

**West Horsley Parish Council's Response to Natural England's Consultation Document  
'Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty: Boundary Variation Project'**

West Horsley Parish Council made a submission as part of the first consultation for an extension to the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in early 2022. At that time the whole of that part of the village south of the railway line was included in the Evaluation Area 6a (Fig.1). This area has now been excluded from Boundary Variation Project Candidate Area 6a (Fig 1a).

1. **Proposal A (Fig 2) West Horsley Conservation Area and West Horsley Place Estate:** We attach a plan proposing that the area to be included should be defined as that area of the village south of the natural barrier of the railway line, extending to the existing AONB boundary along the A246, which is already designated West Horsley (South) by Guildford Borough Council.

Our justification for including this area of West Horsley Parish is as follows.

- a. This area includes our Conservation Area and contains 39 of the 41 Listed Buildings which comprise the traditional centre of our village, which is one of the oldest villages in Surrey and can trace its roots back to the Saxon era.
- b. The area also includes the 380-acre estate of historic West Horsley Place, a 15th century Grade 1 Listed Building (not Grade 2 as suggested by Natural England in the Consultation Document) of national significance. The building is in the centre of the West Horsley Place estate, which extends to some 380 acres of rolling pastureland and woodland and is the subject of an ongoing project of significant restoration and re-wilding. Indeed, a field that is part of the of the estate, south of the A246 and east of St Mary's church, is already within the AONB.



*View of West Horsley Place (incorrectly labelled as Hatchlands in the Consultation Document)*

- c. West Horsley Place has a far greater cultural heritage than Hatchlands with connections to Henry VIII, Elizabeth I, Carew Raleigh, the son of Sir Walter, and the Fair Geraldine, to whom Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517-1547) dedicated his famous love poem '*From Tuscan Came My Lady's Worthy Race*' (see below for full text).

- d. It is noted that the Hatchlands estate, located immediately to the west of West Horsley village and partially within the West Horsley parish boundary, has been included in the proposed extended area but find it illogical that West Horsley Place, which has many similar characteristics to Hatchlands, and is of far more historical and cultural interest, has been excluded.
- e. The walled gardens at West Horsley Place, chiefly to the west of the house, includes one of the best examples of a crinkle crankle/serpentine wall in the country; and the orchard to the west and north of the house has a collection of heritage fruit trees including a mulberry thought to be at least 300 years old.



*Crinkle Crankle/Serpentine Wall at West Horsley Place*

- f. West Horsley Place would appear to qualify for inclusion as it clearly complies with all six tests suggested by Natural England for evidence gathering. Indeed, in their consultation brochure Natural England included a photograph of a building which they consider to be a fine example of a house with cultural and historic significance and therefore worthy of inclusion in the Surrey Hills AONB, but although labelled Hatchlands it is in fact West Horsley Place.
- g. In the Natural Beauty Assessment for Evaluation Area 6a under 'Relative Tranquillity' it is suggested that the area of Hatchlands Park is relatively tranquil in comparison to that part of the area to the east of Shere Road and The Street, West Horsley. However, the majority of the eastern area comprises the West Horsley Place estate.
- h. In terms of relative tranquillity as well as the estate being accessible without paying an entrance fee to the National Trust, the West Horsley Place estate is crisscrossed with public footpaths and permissive paths, only sensitive areas such as the badger sets being restricted. In addition, while Hatchlands Park received 113,512 visitors in 2020/21, by comparison West Horsley Place received less than 20,000.
- i. In recent biodiversity investigations, 284 different species have been recorded on the West Horsley Place estate. It would appear that in terms of relative tranquillity West Horsley Place wins hands down.

***If Proposal A is not acceptable to Natural England we would most strongly recommend that Candidate Area 6a includes the areas identified in Proposals B and C outlined overleaf.***

2. **Proposal B (Fig 3) at Hatchlands Estate:** We attach a plan proposing that the area of Hatchlands Estate to be included in Candidate Area 6a should extend further to the east, creating a boundary along The Street from the A246 to its junction with Ripley Lane; then north along Ripley Lane to the railway line.

