

Objection to Planning Application

DM/26/2178

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

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

Objector: [REDACTED] 128 College Lane, Hurstpierpoint, West Sussex, BN6 9AJ

Email: [REDACTED]

Dear Planning Officer,

I object to application DM/26/2178. Although it is described as a small infill scheme, it would place six houses, 20 parking spaces, a new access and open space on undeveloped land outside the village boundary. It should be assessed together with the seven homes approved next door under DM/24/1139, the changes under DM/25/1379, SHELAA Site 19, Site 575 and other likely development affecting College Lane.

Main reasons for objection

1. Outside the village boundary and not genuine infill

The site is outside the adopted built-up area boundary. Six homes with their own road, parking and open space are not the modest filling of a small gap in a continuous row of houses. The scheme would extend the village into the countryside. The adjoining permission did not move the settlement boundary and should not be used to justify development of the next field. The Council should apply Policies DP6 and DP12 of the adopted District Plan and the countryside and settlement policies in the made Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan. The emerging District Plan is still under examination and should be given only the weight appropriate to its current stage.

2. Harm to rural character, heritage and nearby homes

The field is open, rural land. New houses, lighting, traffic, parking and garden activity would create a harder and more visible village edge, especially because the site appears raised and exposed. The Council should assess roof and floor levels, boundaries, lighting and views together with the final form of DM/24/1139 and DM/25/1379. It should also check overlooking, privacy, noise, lighting and overbearing effects on nearby homes without relying on young planting as the main protection. The adjoining scheme was found to cause some harm to the setting of the Grade II listed building opposite. A new heritage assessment is needed for the combined effect of both developments under Policies DP26 and DP34.

3. Cumulative development and loss of grazing land

This application must not be considered alone. Together with DM/24/1139, DM/25/1379, promoted SHELAA Site 19, Site 575 and other foreseeable schemes, it would mean more traffic, pressure on services, habitat loss and gradual development of the countryside edge. Site 19 has been promoted in different forms, while Site 575 has a history including HP/13/03305/OUT. The Council should confirm the current status and realistic scale of these sites and assess their combined effects. The application land is also reported to have supported a neighbouring sheep-rearing smallholding for more than 30 years. Losing this additional grazing land may make that rural use unviable after land was already lost to DM/24/1139. The Council should investigate the agricultural use and the effect of further fragmentation.

4. Highway and pedestrian safety

There is no footway along this part of College Lane. Pedestrians, children, older people, wheelchair users and people with pushchairs must use the edge of the road. The narrow section by the old cottages is often congested, and the blind bend close to the access for DM/24/1139 gives poor views of approaching vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. The highway authority should inspect the full route at school and commuter times and assess both developments together, including station-bound traffic and the lack of practical alternative routes. It should also confirm whether access visibility depends on removing or repeatedly cutting hedges, trees or banks, whether the necessary land is controlled by the applicant, and what this would do to rural character and wildlife. Rooms labelled as studies should be counted as bedrooms where they could realistically be used that way, so parking, occupancy, traffic, refuse and drainage are assessed correctly.

5. Drainage, sewerage and pollution risk

Residents report that the combined sewer can surcharge during heavy rain and release material onto agricultural land at the northern end of College Lane. In March 2026 a burst Southern Water sewage pipe at Malthouse Lane polluted Pook Bourne and nearby woodland, and published monitoring also records overflow activity in that area. These are different events, but both show that network condition and capacity must be checked. The Council should obtain records and advice from Southern Water, West Sussex County Council, the Environment Agency and other relevant health or agricultural bodies on past incidents, pollution, livestock risk, existing capacity and planned works.

DM/24/1139 required a pumped drainage solution. The Council should publish the approved details, confirm whether that system has been installed and works properly, and show that it has not been assumed to have spare capacity for this site. A combined levels and drainage plan should explain foul and surface-water connections, pump and

storage capacity, discharge rates and what happens during extreme rain, pump failure or power failure. The assessment must include both developments and other schemes using the same network. Any necessary upgrade should be funded, secured and completed before occupation. These matters should be resolved before permission is granted under Policies DP41 and DP42, not left to a general condition.

6. Pressure on local infrastructure

The combined growth around Hurstpierpoint should be matched by reliable infrastructure. The Council should check road capacity, parking and overspill at Hassocks station, GP and NHS dental access, burial capacity and funded improvements. Full-fibre broadband is not available on this part of College Lane, and residents experience slow or unreliable service. The applicant should show how the new homes will be connected without making existing service worse. These wider points may not each justify refusal on their own, but they are relevant to whether further unplanned, car-dependent growth is sustainable under Policies DP20, DP21 and DP25.

7. Biodiversity, trees and habitat loss

A stated ten per cent biodiversity gain does not by itself prove that harm will be avoided. The baseline survey and calculation should be published, with clear details of retained grassland, hedges and trees, lighting effects, replacement habitat, ownership, long-term management and enforcement. The Council should also assess the short- and medium-term loss while new planting becomes established, and the combined fragmentation caused by DM/24/1139 and this scheme. Year-by-year monitoring and replacement measures are needed if habitats fail, in line with Policies DP37 and DP38.

8. Limited public benefit and housing mix

Six market houses would add to housing supply, but no affordable housing is proposed and the homes should not be presented as meeting an identified need for genuinely affordable, accessible or elderly housing. The Council should state its current housing-land-supply position, test the mix against Policy DP30 and explain why unallocated countryside land is needed when planned sites may meet demand in more suitable locations. The limited benefit does not outweigh the landscape, heritage, highway, drainage, ecological and infrastructure concerns.

9. Full and transparent decision

The adjoining seven-home application was considered by the Planning Committee. This application raises the same issues in a more serious cumulative setting. The Council should confirm the delegation rules and ward members should consider referring it to committee. The officer report should identify the evidence and document versions used, address local photographs and incident records where supplied, and explain any different treatment from DM/24/1139. Construction effects also need attention,

including heavy vehicles, the blind bend, pedestrians and cyclists, and possible vibration affecting the listed building. A condition survey, traffic plan, delivery controls and enforceable vibration monitoring should be agreed before work starts.

Requested decision

I ask the Council to refuse permission if it finds that the proposal conflicts with the adopted settlement and countryside policies, is not genuine infill, harms the rural edge or heritage setting, threatens the neighbouring smallholding, or has not shown that the combined effects on roads, pedestrian safety, drainage, pollution, biodiversity and local services are acceptable. The strongest issues are the policy conflict, unsafe pedestrian access, harm to the countryside and listed-building setting, and unresolved cumulative highway, drainage and pollution risks. These matters should be settled before the decision and not left to later conditions. The application should be assessed against the adopted District Plan, the made Neighbourhood Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework in force at the date of decision.

Yours faithfully,

[Redacted Signature]

128 College Lane, Hurstpierpoint, West Sussex, BN6 9AJ

[Redacted Contact Information]