

Sussex Gardens Trust

Encouraging the protection, conservation and evolution of the local garden heritage

47 Denmans Lane
Lindfield
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 2JN

By e-mail to Horsham District Council
Matthew Porter
Parkside,
Chart Way, Horsham,
West Sussex RH12 1RL

7th January 2022

Dear Sir

DC/21/1603 Retrospective application for the construction of additional areas for visitor car parking at Leonardslee Lower Beeding Horsham West Sussex RH13 6PP

Representatives of SGT have carefully studied the documents recently submitted including the rather limited Heritage Impact Statement and comments from the Conservation Officer, Landscape Architect and Arboricultural Officer.

It is disappointing and worrying that commercial pressures have already combined with poor professional knowledge to cause significant harm to trees by the garden entrance. Leonardslee holds a world class collection of rhododendrons, camellias, magnolias and other trees, and this is one of the main reasons it holds a Grade I designation. Responsible custodianship of such a collection requires a detailed understanding of what exists and how it can best be managed. Without a proper Conservation Management Plan (as advised by Historic England), or broader Heritage Impact Assessment than that recently provided, pressures due to higher visitor numbers and commercial interests could cause significant harm to the tree and plant collections throughout the park.

Before the application is determined, it is imperative the applicant fully assesses the horticultural and arboricultural harm higher visitor numbers will cause and describes how this harm will be mitigated. If the park cannot accommodate higher visitor numbers without substantial harm, there is no justification for a larger car park.

Sussex Gardens Trust continues to object to the application.

Yours faithfully

Jim Stockwell.

On behalf of the Sussex Garden Trust.

Copy to: The Gardens Trust