

Hamish Evans

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 28 November 2025 11:38
To: Hamish Evans
Subject: Objection – DM/25/2830 – 65 Balcombe Road

[REDACTED]
Dear Hamish,

I am writing to object to the proposed Change of Use at 65 Balcombe Road (DM/25/2830). The operational model, intensity of use, staffing arrangements and associated vehicle movements clearly amount to a material change of use beyond what is typical of a C3 residential dwelling. The proposal would cause demonstrable harm to residential amenity, highways safety, and the character of the local area. My grounds for objection are set out below.

It is clear that the conclusions reached at the pre-application advice stage were based on incomplete or inaccurate information. The submitted application now reveals a 24-hour staffing model with waking-night supervision, 1:1 staffing ratios, complex shift patterns, regular external professional visits and an operational intensity far beyond that of a family home. These details contradict the earlier assumption that comings and goings would be similar to a C3 use or limited to simple 8am–8pm shift patterns.

The pre-application assumption regarding “five off-street parking spaces” was also incorrect. Vehicles cannot turn on the driveway, the garage is unsuitable for daily staff use, and the parking arrangement becomes unsafe with more than two cars present. The officer’s informal opinion that the change would not be “material” was therefore based on information that is substantially different from the operational reality set out in the full application. For this reason, it should not be afforded significant weight in determining the proposal.

Grounds for Objection

1. Staffing model constitutes a material change of use

The proposal involves shift-based, non-resident care staff providing 24-hour supervision, including waking-night cover. This level of staffing is incompatible with a typical family home and is characteristic of an institutional use.

2. Commercial-level activity

Staff breaks, shift-change waiting and phone calls outside the property would create continuous activity that is not in keeping with the quiet residential nature of the area.

3. Institutional internal alterations

The expected use of sprinkler systems, safety signage and designated fire exits indicates a move away from domestic use toward an institutional environment.

4. Insufficient parking and unsafe vehicle operation

The driveway cannot safely accommodate the number of staff, visitors and service providers required. Shift overlaps could result in six or more vehicles on site at once, necessitating frequent reversing and repositioning.

5. Hazard of reversing onto Balcombe Road

Vehicles would be forced to reverse onto Balcombe Road due to the lack of turning space. This road already has restricted visibility and traffic-calming measures following earlier accidents. Any increase in vehicle movements would worsen an existing safety concern.

6. Inaccurate assumptions about on-street parking

Balcombe Road has no available on-street parking, and Penland Road is subject to time restrictions unsuitable for shift workers or visiting professionals. Overflow parking would impede traffic flow and may obstruct emergency vehicles.

7. Safety concerns for vulnerable children

The busy road, incomplete pavements and unsafe crossing points pose significant risks. Increased traffic from nearby developments, alongside two burglaries at the property earlier this year, heightens safeguarding concerns.

8. Underestimated vehicle movements

Unlike a family home where residents travel together, this proposal would involve multiple staggered staff arrivals, management visits, professionals and shift changes, easily exceeding 20 vehicle movements per day.

9. Misleading comparison to a large household

The claim of accommodating “up to nine residents” is not a realistic comparator. Historically the property has housed only one or two people, making the proposal far more intensive than typical residential use.

10. Noise and disturbance

The need for 1:1 staffing and waking-night supervision implies complex needs. Combined with high staff turnover and frequent external visits, this will increase noise and disturbance to neighbouring homes.

11. Lack of Ofsted registration or proven experience

The operator is not Ofsted-registered and has presented no evidence of experience in running children’s services, raising concerns about suitability and safeguarding.

12. Limited local facilities for older children

There are few amenities nearby, increasing the likelihood of unsupervised outdoor activity or associated disturbance.

13. Impact on the Townscape Protection Area

The site lies within a designated Townscape Protection Area. Increased vehicles, refuse, noise and activity would undermine the character this designation is intended to protect.

14. Adverse impact on residential amenity

The proposal would introduce a significantly higher level of noise, traffic and general activity than is normal for this quiet residential location.

15. Existing and worsening refuse issues

Bins already obstruct the pavement. Additional waste from a more intensive use would exacerbate this issue.

16. Need for Planning Committee determination

Given public interest, operational intensity and the potential precedent, this application should be determined by the Planning Committee rather than under delegated powers.

17. Indicators of institutional operation

The anticipated use of alarms, surveillance doorbells, rotating staff and frequent external professionals demonstrates that the property would operate as an institution, not a household.

18. Uncertain freeholder consent

As the applicant is a lessee, evidence of freeholder awareness and consent has not been provided. This should be confirmed prior to any determination.

For the reasons set out above, the proposal represents a material change of use that would result in harm to highways safety, residential amenity, the Townscape Protection Area and the safeguarding of vulnerable children. I therefore respectfully request that the application be refused.

Please confirm receipt of this email and advise whether any further action is required on my part.

Regards,



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