47 Denmans Lane
Lindfield
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 2JN

By e-mail to Horsham District Council
FAO Jacques Burrowes
Parkside,
Chart Way, Horsham,
West Sussex RH12 1RL

21 February 2024

Dear Sir

DC/24/0088 Signage at Leonardslee, Horsham West Sussex RH13 6PP

This has recently been brought to the attention of Sussex Gardens Trust by one of our members. Since this application lies within the Grade I listed Leonardslee Gardens, Horsham District Council is required to consult the Gardens Trust (GT) in its role as Statutory Consultee with regard to proposed development affecting a site listed by Historic England (HE) on their Register of Parks and Gardens. The Sussex Gardens Trust (SGT) is a member organisation of the GT and works in partnership with it in respect of the protection and conservation of registered sites, and is authorised by the GT to respond on GT's behalf in respect of such consultations.

Representatives of SGT have carefully studied the documents submitted with the application and know the site well having visited several times in recent years.

The area of the park on which the proposed signs are to be located is significant in heritage terms as it forms part of the historic parkland and historic entrance to the house and its gardens. It is therefore important that as much of the former parkland character and sense of arrival at a former country estate is restored as much as possible. This can best be achieved through ensuring that the amount of visitor infrastructure in this area, including signage, is limited to that which is essential to create a viable business. New structures, such as this signage, along with the car parking are cumulatively changing the whole character of this area and degrading the former parkland landscape.

This harm is exacerbated by the non-permitted removal of shrubs and trees along the boundary. Signs similar to those proposed were erected without planning permission some while ago (but were later removed) and their appearance is shown in the Google earth image below:



Another planning application, DC/22/2229, was approved last summer with numerous conditions including pre-occupation Condition 11 which stated

"…No part of the development hereby permitted shall be used or brought into use until full details of all hard and soft landscaping works for that part of the development (a/b/c) shall have been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include plans and measures addressing the following:

- *Details of all proposed trees and planting, including schedules specifying species, planting size, densities and plant numbers ...."*

So far as SGT is aware, such planting plans have not yet been submitted. However, it is to be hoped that replacement planting will be made and, over a period of years, return the shrub screen to its former appearance as illustrated by the Google image below showing the same view as it was in 2015, with a verdant colourful screen between the road and the park:



Screening would eventually mitigate the visual harm to some degree, but even so SGT would prefer to see less prominent signage with more subdued imagery.

Conclusion

SGT objects to the application because it will cause visual harm to the Grade I Registered Park.

Yours faithfully

Jim Stockwell.

On behalf of the Sussex Garden Trust

Copy to: The Gardens Trust