

Objection to Planning Application DM/26/2178

Land between 149 and 161 College Lane, Hurstpierpoint

Proposal: Erection of six dwellings with associated access, landscaping, parking and areas of open space

Application reference: DM/26/2178

Applicant: Remmus

Validated: 9 September 2026

To: Planning Department, Mid Sussex District Council

Email: planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk

Date: 28th September 2026

Dear Planning Officer,

Objection to application DM/26/2178

I am writing to object to planning application DM/26/2178 for the erection of six dwellings on land between 149 and 161 College Lane, Hurstpierpoint.

The application concerns a site of approximately 0.48 hectares on the eastern side of College Lane and proposes a mix of two-, three- and four-bedroom homes. The submitted proposals reportedly provide 20 car-parking spaces and 12 cycle spaces.

Although six homes may appear modest in isolation, the application must be assessed in the context of the substantial amount of existing, approved and proposed development along College Lane and around Hurstpierpoint. In particular, its cumulative effects must be considered alongside proposed Main Modification sites MM71, MM72, MM73 and MM75, as well as all relevant committed development.

My objection concerns the principle of development in this countryside location; the cumulative erosion of the gap between Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks; traffic and highway impacts; drainage and wastewater capacity; additional pressure on local infrastructure; landscape harm; and the risk of creating piecemeal development along College Lane.

I am objecting to the planning proposal one land east of College Lane for the following reasons:

1. Sustainability of the site. Site DM/26/2178 lies on the edge of the village, some distance from the railway station, and would be heavily reliant on private car travel. The plan shows parking for an additional 20 cars and it is realistic to assume that the occupants of the new houses will include commuters who travel to London. It is unrealistic to assume that all new residents would walk to the station. Hassocks station car park is already full shortly after 7am on a weekday and has no capacity for additional parking. Further housing would intensify this pressure, forcing existing commuters such as me to travel increasingly early simply to secure a space. I am 56 and need to continue working in London for many years; the prospect of having to catch a 6am train solely to park is unreasonable. I often return after 7pm, when public transport does not provide a practical alternative. Bus services are too infrequent to connect reliably with trains, particularly when services are delayed or cancelled. Walking is also impractical because I live 23 minutes from the station and carry a heavy bag containing a laptop and other work equipment. This will be the even longer for commuters from this development as it is further away. Allocating the site would therefore increase car dependency, conflict with the environmental objective of sustainable development and fail to deliver a sustainable pattern of growth.
2. Increased parking on College Lane by residents of the new development. Mid Sussex statistics indicate an average of 1.44 cars per household, although local experience suggests that the current figure may be closer to two; my neighbours and my household each have at least two cars. New housing developments often provide insufficient parking, making overspill parking on College Lane likely. The plans show 20 parking spaces, but it is not clear how many of these spaces are on private drives. It is likely that these spaces will likely be taken up by residents, leaving very limited spaces for visitors. I have personal experience of this situation at The Grange – a development completed in 2011 where parking limitations force visitors to park elsewhere. I see no mitigating improvements in this plan. The proposals would impact on spaces currently available to existing College Lane residents, displacing vehicles further along the lane.

This would alter the character of our quiet rural road and reduce residents' quality of life. This impact would be neither fair nor reasonable. One of the reasons we chose our house back in 2007 was the lack of housing at the back of our east facing garden. The seat overlooking the field is our go-to place for peace and quiet and to enjoy the rural setting that we chose and love so dearly. Over the years, we have watched deer graze, rabbits hop, foxes rear families, pheasants strut, buzzards soar and bats swooping low. I have a wildlife camera and have caught many images of this wonderful wildlife enjoying our rural location and also visiting our garden, an additional joy. I have attached a few example in images and videos. This week I have watched the deer graze at dawn on no less that three occasions. There is no doubt that the wildlife would be both temporarily and permanently impacted by any further housing development.

1. Development outside the established built-up area

The applicant's design material describes the site as vacant land on the eastern side of College Lane, at the northern edge of Hurst Wickham. It presents the proposal as a continuation of existing and approved development and as a transition to the open countryside beyond.

However, the proposal's description as a continuation of nearby development does not make residential development on this site acceptable in principle. If the site is outside the defined built-up area boundary and is not allocated for housing in the adopted development plan, it should be treated as development in the countryside.

