

We live next-door to the proposed housing development at 42 Hurst Road DM/25/2626 and strongly object to the planning application on the following grounds:

1. Precedent for Refusal

Reference number **14/00522/FUL** (Land Rear of 27 Hurst Road, Hassocks, West Sussex BN6 9NL) was refused by the Council because the proposed back-garden development was considered “distinctly out of keeping with the immediate surroundings,” causing harm to the character of the area and conflicting with **Mid Sussex Local Plan Policy B1** and the **NPPF** (previously paragraphs 53, 57, and 58). While these policies have since been updated, it is our understanding that this application **DM/25/2626** similarly conflicts with the current **DP26: Character and Design** and the **NPPF** (paragraphs 75, 131, and 135) for the same reasons, as the development would fail to respect the character, scale, and setting of the surrounding area.

2. Impact of Proposed Development on Garden, Biodiversity, and Countryside Character

Our garden is a valuable natural sanctuary, supporting mature trees, hedgerows, and a diverse range of wildlife, including deer grazing on our apple trees, owls, foxes, hedgehogs, and pollinators such as bees and butterflies. Seasonal changes—from spring blossom to autumn leaves—further enhance the tranquillity and character of the space. The proposed development would remove or disturb these habitats, causing permanent harm to biodiversity, visual amenity, and the rural character of the area. This would directly conflict with **District Plan Policy DP12**, which seeks to protect the intrinsic character and quality of the countryside, and **Policy DP38**, which requires the protection, enhancement, and connectivity of biodiversity and ecological networks. It would also be contrary to the **National Planning Policy Framework (Sections 12 and 15)**, which emphasise well-designed development that integrates with the natural environment, protects wildlife habitats, and respects local character. Granting this application would therefore result in unacceptable harm to both the natural environment and the quality of the local landscape, undermining key local and national planning policies.

3. Impact of Proposed Development on Residential Privacy and Wellbeing

Although the proposed back garden dwelling is designed as an eco underground house, its location in the middle of the back garden would significantly impact the privacy and amenity of neighbouring properties. Its central position means that neighbouring gardens would be visible through the existing hedges, reducing privacy and creating a sense of intrusion, and the increased human activity, movement, and associated noise would cause disturbance. Light pollution from windows, external lighting and potentially 4 cars would further affect the tranquillity of adjacent homes. This conflicts with **District Plan Policy DP29 (Amenity)**, which requires development to safeguard the amenity of existing and future residents, including protection from overlooking, overshadowing, and disturbance. The proposal would therefore fail to meet the expected standards for privacy, light, and noise, resulting in an unacceptable reduction in neighbouring amenity. Whilst a pool house was approved in previous planning applications, changing this into a 4 bedroom house with two residential parking spaces and a visitor parking space is materially different in use.

4. Impact of Proposed Development on the Settlement Separation and Countryside

The proposed dwelling sits in the middle of the back garden in a location that lies between two distinct villages, effectively filling a gap in the open countryside that currently separates them. Allowing development in this position would erode the physical and visual separation between settlements, contributing to the gradual coalescence of these villages. This would directly conflict with **District Plan Policy DP13**, which seeks to prevent the merging of settlements and protect the open character and identity of the countryside between built-up areas. Even a single dwelling in this location undermines the strategic intent of **DP13**, as it reduces the perception of separation, harms the rural character of the landscape, and sets a precedent for further infill that could eventually lead to settlement coalescence.

5. Impact of Proposed Development on Character and Design

The proposed dwelling would require a long driveway through the back garden to accommodate multiple vehicles, with 4-6 cars expected to enter and exit daily. This driveway would cross a busy pedestrian route regularly used by school children and commuters walking to the nearby station. The increased vehicle movements create a clear risk of accidents and conflict between vehicles and pedestrians, compromising the safety of residents and the local community. This directly conflicts with **District Plan Policy DP26**, which requires development to create layouts that are safe, well connected, and accessible, while respecting the character and function of the surrounding area. Granting this application would therefore introduce unacceptable hazards for pedestrians and children, making the site unsafe and unsuitable for development in this location.

6. Sequential Applications and Implications for the Site

This application forms the **third iteration of proposals** for residential development within the site's curtilage, with no implementation of the previously approved scheme. The pattern of sequential submissions is a material consideration under established planning practice, as it evidences a progressive re-evaluation of the development potential of the plot. The remaining garden area is extensive when assessed against the scale and footprint of the proposed four-bedroom dwelling, indicating that the site retains a level of residual capacity beyond that explicitly presented within the current application boundary. In such circumstances, it is appropriate for the Local Planning Authority to consider the **implications of incremental site intensification**, including its potential cumulative impact on the **established spatial pattern, local character, and policy objectives relating to settlement form and design quality**. It is therefore requested that the planning history and the site's capacity for further subdivision are afforded due weight in the determination of this proposal.