as defined within the methodology as “Area and/or features/or views with typical characteristics, in generally moderate condition, with potential for substitution.” Given the high quality of landscape features identified within the Arboricultural Implications Assessment, we consider these features to be distinctive and susceptible to development, and therefore indicative of a higher level of landscape value than has been attributed.
- 3.7. Para 4.13 references Townscape which we do not consider relevant for this site and continues to describe the baseline of the landscape receptors and their components without providing detailed assessment of value which should form the baseline as per GLIVA3 (para 3.15).
- 3.8. As noted within section 3.0 of the LVA, characteristics of NCA 121 include “A largely pastoral landscape with generally small and irregular fields divided by a dense network of hedgerows and shaws” where “Oak is the principal tree of the Low Weald and veteran beech is also an important feature.” From the characteristics of LCA LW11, the site contributes towards “Arable and pastoral rural landscape, secluded in places, a mosaic of small and larger fields, woodlands, shaws and hedgerows with hedgerow trees” where management guidelines include “Maintain and restore the scenic historic pattern and fabric of the agricultural landscape including irregular patterns of smaller fields”. LCA D2 describes “Small to large size regular and irregular fields with a variable hedgerow pattern small streams” where the condition is described as “Overall condition is declining, particularly through loss of hedgerows in many parts, and urban intrusion along the A2037.”
- 3.9. While we could accept that the geographical extent of the magnitude of change is on the smaller scale, we do not agree that the magnitude of change for landscape outside of the site to be “Minor or virtually imperceptible change in any area of landscape characteristics

and features” given the aforementioned contribution of the site characteristics to local, regional and national landscape character.

- 3.10. We can accept the overall effects which have been judged as minor-moderate adverse; however, the importance of highlighting valuable landscape features and characteristics should not be understated and should be utilised to inform any development of the site. We refer to Policy 3.1.3 of the HNP which states: “The design for the proposal demonstrates an understanding of the landscape character which contributes to the character of this part of the neighbourhood area and these inform the design and layout of the site”

Visual Amenity

- 3.11. The LVA includes Type 1 (Annotated) photography to represent the development within its context, which generally aligns with the LI’s Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 06/19: ‘Visual Representation of Development Proposals’. While we welcome the inclusion of long-distance representative viewpoints (figure 4.3) and short distance viewpoints (figure 4.4), assessment has not been made for mid distance views from Public Rights of Way to the west of the site along footpath HEN-3184 and those connected to it. Policy 3.1.4 of the HNP requires “The proposal has regard for visibility from the surrounding countryside and provides for appropriate boundary treatments incorporating landscaping in particular provides screening on the western side” We therefore request assessment of views from the west.
- 3.12. The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV, Figure 4.2) states that “viewshed derived at a height of 12m above most elevated part of Site of 20m AOD”; Para 4.18 of the Planning Statement states “The proposed buildings vary in eaves height from 5m to 7.5m” Clarification is requested on the proposed building heights.

Mitigation

- 3.13. Section 5.0 of the LVA sets out mitigation measures including primary mitigation to retain existing field boundaries and tree belts where appropriate and enhancing them through both reinforcement and structural planting. The Tree Protection Plan (Dwg. J65.00/01 Rev C) identifies a total of 13 trees and groups to be removed. Notably T3, G1, and T2 on the western boundary of the northern field. This is confirmed in other mitigation proposals which states that this is necessary to facilitate the proposed level changes. We request section drawings are provided across this boundary to understand the existing and proposed level changes. The replacement planting along this boundary would not mitigate its loss within a 15-year period.
- 3.14. The loss of this boundary vegetation raises further concerns regarding visual impact from the missing views from footpath FP HEN-3184 to the west and we question the necessity for vegetation removal.

- 3.15. We note the Tree Protection Plan does not include any protection for the southwestern field and request this area is fenced off and protected from construction pressures.
- 3.16. Other mitigation measures include “the colour of the façades to the units would be primarily grey, with a belt of dark green offset under the eaves, which would extend latitudinally along the façade” The proposed elevation details shown in section 8.0 of the Design and Access Statement (DAS) identify an indication towards materiality including signage which requires consideration for colour given the height of the signage on the building. The use of ‘timber-look’ cladding is welcomed, and we encourage the use of real timber cladding which will weather over time and integrate more naturally with the existing landscape.

Layout and appearance

- 3.17. We are disappointed to note that section 10.0 Landscaping of the DAS which states “The industrial developments have minimal landscaping within the sites and are predominantly surfaced with concrete and tarmac”. The Proposed Site Layout Plan identifies small areas proposed as flowering lawn which question the appropriateness of plant choice for location where it is likely to be subject to high foot traffic and at risk of failure. We recommend the use of shrub planting in these locations instead, and understory species for those areas where tree planting is proposed.
- 3.18. We note the pedestrian gateway located within the proposed hedge adjacent to the proposed BNG area. We request clarification on whether this access is intended to be restricted or utilised as amenity space for workers of the site. Furthermore, we request confirmation of where access for maintenance of this area is proposed.
- 3.19. Reference is made to the BNG report for details of enhanced landscaping in this area; however, we request plant specification to clearly identify what landscaping is proposed. It is important to understand the differences between ecological value and landscape value when proposing landscape details. While the indication towards edible landscapes is welcomed, we raise concerns regarding high maintenance of orchards and request further details on the intention of this area. We recommend including native species such as oak which are already existing on site and readily available for enhancement.

4.0. Summary

- 4.1. Overall, while we accept the principle of development on site is established through its allocation in the neighbourhood plan (Site F), we request further clarification and additional details to demonstrate that the proposals satisfy Policies 3.1.3 and 3.1.4 of the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan, in particular. Namely:
- Clear and justified assessment of the sites’ landscape value
 - Assessment of visual impact from footpath HEN-3184
 - Clarify building heights
 - Provide section drawings to explain proposed level changes on the western boundary

- Extend tree protection measures to include the southwestern field during construction

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.

