

Hamish Evans

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 02 December 2025 17:42
To: Hamish Evans
Subject: Change of Use at 65 Balcombe Road (DM/25/2830)

[REDACTED]

Dear Hamish

I object to the proposed **Change of Use at 65 Balcombe Road (DM/25/2830)**. The application shows a level of activity, staffing and operations far beyond a C3 residential use, and the proposal would materially alter the site and adversely affect neighbours and highway safety.

The pre-application view was based on understated information. The full application confirms 24-hour staffing with waking-night cover, 1:1 staffing ratios, shift overlaps and regular professional visits—nothing like normal domestic activity.

Claims of “five off-street parking spaces” were also incorrect. The site has no safe turning area, the garage is unsuitable for staff parking, and the driveway becomes unsafe with more than two vehicles. The earlier conclusion that the change would not be “material” was therefore based on inaccurate information and should carry little weight.

- **Staffing model represents a material departure from C3 use**

A rolling shift pattern with non-resident care staff, including overnight waking duties, is wholly inconsistent with the operation of a family dwelling and is characteristic of an institutional setting.

- **Commercial-level activity on site**

Shift changes with 6 persons more often than that, staff breaks, waiting during shift changes and phone calls taking place outdoors would create ongoing background activity, which is incompatible with the quiet, residential character of the area.

- **Internal alterations indicative of an institutional environment**

The likely inclusion of sprinkler systems, fire-safety signage and dedicated evacuation routes moves the property away from domestic use and towards institutional occupation.

- **Inadequate and unsafe parking arrangements**

The driveway cannot safely accommodate the volume of staff, visitors and professionals. Shift overlaps could result in six or more vehicles at one time, causing repeated manoeuvring and congestion. With no turning space, vehicles will be forced to reverse onto a road that already suffers from poor visibility and a history of accidents. Additional movements would exacerbate an existing safety risk. Also Balcombe Road offers no practical on-street parking. Penland Road’s restrictions make it unsuitable for staff or visiting professionals. Displaced parking would hinder traffic flow and could obstruct emergency access.

- **Safety concerns for vulnerable children**

The busy road, limited pavement provision and hazardous crossing points present safeguarding concerns. Increased traffic from local developments and recent burglaries at the property heighten these risks.

- **Underestimated vehicle movements**

Unlike a household where trips are typically shared, this operation would generate multiple staggered staff arrivals, management visits and professional appointments, easily exceeding 20 daily vehicle movements.

- **Misleading comparison to a “large” household**

The suggestion that the property could accommodate “up to nine residents” as a domestic comparison is unrealistic. Historically the house has been occupied by one or two people; the proposed intensity is far beyond normal residential use.

- **Noise and disturbance**

1:1 staffing and waking-night supervision imply residents with complex needs. Combined with staff turnover and regular external visitors, this will inevitably increase noise and disturbance for neighbours.

- **Lack of Ofsted registration or proven experience**

The operator is not Ofsted-registered and has provided no evidence of experience in delivering children’s care services, raising questions about capability and safeguarding.

- **Impact on the Townscape Protection Area**

The site sits within a designated Townscape Protection Area. Additional traffic, noise, waste and general activity would detract from the character the designation seeks to preserve.

- **Detriment to residential amenity**

The cumulative increase in noise, comings and goings and general operational intensity would be highly disruptive to this quiet residential location.

- **Existing refuse issues likely to worsen**

Bins already obstruct the pavement; higher occupancy and staffing levels would lead to greater waste and further exacerbate this problem.

- **Indicators of institutional operation**

Alarms, surveillance devices, rotating staff and regular professional attendance indicate the operation of an institution rather than a family home.

Given the nature of the proposal, the level of public interest and the precedent it may set, it is essential that the application is reviewed by the Planning Committee rather than decided under delegated powers.

For these reasons, the proposal represents a clear material change of use and would adversely affect residents, safety and the Townscape Protection Area. I respectfully request that the application be refused.

Please confirm that this objection has been received and let me know if any further information is required.

Yours sincerely

57 Balcombe Road, RH16 1PE