The adopted Mid Sussex District Plan remains the principal planning document for determining applications. Relevant policies include DP12 on protecting and enhancing the countryside; DP13 on preventing coalescence; DP21 on transport; DP26 on character and design; DP37 on trees and hedgerows; DP38 on biodiversity; DP41 on flood risk and drainage; and DP42 on water infrastructure and the water environment.

Residential development in the countryside should not be permitted simply because homes have already been built or proposed nearby. Allowing development on that basis would risk the gradual extension of housing along College Lane without a coherent, plan-led and infrastructure-led strategy.

2. Cumulative erosion of the gap between Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks Planning importance of the gap

The countryside to the east of Hurstpierpoint, including the College Lane area, plays an important role in maintaining the physical separation and distinct identities of Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks.

The most relevant national decision is the Secretary of State's 2014 refusal of application 13/01250/FUL for 81 dwellings on land off College Lane. The Secretary of State agreed that the gap continued to perform an important planning function by preventing the coalescence of Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks and preserving their separate identities and amenity.

The decision concluded that the development would undermine the purpose of the Local Gap, alter its character and cause a "small but nevertheless significant diminution of openness".

I recognise that DM/26/2178 is a smaller scheme and may not share the same application boundary as the land considered in 2014. Nevertheless, the Secretary of State's findings remain directly relevant to the planning importance of the wider College Lane countryside and the gap between the two settlements. The allocation is therefore contrary to policy and unjustified.

Cumulative development pressure

Viewed in isolation, six dwellings may cause less harm than an estate of 75 or 81 homes. The principal planning concern, however, is that DM/26/2178 would contribute to a wider and increasingly continuous pattern of development along College Lane.

The Council is also considering proposed Main Modification MM72, which would allocate land east of College Lane for 75 dwellings. The draft MM72 policy provides for connections to neighbouring

development sites and acknowledges the need for landscaping, drainage measures, highway works and sustainable-transport measures.

DM/26/2178 must therefore be assessed cumulatively with:

- existing residential development;
- relevant planning permissions and committed development;
- MM72 and the other proposed College Lane allocations;
- the cumulative eastward expansion of Hurstpierpoint;
- the resulting reduction in the physical and perceived separation between Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks; and
- the potential precedent for further development on adjoining land.

Limits of landscaping

Landscaping may soften or partially screen the appearance of the development, but it cannot preserve the openness of the countryside once houses, roads, driveways, lighting, parked vehicles and domestic activity have been introduced.

3. Piecemeal and fragmented development

Applicant's stated approach

The applicant states that the proposal has been designed to avoid fragmented development and to create a cohesive continuation of the existing and approved built form.

Risk of incremental urbanisation – death by a thousand cuts.

In my opinion, the proposal risks producing the opposite outcome. Developing this edge-of-settlement or intervening parcel for six homes would fill another section of currently undeveloped frontage, further enclosing the remaining countryside and making it appear increasingly available for development.

The scheme cannot reasonably be described as entirely self-contained when its justification relies on surrounding development. If nearby permissions make the site appear more enclosed, the Council must determine whether the combined outcome represents a coherent, plan-led settlement boundary or the incremental urbanisation of College Lane.

Effect on adjoining land

Permitting individual parcels in this way is likely to weaken the Council's ability to resist later applications on neighbouring land. This is a legitimate concern about the cumulative spatial effect of development and the integrity of the settlement boundary, rather than an objection based solely on the possibility of setting a precedent.

4. Traffic and highway effects

From my personal experience, the local highway network is already under considerable pressure. Hurstpierpoint High Street is narrow and is regularly affected by through-traffic, buses, deliveries, parked vehicles and turning movements. Delays are not limited to one junction or a brief peak period. College Lane itself has rural and residential characteristics and is used by pedestrians, cyclists, school and college traffic, existing residents and vehicles travelling between Hurstpierpoint and the surrounding road network.

The community Traffic and Transport Assessment reported almost 46,000 vehicle movements through Hurstpierpoint High Street during a seven-day period and approximately 6,700 movements on an average weekday. It also reported hourly mean speeds below 18 mph between 8am and 7pm. Low mean speeds do not prove continuous congestion, but they are consistent with constrained conditions and support the need for proper queue-length, journey-time and delay surveys.

The application proposes 20 car-parking spaces for six homes, which is more than three spaces per dwelling. This provision suggests that the development is expected to be substantially car-dependent, notwithstanding the proposed 12 cycle spaces.

