

Stefan Galyas

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 14 November 2025 15:02
To: Stefan Galyas
Subject: Objection to planning application DM/25/1185

Dear Mr Galyas,

I write as the owner of a property at Southdowns Park to object to Application DM/25/1185, the proposed temporary (36-month) change of use of the existing tennis courts to three padel courts with associated works at St Francis Sports & Social Club.

While I appreciate that sporting facilities are in demand, this proposal is inappropriate for this setting and would cause a significant and unacceptable impact on both the residential amenity and the character of Southdowns Park. We already have added noise and traffic for the swimming pool, bowls club and the St Francis Football. Introducing a fourth public venture really does exasperate the quiet enjoyment of this private estate.

SM

1. Noise and Residential Amenity

Padel produces frequent, sharp impact sounds from ball-bat and wall rebounds. Even if the average decibel readings appear compliant, the character and repetition of these impulsive noises — often described as resembling constant door-slams — make them highly intrusive.

The submitted acoustic data is not robust: it does not appear to represent the most exposed dwellings or realistic receiver heights, particularly given the rising ground and elevation across large areas of Southdowns Park that are directly exposed to the courts. Prolonged exposure for up to 14 hours a day, seven days a week (8 a.m.–10 p.m.) would be fundamentally at odds with the tranquil environment that defines this development. The application also includes amplified music - this is not essential for the game to be played and is totally at odds with the natural surroundings.

SM

2. Character of the Historic Residential Setting

Southdowns Park is a distinguished, converted Victorian hospital complex set in landscaped grounds overlooking the South Downs. Its peaceful, semi-rural character is a core part of its appeal and heritage value.

Introducing three intensively used, noise-generating courts in close proximity to homes would erode that character. Comparisons with other padel sites — such as the Triangle, Haywards Heath Rugby Club, or the Handcross Racket Centre — are not valid, since those are stand-alone leisure locations well away from residential receptors.

SM

3. Enjoyment of Property (a Legitimate Planning Concern)

While direct property value is not a material planning factor, the ability of residents to enjoy their homes and gardens in peace is. The distinctive impulsive nature of padel noise would materially diminish that enjoyment and sense of tranquillity.

SM

4. Traffic and Parking

Padel's current popularity will attract non-resident users, increasing traffic movements and parking demand within and around Southdowns Park, causing further disturbance — particularly in evenings — when the existing on-site parking is already constrained.

3M

5. "Temporary" Nature Is Not a Remedy

Labeling the change "temporary (36 months)" does not eliminate the harm. Three years is a long period for residents to endure unacceptable disturbance, and such consents are often renewed, leading to permanent change by attrition.

3M

6. Relevant Planning Trend and Precedent

My research shows that a growing number of councils have refused or restricted outdoor padel-court applications precisely because of noise and amenity impacts in residential contexts.

Recent examples include:

- Adur & Worthing Council (AWDM/0692/25) – approved only with stringent noise-control conditions after members raised amenity concerns.
- Arun District Council (A/100/24/PL, Angmering) – withdrawn following strong objections over noise and setting.
- Brighton & Hove City Council (2025 Hove Fitness Centre) – significant neighbour objections on noise grounds reflecting the same sensitivities.
- Planning Appeal APP/X1735/W/25/3359465 (Hayling Island, Hampshire) – dismissed in August 2025 after the Inspector found that the padel courts would unacceptably harm residents' living conditions through noise and disturbance.

These examples demonstrate that planning authorities and Inspectors recognise padel noise as a serious amenity issue, especially in quiet residential or heritage environments.

3M

Conclusion

For the reasons above, I respectfully request that the Council refuse application DM/25/1185. It is not an appropriate use in this sensitive, historic residential setting and would cause unacceptable harm to amenity, tranquillity, and character.

If, contrary to these points, the Council is minded to approve, then it is essential that robust, enforceable conditions are imposed, including:

- Reduced hours: no earlier than 09:00 and no later than 19:00 (weekdays) / 17:00 (weekends & Bank Holidays).
- No amplified sound is essential for the game to be played and should be totally prohibited and no floodlighting outside those hours.
- Comprehensive acoustic barriers addressing impulsive characteristics (not just average dB), plus post-installation testing at worst-affected façades with a remediation trigger if limits are exceeded.
- Booking-only use, limits on concurrent players/spectators, and a management plan covering parking and complaints procedures.
- Strictly non-renewable 36-month limit with mandatory reinstatement to the original or landscaped condition.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

