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Horsham District Council
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Our ref: 24609
Date: 16 November 2026

For the attention of: Bethan Tinning

Application ref: DC/26/1475
Location: Land To The Rear of The Hermitage Tower Hill Horsham West Sussex
Proposal/Description: Erection of nine dwellings (two affordable units) with associated existing access, parking, landscaping, drainage infrastructure and communal amenity space

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 on Parthings Lane to the north of Tower Hill village. The site comprises a singular small grassland field adjacent to The Hermitage. The wider landscape comprises grassland and arable fields, surrounded by strong hedgerows and trees. The railway line which runs along the southern edge of Horsham is located close to the north. Bridleway SOW-1635 runs along Parthings Lane.

2.0. Planning Policy Context

Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF)

2.1. Policies relevant to this application include: Policy 25: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character, Policy 26: Countryside Protection, Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity and Policy 33: Development Principles.

Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040 Regulation 19

2.2. As of January 2026, the Horsham District Local Plan (Regulation 19) is 'submitted' and the following policies are relevant:

- Strategic Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
- Strategic Policy 14: Countryside Protection
- Strategic Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
- Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles

Southwater Neighbourhood Plan

2.3. The following policies are considered relevant: SNP16: Design and SNP18: A Treed Landscape.

3.0. Review of the proposal/submitted information:

3.1. The site is located within Local Landscape Character Area 23: Parthings and Tower Hill of the Horsham Local Landscape Character Assessment (2014). The study states: "*Key landscape features and qualities are highly sensitive to development. Overall, the rural character of the landscape together with the role it plays in forming a strong green edge / setting to the settlement of Horsham means that this area has no / low capacity for large scale development.*"

3.2. The application has not been supported by a Landscape Visual Appraisal (LVA). However, based on our professional judgement, the application introduces several new dwellings into an undeveloped parcel of land within the countryside. The proposals would result in localised adverse effects on landscape character; however, these effects are largely contained by the existing vegetation and landform surrounding the site..

3.3. The site is located outside of the defined built-up area boundary and is therefore subject to Policy 26: Countryside Protection. The proposed development largely retains the existing trees, woodland edges and landscape features surrounding the site, helping to contain and mitigate effects on landscape character and visual amenity. Ensuring that the proposed development responds to this rural location is important to assimilating the proposals into the landscape.

3.4. In the context of Policy 26, the proposed development would alter the land use from an undeveloped rural field to a residential use, resulting in a noticeable change in character at a site level.

3.5. The surrounding woodland and field boundaries enclose the site along Parthings Lane, limiting the visual effects from this PRoW, thereby reducing effects on the landscape character and visual amenity experienced along this undeveloped, enclosed rural lane.

3.6. Whilst there would be adverse visual effects from Tower Hill, the sensitivity of these effects is moderated by the existing residential context and presence of built development along this frontage.

3.7. Policy SNP18.1 of the SNP states: "*Where existing trees or an area of woodland is to be lost, it must be replaced with trees or new woodland of greater environmental value on site or elsewhere within the Plan Area. Trees planted should be suitably mature and, as a minimum, conform to British Standard BS 3936-1 / Standard 10-12cm girth*". We welcome the variation in proposed tree sizes across the scheme, which will provide a degree of immediate landscape structure and assist in mitigating the effects of tree loss.

3.8. Several trees are proposed for removal on the edge of Tower Hill to facilitate the access. The removal of these trees has the potential to erode the rural character of Tower Hill, contribute to urbanisation of the frontage and conflict with the objectives of Policy 26.

3.9. Hard landscaping and boundary treatment information is included within Page 12 of the Design and Access Statement (DAS). This information should be submitted as a separate Hard Landscape Plan for review. We have included the details within the below suggested Condition wording.

3.10. Cross-sections should be submitted showing the SuDS basin, associated mounding and proposed gradients. This information is necessary to assess the visual integration of these features and to ensure that the public open space remains functional, accessible and usable.

3.11. The Proposed Landscape Layout (Dwg no. RCo596/01) and the Proposed Drainage Strategy Sheet 2 of 2 (Dwg no. C3407/P/102/P3) have comparatively different layouts for the SuDS basin, with the proposed pond occupying a larger area in the Drainage Layout. The information within these two plans should align for clarity.

3.12. Overall, from a landscape perspective, we consider there is capacity for a development of this type within the site. Whilst the proposals would introduce a degree of localised landscape and visual change, these effects are largely contained by the existing landscape structure, surrounding woodland and settlement context. This is subject to the recommendation below:

- A soft boundary treatment is proposed along the Parthings Lane site edge to ensure that the proposed scheme does not contribute to the urbanisation of the surrounding rural area.
- Split pole / post and rail fence is proposed along the frontage of most plots, which is welcome. We would however advise that this treatment is proposed between the front gardens, and close-board fencing is limited only to between the rear gardens. Since the frontage boundary treatment has been designed around the rural character, we advise that the close-board fences which have a more 'urban' feel are proposed only between the screened rear gardens.
- Shrub or other pond edge planting should be proposed around the headwall within the SuDS basin, to provide some screening and softening of this hard feature.

- We also advise that the precast concrete headwall is replaced within an alternative material and method which is more suitable in its rural location, such as use of gabion baskets.

4.0. Summary

4.1. Overall, we consider that the site is capable of accommodating the proposed residential development from a landscape perspective. Whilst the development will result in localised landscape and visual effects, these are generally limited by the site's containment and can be appropriately mitigated through detailed landscape design. We therefore recommend that the above conditions, recommendations and design amendments are considered.

5.0. Recommended Condition(s):

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

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, built features and street furniture. 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.

ACTION REQUIRED PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT: LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN (LMP)

No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority a landscape management plan for a minimum of 5 years. This should include:

a) *Drawing/s showing the extent of the LMP i.e. only showing the areas to which the LMP applies, areas of private ownership should be excluded.*

b) *Written Specification detailing:*

- *All operation and procedures for soft landscape areas; inspection, watering, pruning, cutting, mowing, clearance and removal of arisings and litter, removal of temporary items (fencing, guards and stakes) and replacement of failed planting.*
- *All operations and procedures for hard landscape areas; inspection, sweeping, clearing of accumulated vegetative material and litter, maintaining edges, and painted or finished surfaces.*
- *Furniture (Bins, Benches and Signage) and Play Equipment.*
- *All operations and procedures for soft landscaping to SuDS features; inspection of linear drains, basins and swales, removal of unwanted vegetative material and litter, including inlets and outlets.*

c) *Maintenance task table which explains the maintenance duties across the site in both chronological and systematic order.*

d) *Mechanism for monitoring and review of the management plan and operations.*

Reason - To support plant establishment and ensure appropriate management is carried out and to maintain functionality and visual aesthetic.

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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