The relevant highway assessment must not be restricted to whether six dwellings can obtain physical access to College Lane. It should examine:

- visibility and highway safety at the proposed access;
- pedestrian and cyclist safety along College Lane;

- the availability and continuity of safe footways;
- interaction with existing accesses and on-street activity;
- school and college traffic;
- refuse, servicing and emergency-vehicle access;
- construction traffic and contractor parking;
- additional journeys through Hurstpierpoint High Street;
- traffic travelling towards Hassocks and its railway station;
- cumulative traffic from committed and proposed development; and
- the effects of future development at MM72 and the other College Lane sites.

A conclusion that six homes alone would generate only a limited number of vehicle movements would not answer the cumulative planning question. In addition the transport evidence provided as part of other applications is inadequate because the combined-impact assessment considers junctions but does not examine Hurstpierpoint High Street or College Lane/Malthouse Lane. College Lane and Malthouse Lane are narrow rural roads without a continuous footway, and two sections are too narrow for vehicles to pass safely. They currently serve approximately 220 properties, while the cumulative effect of all the proposed allocations, including this one, would add a further 900 dwellings. This fivefold increase in the number of homes served by these roads has not been tested. Stonepound Crossroads already operates at a “severe” level, and the listed buildings along the High Street leave no scope for widening. No feasible mitigation has been identified to address the effect of tripling the local population on this constrained road network. National policy permits refusal where the residual cumulative impact on the road network would be severe. The allocation is therefore neither justified nor effective.

The increase in traffic on College Lane is already noticeable since the houses were built off Chalkers Lane. To create a five-fold increase would make the road significantly worse and increase the likelihood of villagers of the Hurst Wickham part of College Lane becoming ‘trapped’ in their homes as the standstill traffic could become a very common occurrence. There are frequent grid-locks as it is and I have already witnessed poor driving and aggressive behaviours. I am fearful that this will become much worse. And more worrying is that the threat of grid-locks on College Lane will have the effect of forcing drivers who would normally be driving up College Lane to access Cuckfield Road, to instead chose to drive through the village as the alternative route. The impact on the village where the High Street is already congested will be even worse. There is no winning answer here other than to conclude that it should be a refusal.

In addition to the above concerns, the village already becomes grid locked when there is an accident on the A23, as drivers will leave at the local exits and drive through the village as an alternative route. We have seen recent evidence of this on 4th September 2026 after an oil spillage at Pyecombe, you just need to read the comments on social media to appreciate the severe impact this had on the village with local residents subject to severe delays. To add a potential additional 20+ cars to College Lane and other local roads would make this even worse.

5. Parking and car dependency

The provision of 20 parking spaces may reduce immediate overspill close to the site, but it demonstrates the number of vehicles that the development could accommodate and potentially add to the local road network.

On-site parking does not address parking demand at residents’ destinations. New households would use Hurstpierpoint High Street, the health centre, schools, community facilities and Hassocks railway station. From my lived experience, parking in Hurstpierpoint is already difficult at busy times. Spaces at or near Hassocks station can also be difficult to find during normal commuting hours. It is therefore unrealistic to rely on the station as evidence of sustainability without examining how future residents would reach it and whether station parking and train capacity can accommodate further demand.

The Council should require evidence based on actual local travel patterns rather than assuming that cycle storage will, by itself, result in a significant reduction in car use.

6. Pedestrian and cyclist safety

Cycle spaces within the development are beneficial only if residents can reach everyday destinations using safe and convenient routes.

The assessment should consider whether College Lane provides a continuous, suitably surfaced and adequately lit pedestrian route, and whether it is safe for children, older people and residents with reduced mobility. It should also consider the combined effects of new accesses, additional traffic and vehicles entering or leaving driveways.

The safety assessment should include conditions during:

- school and college arrival and departure periods;
- hours of darkness;
- poor weather;
- construction;
- refuse collection; and
- periods when vehicles are parked near the proposed access.

Any necessary footway or crossing improvement should be identified, designed, funded and secured before permission is granted, rather than left to an unspecified future process.

