HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Land North of Stonepit Lane Henfield West Sussex BN5 9QT
DESCRIPTION:	Erection of a single storey detached workshop / woodland management / forestry building. Installation of 6No. rooflights, new access and track.
REFERENCE:	DC/23/2076
RECOMMENDATION:	Objection / More Information / Modification

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION:

The current proposal is likely to have an adverse effect on visual amenity and an eroding effect on the landscape character if not sympathetically designed with the landscape context in mind. Should you deem the principle of a building of this nature justifiable in a countryside location, recommendations to overcome the landscape issues are listed below.

MAIN COMMENTS:

This site has been subject to a refused application for the erection of a single storey detached workshop including the provision of 6no rooflights, new access and track, under DC/22/1874. The reasons for refusal were due to the proposal resulting *in significant and demonstrable harm to the countryside setting, contrary to Policies 25, 26, 32, and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)*. It was additionally deemed that the proposal was *unlikely to maintain the relative tranquillity of the countryside in this location*. The current proposal is similar to the refused application, the main changes being:

- More robust planting plans
- The proposed building is 30cm smaller in height (7.2m) and 2m smaller in length (13m).
- The proposed building materials include metal profiled sheet roofing and timber cladding to the external walls with cart shed style external doors, as opposed to dark green metal cladding throughout.

It is noted that the block plans and elevations submitted are the same as plans submitted under DC/22/1874 and should be duly updated.

The proposed site is located north west of the town of Henfield, within Henfield Parish. It is set outside the built up area boundary and is therefore in a countryside location. The site is rectangular in shape and surrounded by agricultural land on all sides. The east,

south and west of the site are bounded by hedgerow and intermittent hedgerow trees. The northern boundary is undefined and open to the adjacent agricultural field.

The site currently comprises open grassland and is part of the South Downs Designated Protected Area. A traditional orchard is situated to the immediate south-east of the site.

Existing access to the site is via Stonepit lane - Public Right of Way (PRoW) 2524 - through clearings in the hedgerow in the south-western and south-eastern corners. Proposed access will be via the south-eastern corner via a new access track. Four other PRoW routes are within close proximity and offer views or glimpse views onto the site:

- PRoW 2528 runs south, perpendicular to the southern border
- PRoW 2530 runs approximately 160m further east of the site, along the northern adjacent field
- PRoW 3517 runs approximately 200m further west of the site, along the northern adjacent field
- PRoW 2525 runs along the northern border of the northern adjacent field

The proposed site falls along the edge of D2 - Henfield and Small Dole Farmlands Character Area of the Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment, however it is also representative of adjacent O3 - Steyning and Henfield Brooks Character Area due to its proximity.

Key relevant characteristics of D2 include medium to large arable fields with low gappy hedgerows, undulating landscape of low ridges and long views to and from the ridges. Key issues include previous and continuing loss of hedgerows partly through lack of management. Overall sensitivity to change is high, and planning and land management guidelines state to ensure any new development does not intrude onto visible ridgelines, to conserve and manage existing hedgerows and to encourage coppice management of existing woodlands.

Key relevant characteristics of O3 include arable valleysides with fragmented hedgerow pattern and small isolated woodlands. It is a major wildlife corridor and as such, key issues include fertiliser/pesticide runoff from adjacent agricultural landscapes. Overall sensitivity to change is high due to the openness of the area and key sensitivities include localised intrusion from modern farm buildings. Planning and land management guidelines state to conserve the tranquil, undeveloped character, ensure that any road widening or new road crossings do not damage the character and to ensure any new development on valleysides is small scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, form and building materials.

The site is considered to be representative of both D2 and O3 character areas given its undeveloped and rural character, open, agricultural fields and variable hedgerow pattern.

While extra detail and a more robust planting plan is welcomed, there is still not sufficient information submitted in order to ascertain and understand impacts and effects on landscape character and visual amenity. This site is particularly sensitive to change given both its character areas and that it's visible from multiple PRoWs, where views are read in line with the rural context of the location, observed by receptors associated with the countryside. The current proposal does not differ enough from previously refused DC/22/1874 or address previous recommendations. It was noted in the previous landscape response that the application, *'has not been supported by a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA), though we have made the professional judgement that the*

