

Susan Dubberley

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 20 September 2026 14:45
To: Susan Dubberley
Subject: Objection to Planning Application DM/26/2178

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Dear Susan

Land Between 149 and 161 College Lane, Hurstpierpoint

I am writing to object to the above application for 6 dwellings on land between 149 and 161 College Lane.

1. Portal failure and procedural fairness

The reason I am contacting you by email is because the online planning portal has again been unavailable during the consultation period, preventing residents from submitting comments through the proper channel. I request written confirmation that this objection has been manually logged against the case file, uploaded to the public file, and that residents' right to comment has not been prejudiced by the portal's repeated failures.

2. This site has already been refused permission and had an appeal dismissed

This is not the first application on this land. Application 14/03359/FUL, for 3 detached houses on this same site, was refused on 14 November 2014, and the subsequent appeal (AP/15/0002) was dismissed on 13 May 2015. The Inspector's reasons for dismissal included the effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area and whether the site is accessibly located in relation to local services — findings that were not dependent on the number of dwellings proposed and were not specific to any neighbouring land.

This application proposes 6 dwellings — double the number refused in 2014 — together with a new access road, an attenuation pond and SuDS drainage basin, representing a materially larger and more urbanising form of development than what was found unacceptable at appeal. The applicant's Planning and Heritage Statement acknowledges this refusal history but argues that the subsequent approval of DM/24/1139 on the neighbouring site, together with the Council's housing land supply shortfall, represents a "material change in circumstances" sufficient to overturn that finding. I do not consider this follows: neither the character and appearance of this site, nor its accessibility, has changed since 2015. The applicant has not demonstrated that the specific harms identified by the Inspector no longer apply; it has simply pointed to a different site's approval and a district-wide policy shift. I would ask the Council to require the applicant to address directly why the reasoning of the 2015 appeal decision no longer holds for this land, rather than treating the neighbouring approval as a substitute for that analysis.

3. This application directly tests the assurance given when DM/24/1139 was approved

The 7-dwelling scheme approved immediately to the south of this site (DM/24/1139) was justified specifically on the basis that it was a standalone, contiguous exception under Policy DP6 — for fewer than 10 dwellings, contiguous with the existing built-up area boundary. The officer's report for that application did not treat it as opening the site or its surroundings to further development; on the contrary, the clear expectation communicated to residents at the time was that this was a one-off exception, not the first phase of a larger expansion, and would not be used to justify further coalescence of built form beyond the existing settlement edge.

This application is the direct test of that assurance. Approving 6 further dwellings on the immediately adjoining land, on the strength of DM/24/1139's approval, would confirm residents' concern that each contiguous exception is simply being used to justify the next one - precisely the incremental coalescence that Policy DP6 and Policy DP13 (Preventing Coalescence) are designed to prevent. If this application is approved on that basis, there is no principled reason why the next parcel along College Lane would not be approved on the same grounds, and the one after that. I would ask the Council to treat this as a matter of real weight: either the assurance given in 2024/25 was meaningful, in which case this application should be refused, or it was not, in which case residents are entitled to know that any "one-off" exception granted in this location should be treated as the first step in continuous expansion.

4. Severe and unassessed cumulative impact

As you know, this application must not be assessed in isolation. You must also be aware that it sits within a parish already absorbing an exceptional concentration of new housing, both consented and proposed:

- DM/24/1139 — 7 dwellings recently permitted immediately adjacent at 147–149 College Lane;

- DPSC1 — the "Significant Site" allocation of c.1,350 dwellings on land west of Burgess Hill/north of Hurstpierpoint, bordering Malthouse Lane, which connects directly to College Lane;
- MM72–MM76 — a further c.419 homes proposed around Hurstpierpoint through the District Plan Main Modifications;
- the Thakeham outline scheme for c.75 further homes on land east of College Lane;
- an approved expansion of Hurstpierpoint College generating additional servicing and coach movements along the lane.

The applicant's own Transport Statement and Planning and Heritage Statement assess this scheme's traffic and planning impact solely against the immediately adjacent DM/24/1139 permission, with no reference to DPSC1, MM72–76, or the Thakeham scheme. This is a material omission: the NPPF (Policy TR6(3)) requires "potential cumulative impacts" to be taken into account, and the same principle applies to the wider planning balance. Taken together, the parish is facing well over 1,700 additional dwellings either consented, allocated, or proposed, against a road network, sewerage system and water supply already acknowledged by the Council's own evidence base to be under strain.

5. Mischaracterisation of the pre-application officer's comments as "infill"

The applicant's Planning and Heritage Statement repeatedly asserts that the Council's pre-application officer "accepted," "confirmed" or found the principle of the development "capable of being supported" as infill. This overstates what was actually said. The officer's own words were that "an argument could be made that the site could be viewed as an infill development" — a deliberately qualified, non-committal observation, made at officer level only, expressly stated not to prejudice any subsequent decision. I would ask the case officer to treat the applicant's characterisation of the pre-application advice with appropriate caution.

On the substance, the scheme does not read as infill in any ordinary sense:

- Infill normally means completing a genuine gap of 1–2 dwellings in an otherwise continuous frontage; 6 dwellings on a 0.48-hectare site with a new access road, attenuation pond and SuDS basin constitutes a new estate, not infill.
- To qualify as infill, a site should continue a building line established on both sides — but as set out in point 3 above, the building line to the south (DM/24/1139) was itself only recently created and was expressly not intended to justify further extension.

6. Highway and pedestrian safety

College Lane has no continuous footpath and cannot safely absorb a second estate junction and about 20 further vehicle movements in close proximity to the DM/24/1139 access, particularly once assessed cumulatively with the developments listed in point 4 above. I regularly use this road on foot and find the traffic constant and aggressive in its nature, putting safety at risk. Any increase in traffic will cause greater safety risks.

7. Loss of countryside and conflict with biodiversity policy

The site is currently functioning agricultural/grazing land. Its loss reduces the green buffer between the village and Hurstpierpoint College and runs contrary to the conservation objectives of the Hurstpierpoint Neighbourhood Plan.

8. Housing need

The scheme comprises large market houses, falls below the threshold for affordable housing contribution under Policy DP31, and there is no evidence it meets an identified local need for affordable or starter homes.

Given the strength and consistency of local objection to development along this stretch of College Lane, the site's own refusal and appeal-dismissal history, the mischaracterisation of the pre-application advice, and the precedent this application risks setting when read alongside the pattern of allocations and applications described above, I would ask that this application be determined by the Planning Committee rather than under delegated officer powers.

Kind regards


Burgess Hill/Hurstpierpoint Area Resident