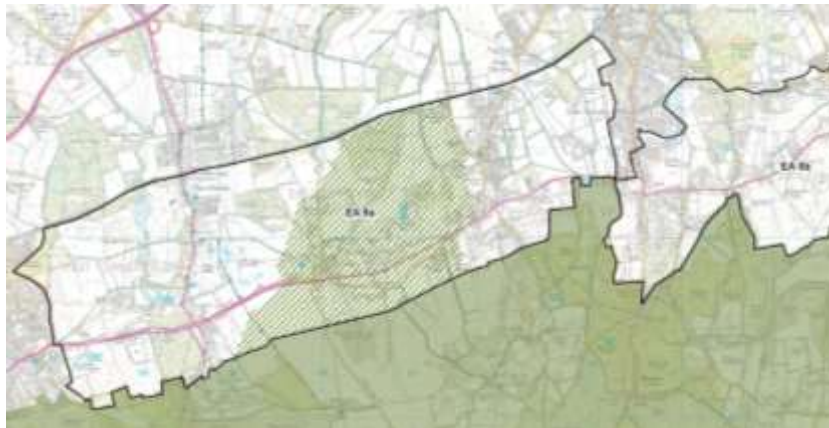
Our reasons for this are as follows:

- a. Candidate Area 6a currently includes Lower Hammonds Farm, part of the Hatchlands estate within the West Horsley parish, taking the AONB extension to Ripley Lane, but excludes Hammonds Farm to the south which has the same quiet, rural, natural surrounding as Lower Hammonds Farm.
3. **Proposal C (Fig 4a & Fig 4b) at West Horsley Place:** We attach a plan proposing that the entire West Horsley Place estate be included in Candidate Area 6a. Our reasons for this have been clearly outlined in Proposal A above. We understand that the Trustees of West Horsley Place Trust are submitting their own response to the current consultation.

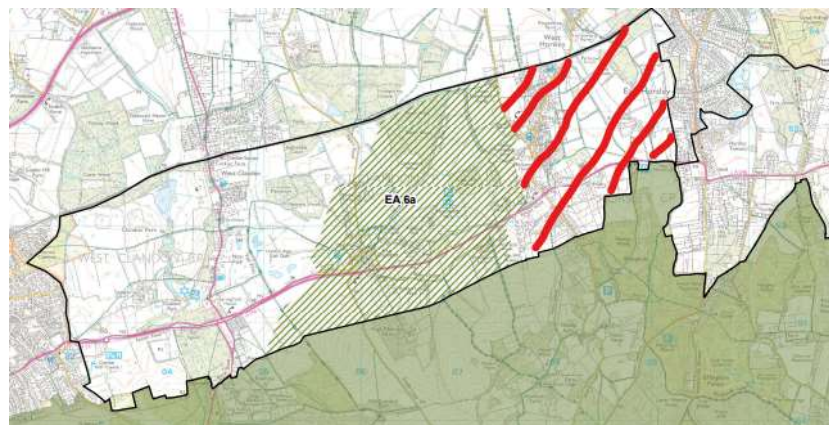
**Figure 1: Original Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review Evaluation Area EA6**



**Figure 1a: Boundary Variation Project Candidate Area 6a**



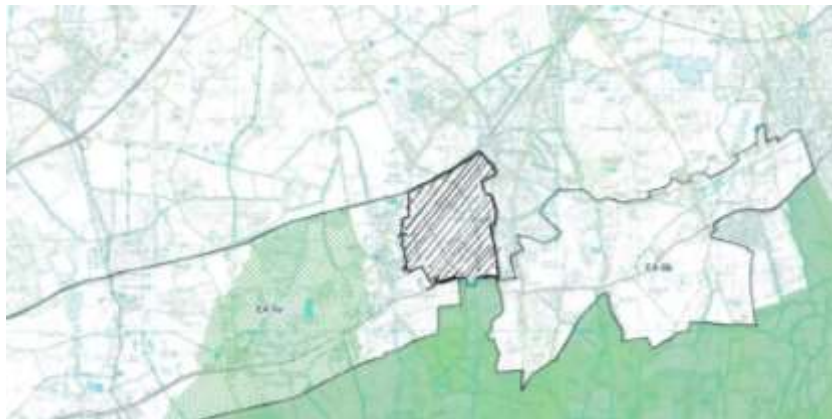
**Figure 2: Proposal A – Extension to Candidate Area 6a for West Horsley Parish**



**Figure 3: Proposal B – Extension to Candidate Area 6a at Hatchlands Estate**



**Figure 4a: Proposal C – Inclusion of West Horsley Place Estate in Candidate Area 6a**



**Figure 4b: OS Map of West Horsley Place - as shown above**



**From Tuscan Came My Lady's Worthy Race'**  
**Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517-1547)**

*"From Tuscan came my lady's worthy race ;  
Fair Florence was sometime her ancient seat.  
The western isle whose pleasant shore doth face  
Wild Camber's cliffs, did give her lively heat.  
Foster'd she was with milk of Irish breast:  
Her sire an earl, her dame of prince's blood.  
From tender years, in Britain doth she rest,  
With a King's child, where she tastes ghostly food.  
Hunsdon did first present her to mine eyen:  
Bright is her hue, and Geraldine she hight.  
Hampton me taught to wish her first for mine;  
And Windsor, alas, doth chase me from her sight.  
Her beauty of kind ; her virtues from above;  
Happy is he that may obtain her love!."*