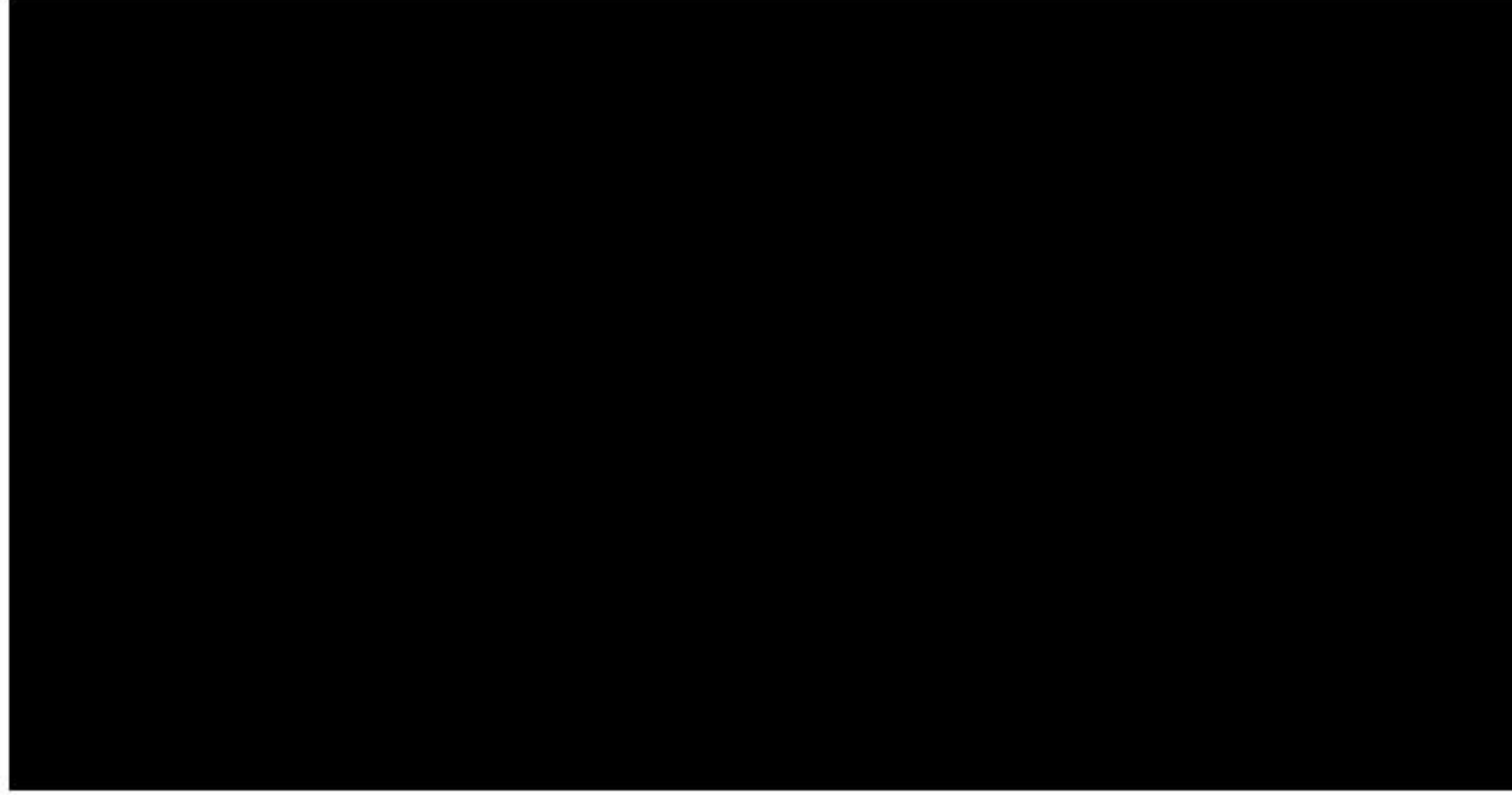


Planning Application DM/26/2178

Land between 149 and 161 College Lane, Hurstpierpoint, West Sussex

Proposal: Six dwellings with access, parking, landscaping and open space

Objection from:



Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to object to planning application **DM/26/2178** for six dwellings, access, parking, landscaping and open space on land between 149 and 161 College Lane, Hurstpierpoint.

Although the proposal is described as a small infill development, I do not consider that description reflects the character or planning status of the site. The proposal would place six houses, a new access, substantial parking and associated domestic activity on currently undeveloped land outside the established built-up area of Hurstpierpoint.

I ask Mid Sussex District Council to assess the proposal in its proper cumulative context, including the adjoining seven-home development approved under **DM/24/1139**, subsequent changes under **DM/25/1379**, relevant SHELAA sites including Sites 19 and 575, and any other committed or reasonably foreseeable development affecting this part of College Lane.

1. Development outside the settlement boundary

The application site lies outside the adopted built-up area boundary. Six dwellings served by a new access and internal arrangement of parking and open space would represent a substantive extension of the built form into the countryside rather than the modest filling of a small gap within an established frontage.