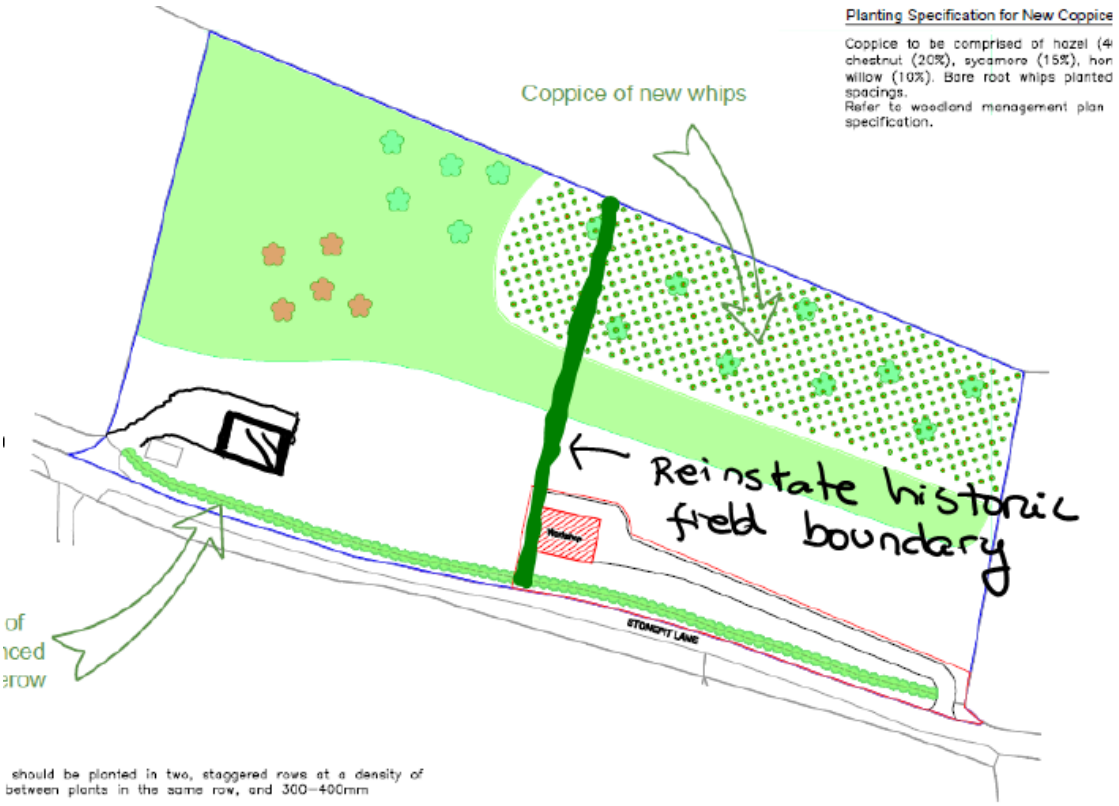
proposal will have an adverse impact on visual amenity and an eroding effect on the landscape character if not sympathetically designed with the landscape context in mind'. If the conclusions reached are not agreed with, we would therefore recommend that an LVA is provided. This is in order to assess likely effects and proposed mitigation measures that demonstrate how the proposal will protect, conserve or enhance the key features and characteristics of its landscape character areas.

Outstanding requests from our previous response are listed below and further recommendations added as follows:

- We would advise that as a result of the site's topology, the access point to the west of the site is used, and that the length of the access road is reduced by bringing the proposed building closer to the site entrance.
    - In addition, planting plans should be updated to include hedgerow aligning with the lost field boundary, reinstating part of the historic field pattern which contributes to the character of the area (see below).



    - Our recommendations are illustrated below and include the relocation of the building to make use of the existing access, as suggested by the previous consultation response, and the inclusion of hedgerow planting with interspersed trees to reinstate the historic field boundary



- We would advise that a tree survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) and Tree Protection Plan (TPP) are submitted to give us a greater understanding of the impact on existing trees and hedgerows on Stonepit Lane and to ensure root protection areas are not adversely impacted by the proposed building and access lane layout.
- Hard landscaping details must be provided in regard to the access track and proposed boundary treatments.
- Hard boundary treatments should include exclusion fencing as stated in the Woodland Management Plan and its position clearly marked on plan.
- A landscape plan to be submitted as a separate document, as opposed to a planting plan drawing within the planning statement. This should detail Latin names and specification of all proposed plants. Oak, for example, is insufficient detail and there is currently no information on proposed orchard trees. and must include details on hard landscape and boundary treatment.
- A gap should be left in between new coppice and wildflower in order to allow access without disturbing new biodiversity found within the meadow.
- Tree pit details.
- A Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan (LMMP) detailing management responsibilities, specification and maintenance schedules. This could be combined with the Woodland Management Plan and must address the proposed orchard, meadow, hedgerow, boundary treatments and hardstanding. Information regarding treatment and removal of guards and canes should also be included.
- Information on weeding within the Woodland Management Plan and LMMP should specify hand weeding as the method of removal. Given the site's sensitive valleyside location representative of O3, fertiliser/pesticide runoff is to be avoided.

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS:

n/a

NAME:	Elly Hazael Trainee Landscape Architect (Planning)
DEPARTMENT:	Specialists Team - Strategic Planning
DATE:	22/02/24
SIGNED OFF BY:	Inês Watson CMLI Specialists Team Leader (Landscape Architect)
DATE:	23/02/2024