7. Drainage and surface-water risk

Our garden suffers whenever there is a highwater table. After many years of winter floods, in 2026 we spent over £2000 on additional drainage. This appears to have worked very well and our wet spring did not impact our ability to enjoy the garden. And for the first year in many, we would venture up the lawn without wellies on. If housing and associated infrastructure is built nearby, there could be further changes to the water table through loss of natural ponds and drainage areas. Water will always find a new route. We have seen this sort of flooding in Hassocks, where since the new housing was built, roads and gardens regularly flood and now impact previously unaffected areas.

I have photo and video evidence of large rivers of water running down College Lane during periods of heavy rain. I have experienced rain to the point that it breaches the curb height and crosses pavements into front gardens. College Lane regularly becomes impassible through standing water, sometimes for days at a time. Additional hard surfaces, including roofs, driveways, parking areas and the access road, would increase the volume and rate of surface-water runoff unless a robust drainage scheme is provided.

The submitted reference to landscaping and open space does not demonstrate that surface water can be managed safely over the lifetime of the development.

The Council should require a detailed drainage strategy establishing:

- the existing surface-water flow paths;
- the site's infiltration potential and groundwater conditions;
- the destination and permitted discharge rate of surface water;
- climate-change allowances;
- the capacity and condition of receiving drains and watercourses;
- the consequences of blockage or system failure;
- safe exceedance routes;
- effects on neighbouring properties and College Lane;
- long-term maintenance responsibility; and
- cumulative runoff from nearby existing, approved and proposed developments.

The adopted District Plan specifically contains policies dealing with flood risk, drainage, water infrastructure and the water environment.

Permission should not be granted subject only to a vague condition requiring drainage details later if the principle, capacity or discharge destination has not first been shown to be satisfactory.

8. Foul drainage and wastewater capacity

Surface-water drainage and foul-water disposal are separate issues. Sustainable drainage features may manage rainfall, but they do not create additional capacity in the foul-sewer network or at the receiving wastewater-treatment works.

Local infrastructure must be assessed against cumulative growth, not just the additional demand from six dwellings. The Council should obtain a substantive response from the relevant sewerage undertaker confirming:

- the proposed point of foul connection;
- available network capacity;
- treatment capacity;
- whether reinforcement is necessary;
- who will fund any necessary work;
- when that work will be completed; and
- whether occupation must be restricted until improvements are operational.

A statement that a connection will be agreed at a later stage would not demonstrate that the development can be accommodated without increasing the risk of sewer surcharge, overloading or environmental harm.

9. Pressure on healthcare and local services

Six dwellings would not, in isolation, create the same demand as a major housing allocation. However, planning decisions in this area are not occurring in isolation.

Hurstpierpoint Health Centre and other local services must absorb demand from completed development, approved housing and the substantial number of additional homes proposed through the District Plan review.

From my experience, obtaining timely routine healthcare appointments can already be difficult. An obtaining a parking space when visiting the Hurstpierpoint medical centre is already difficult. Once the carpark is full, there are rarely any spaces on the surrounding roads and the nearest carpark is always full.

The Council should therefore consider the cumulative demand on:

- GP and nursing appointments;
- pharmacy and prescription services;
- schools and early-years provision;
- waste and recycling services;
- emergency services; and
- community facilities.

A small development should not automatically escape infrastructure scrutiny if it forms part of a much larger cumulative increase in the local population.

10. Character and appearance

The proposal would change vacant or undeveloped land into a residential development containing six houses, access infrastructure, parking for 20 cars and associated domestic activity.

The effect would not be limited to the buildings themselves. It would include:

- loss of open land;
- hard surfacing;
- parked vehicles;
- refuse storage;
- external lighting;
- fences and domestic boundaries;
- garden structures;
- increased movement and activity; and
- the suburbanisation of the College Lane frontage.

The applicant states that the development would form a sensitive transition to the open countryside. However, this description needs to be tested against verified viewpoints, sections, levels and the cumulative built form along College Lane.

The Council should consider whether the number, height, scale and layout of the proposed houses genuinely respond to the rural-edge character or whether the development would appear as an urban extension into the countryside.

11. Trees, hedgerows and biodiversity

The applicant proposes retaining existing high-quality boundary trees and introducing further shrubs, hedges and trees. It also states that ecological enhancements would meet the minimum 10% biodiversity net-gain requirement.

These commitments require careful scrutiny. Retaining selected high-quality trees does not necessarily protect the complete landscape framework or ecological connectivity of the site.