The adjoining permission under DM/24/1139 does not, in itself, establish a new settlement boundary or make the adjoining field an appropriate location for further residential development. Each application must be assessed against the development plan and the circumstances of the site.

The proposal should therefore be assessed against, in particular, **Policies DP6, DP12 and DP15 of the adopted Mid Sussex District Plan**, together with the relevant policies of the made Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan. The Council should also give appropriate, rather than determinative, weight to the emerging District Plan according to its current examination status.

The Council has previously treated development outside a built-up area as engaging Policies DP6 and DP12, even where other material considerations have subsequently been considered.
Mid Sussex District Council+1

2. Impact on the countryside, landscape character and village edge

The application would urbanise an existing open field and create a substantially harder and more developed edge to Hurstpierpoint.

The effects would not be limited to the physical footprint of the houses. The development would introduce:

- six additional residential properties;
- a new access and associated highway infrastructure;
- substantial parking provision;
- domestic lighting;
- garden activity and boundary treatments;
- additional vehicle movements; and
- built development and associated paraphernalia currently absent from the site.

The site appears elevated and exposed in parts, and the relationship between the proposed buildings, roof and floor levels, existing vegetation and the adjoining development requires careful assessment.

The Council should assess the proposal from relevant public viewpoints and consider the **combined landscape and visual effect of this development and DM/24/1139/DM/25/1379**, rather than treating the application site in isolation.

The National Planning Policy Framework requires development to recognise the character and beauty of the countryside and to consider the environmental qualities of land proposed for development. GOV.UK

3. Heritage impact

There is a Grade II listed building opposite or close to the site whose setting must be properly considered.

The adjoining development under DM/24/1139 was itself identified as causing some harm to the setting of the listed building. The Council should therefore consider whether the present proposal would add further harm, particularly when the two developments are experienced together.

A proper assessment should address:

- the setting and significance of the listed building;
- views towards and from the heritage asset;
- the cumulative effect of the two developments;
- building heights and roof forms;
- changes to the rural setting;
- lighting and boundary treatments; and
- construction impacts, including potential vibration if relevant.

The proposal should be assessed against **Policies DP26 and DP34 of the Mid Sussex District Plan** and the relevant heritage provisions of the NPPF. The NPPF treats heritage

assets as an irreplaceable resource and requires their significance to be conserved appropriately. GOV.UK

The Council should not rely principally on proposed planting to mitigate heritage or landscape effects where such planting would take years to mature.

4. Cumulative development and loss of agricultural/grazing land

The application should be assessed in combination with other development affecting this part of College Lane.

In particular, the Council should consider the relationship between this proposal and:

- DM/24/1139;
- DM/25/1379;
- SHELAA Site 19;
- SHELAA Site 575, including its previous planning history; and
- any other committed or reasonably foreseeable development that could materially affect traffic, drainage, landscape character, ecology or infrastructure.

This is important because the effect of incremental development can be materially different from the effect of considering each proposal separately.

The application land is also understood to have supported a neighbouring sheep-rearing smallholding for many years. If that is correct, the Council should establish the existing agricultural use and consider whether the loss or fragmentation of further grazing land would affect the continued viability of that rural activity.

The Council should not assume that the loss of this land is insignificant merely because the application is for only six houses.

5. Highway and pedestrian safety

There are significant concerns about pedestrian and highway safety on this part of College Lane.

There is no continuous footway along this section of the lane, meaning pedestrians—including children, older people, wheelchair users and people with pushchairs—must use the road edge.

There are also concerns about congestion around the narrow section near the older cottages and about visibility at the bend close to the access serving DM/24/1139.

The Highway Authority should therefore assess the **whole route and the combined effect of DM/24/1139 and DM/26/2178**, rather than considering the new access in isolation.

I ask that the assessment specifically consider:

- pedestrian movements;
- cyclists;
- school-time traffic;
- commuter traffic;
- traffic travelling towards Hassocks railway station;
- vehicle speeds;
- the narrow section of College Lane;
- visibility around the bend;
- construction traffic;
- refuse and delivery vehicles; and
- whether the proposed access requires removal or substantial management of existing hedges, trees or banks.

Any visibility requirements should be demonstrated on plans and should establish who controls the land needed to maintain the required visibility permanently.

The Council should also ensure that rooms described as "studies" or similar are assessed according to their realistic potential use where that could affect the number of bedrooms, occupancy, parking demand and traffic generation.

6. Drainage, sewerage and pollution risk

Drainage and sewer capacity require particularly careful examination because of concerns about the existing network in this part of College Lane.

Residents have reported incidents of surcharge from the combined sewer during heavy rainfall, including reports of material reaching agricultural land at the northern end of College Lane. These reports should be investigated and verified by the relevant authorities.

There was also a reported Southern Water sewage incident at Malthouse Lane in March 2026 involving pollution of Pook Bourne and nearby woodland. That incident may be separate from the College Lane drainage system, but it reinforces the importance of establishing the condition, capacity and resilience of the relevant sewer infrastructure rather than assuming that adequate capacity exists.