The Council should establish:

- which trees and hedgerows would be removed;
- the root-protection areas of retained trees;
- whether the access, visibility splays and services conflict with retained vegetation;
- the ecological value of the land and boundaries;
- effects on nesting birds, bats and other protected species;
- the consequences of external lighting;
- whether biodiversity gains would be delivered on site;
- how habitats would be managed and monitored; and
- whether the claimed net gain is additional and deliverable.

Any landscaping proposed close to private gardens may be vulnerable to later removal unless it is placed within a properly managed area and secured for the lifetime of the development.

12. Residential amenity

The application site is located between existing residential properties. The applicant claims that the effect on neighbouring properties would be negligible, but that is a conclusion that must be independently assessed rather than accepted at face value.

The Council should examine:

- separation distances;
- overlooking from upper-floor windows;
- loss of privacy;
- overbearing effects;
- changes in outlook;
- loss of daylight or sunlight;
- vehicle headlights;
- noise from the access and parking areas;
- refuse collection;
- boundary treatment; and
- the effects of construction.

Particular attention should be given to the relationship between the access and parking areas and the gardens or habitable-room windows of neighbouring homes.

13. Construction impacts

Even a six-home development can generate a concentrated period of disruption on a constrained road. Before any permission is granted, the Council should require a Construction Management Plan covering:

- construction vehicle routes;
- delivery times;

- contractor parking;
- wheel washing and road cleaning;
- mud and debris on College Lane;
- dust and noise control;
- protection of pedestrians and cyclists;
- hours of work;
- storage of materials; and
- coordination with construction on other nearby sites.

Construction traffic should not be permitted to obstruct College Lane or transfer parking and safety problems onto neighbouring residential streets.

14. The emerging MM72 allocation does not justify this application

Proposed Main Modification MM72 should not be treated as establishing the acceptability of residential development throughout the College Lane area.

MM72 is an emerging allocation still subject to examination. It is not equivalent to an adopted planning permission. DM/26/2178 must therefore be determined against the development plan and all other material considerations applicable at the date of the decision.

Conversely, the Council cannot assess DM/26/2178 as an isolated six-home proposal while ignoring MM72. The correct approach is:

1. not to assume that MM72 establishes the principle of development on DM/26/2178; but
2. to include MM72 and other reasonably foreseeable development when assessing cumulative impacts.

Conclusion

I support the delivery of genuinely needed housing in appropriate and sustainable locations. However, this application has not demonstrated that developing this particular countryside site is acceptable when its effects are considered alongside existing, approved and proposed development throughout the College Lane corridor.

My principal objections are:

1. residential development outside the established built-up area;
2. further erosion of the countryside separating Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks;
3. conflict with the important gap function recognised in the Secretary of State's 2014 decision;
4. piecemeal urbanisation along College Lane;
5. inadequate assessment of cumulative traffic and highway effects;
6. increased car dependency and destination-parking pressure;
7. unresolved surface-water, foul-drainage and wastewater-capacity concerns;
8. additional cumulative pressure on healthcare and local services;
9. harm to landscape character, trees, hedgerows and ecological connectivity;
10. potential effects on neighbouring residents; and
11. reliance on landscaping and later technical details to address matters that should be resolved before planning permission is granted.

I therefore respectfully request that planning application **DM/26/2178 be refused**.

If the Council is not presently able to refuse the application, determination should at least be deferred until it has received and independently assessed:

- a verified site-location and settlement-boundary assessment;
- a cumulative landscape and coalescence assessment;
- a cumulative transport and highway-safety assessment;

- a detailed surface-water drainage strategy;
- confirmation of foul-sewer and wastewater-treatment capacity;
- an arboricultural impact assessment;
- a robust ecological and biodiversity net-gain assessment; and
- a Construction Management Plan.

If officers are minded to recommend approval, I request that the application be referred to the appropriate planning committee rather than determined under delegated powers, due to the cumulative planning issues affecting College Lane and the gap between Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks.

Please register this submission as a formal objection and notify me of any significant amended plans, committee date or decision.

And from a purely personal perspective, it concerns me hugely to think that just as we should be looking forward to slowing down a little and enjoying the garden even more, that our environment could get noisier, the wildlife eradicated, the roads busier and my commute much harder. We moved to a village for a reason, and we chose the rural nature of College Lane. We dearly want it to stay like that.

#KeepHurstAVillage