The Council should obtain appropriate evidence from **Southern Water, West Sussex County Council, the Environment Agency and other relevant bodies**, including records of previous incidents, existing network capacity and any planned or required infrastructure works.

Of particular importance is the drainage solution associated with DM/24/1139. That permission required a pumped drainage arrangement. The Council should:

- publish and examine the approved drainage details;
- establish whether the system has actually been installed;
- establish whether it is operating satisfactorily;
- confirm its designed and available capacity;
- confirm that spare capacity has not simply been assumed for this application; and

- assess the combined effect of both developments on the relevant drainage infrastructure.

A coordinated foul and surface-water drainage and levels plan should demonstrate the proposed connections, pumping and storage capacity, discharge rates and arrangements for extreme rainfall, pump failure and power failure.

If infrastructure upgrades are necessary, they should be properly identified, funded and secured before occupation rather than left as an unresolved matter to be dealt with through a general planning condition.

7. Pressure on local infrastructure

The cumulative effect of additional housing in this area should also be considered in relation to local infrastructure.

The Council should consider the effect of additional residents on:

- the local highway network;
- parking and overspill parking associated with Hassocks railway station;
- GP and NHS dental provision;
- other relevant community services; and
- burial provision where relevant.

There are also concerns about broadband provision on this section of College Lane. The applicant should demonstrate that the proposed homes can receive an adequate communications connection and that installation will not adversely affect existing residents.

These matters should be considered alongside the Council's assessment of whether the location represents sustainable development.

8. Biodiversity, trees and ecological effects

A claimed 10% biodiversity net gain should not be treated as proof that the proposal has no ecological impact.

The Council should examine the underlying baseline assessment and biodiversity calculation and require clear information about:

- existing habitats;
- retained grassland;
- hedges and trees;
- proposed habitat creation;
- proposed lighting;
- habitat connectivity;
- ownership and responsibility for management;
- long-term maintenance; and
- monitoring and enforcement.

The assessment should consider both the immediate loss of habitat and the period before replacement planting and habitat becomes established.

It should also consider the cumulative fragmentation arising from this proposal and DM/24/1139.

The current NPPF expressly requires consideration of environmental qualities, habitats, landscape character and opportunities to conserve or enhance ecological networks. GOV.UK

9. Housing need, mix and public benefit

The six additional dwellings would contribute to housing supply, but the Council should identify precisely what weight can reasonably be given to that benefit in this particular location.

The proposal does not appear to provide affordable housing. Nor should the development be presented as addressing an identified need for genuinely affordable, accessible or specialist elderly housing unless the evidence demonstrates that it does so.

The Council should therefore:

- state its current housing land supply position;
- assess the proposed dwelling mix against **Policy DP30** and current evidence;
- consider whether the proposal makes an appropriate contribution towards identified housing needs; and
- explain why development of this unallocated countryside site is necessary or appropriate when planned and allocated sites are available elsewhere.

Policy DP30 is specifically concerned with ensuring that housing mix reflects current and future local housing needs. Mid Sussex District Council+1

10. Cumulative assessment and decision-making

The application should be determined on the basis of a transparent assessment of the actual circumstances on the ground, including committed development.

The Council should explain clearly how the present proposal differs from, and relates to, DM/24/1139 and DM/25/1379, particularly in relation to:

- settlement boundaries;
- landscape character;
- heritage;
- highway safety;
- drainage;
- ecology;
- infrastructure; and
- cumulative effects.

Given the scale of the concerns and the relationship with the adjoining development, I also ask the Council to confirm whether the application should be determined by the Planning Committee under its delegation arrangements.

If permission were nevertheless contemplated, construction impacts should be properly addressed, including construction traffic, deliveries, working hours, protection of pedestrians and cyclists, and any potential vibration risk to nearby buildings or heritage assets.

Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, I respectfully ask Mid Sussex District Council to **refuse planning permission for DM/26/2178** if, following its assessment, it concludes that the proposal conflicts with the development plan or that the identified harms and risks cannot be satisfactorily addressed.

In particular, I ask the Council to give careful weight to:

1. the site's location outside the established built-up area and the resulting conflict with settlement and countryside policies;
2. the effect of six additional dwellings on the rural character and established edge of Hurstpierpoint;
3. the potential cumulative impact on the setting of the nearby Grade II listed building;
4. the absence of a continuous pedestrian footway and the highway and pedestrian-safety implications of additional development on College Lane;
5. the need to establish the capacity and resilience of the foul drainage and sewerage network;
6. the potential cumulative effect of DM/24/1139, DM/25/1379 and other relevant development;
7. the loss and fragmentation of grazing/agricultural land;
8. biodiversity, habitat and landscape impacts; and
9. whether the limited housing benefit associated with six additional market homes is sufficient to outweigh the identified planning harms.

These matters should be properly resolved through the application and supporting evidence before permission is granted, rather than being left to unspecified future conditions.

The application should be determined in accordance with the **adopted Mid Sussex District Plan, the made Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework in force at the date of decision**, together with all other relevant material considerations.

I respectfully request that this objection is taken fully into account when the application is determined.

