

Peter Davies

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 01 June 2026 11:46
To: planninginfo
Cc: Anna Tidey
Subject: DM/26/1132 - 50 Hurst Road, Hassocks BN6 9NL Representation - Objection to Planning Application PP-14903788 - "Land Parcel to the North of Nos 42–54 Hurst Road, Hurstpierpoint, BN6 9NL"

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50 Hurst Road, Hassocks, BN6 9NL Representation - Objection to Planning Application PP-14903788 - "Land Parcel to the North of Nos 42–54 Hurst Road, Hurstpierpoint, BN6 9NL"

Dear Planning Officer/Anna,

I strongly object to this application and respectfully request that Mid Sussex District Council refuse planning permission for the following reasons.

1. Inappropriate Development and Urbanisation of Open Countryside

The application proposes a substantial intensification of use on open agricultural land, including:

- Three shepherd huts
- A stable block
- A large enclosed donkey paddock
- Tractor parking and hardstanding
- Concrete wash-down area
- Wildlife pond
- Fencing and associated infrastructure

The applicant attempts to describe the proposal as “low impact” and “non-permanent”, however the cumulative impact is clearly substantial and transformative.

This is not a simple agricultural use. It introduces multiple structures, vehicle activity, engineered surfaces, and domestic-style occupation features into an otherwise open rural field. The development would materially urbanise the countryside and permanently alter the rural character of the site.

The Planning Statement itself admits the shepherd huts are intended partly for “personal shelter for the owners” and “a quiet spot from which to enjoy the proposed wildlife pond.”

This strongly suggests the huts are not genuinely essential agricultural structures, but instead represent leisure/recreational accommodation and domestic encroachment into the countryside.

2. The Shepherd Huts Represent an Unjustified Residential or Leisure Use

The proposal for "three shepherd huts" is excessive and wholly disproportionate for the stated keeping of two donkeys.

There is no operational justification for three separate huts on a 2-hectare field intended for only two animals.

The application states the huts may be used:

- for storage,
- for shelter,
- and for enjoyment of the pond and land.

This creates serious concern that the structures could evolve into:

- overnight accommodation,
- holiday use,
- recreational occupation,
- or future residential conversion.

The cumulative layout resembles a leisure compound rather than a genuine agricultural facility.

The Council should give significant weight to the risk of incremental residential creep in open countryside.

3. Harm to Rural Character and Visual Amenity

The field currently forms an important open green buffer behind residential properties on Hurst Road and adjacent to Belmont Lane.

The proposed block plan shows:

- clustered shepherd huts,
- fencing,
- parking area,
- stable structures,
- engineered surfacing,
- and a pond feature concentrated within the field.

The visual effect would be suburbanising and harmful to the rural landscape character.

The proposal introduces:

- domesticated paraphernalia,
- increased human presence,
- parked vehicles and machinery,
- lighting potential,
- and visible built form where none currently exists.

The applicant's assertion that the structures are "traditional" does not remove their harmful cumulative impact. Multiple timber structures and engineered surfaces still constitute harmful development in open countryside.

4. Agricultural Justification Is Weak and Contradictory

The proposal repeatedly refers to "agricultural use", yet the application concerns the private keeping of two donkeys.

Private equestrian or donkey keeping is generally not equivalent to agriculture in planning terms.

Furthermore:

- three shepherd huts,
- a wildlife pond,
- a recreational seating/shelter arrangement,
- and extensive ancillary infrastructure

go significantly beyond what is reasonably necessary for basic animal welfare.

The Planning Statement appears designed to frame a private leisure use as agricultural development.

5. Precedent for Further Incremental Development

Granting permission would establish a dangerous precedent for further piecemeal expansion on the site.

Once:

- huts,
- hardstanding,
- fencing,
- and utility-style infrastructure

are accepted, there is a clear risk of future applications for:

- additional structures,
- utilities,
- lighting,
- extended access,
- residential occupation,
- or commercial/leisure activities.

The Council should carefully consider the long-term cumulative implications rather than assessing each individual element in isolation.

6. Impact on Neighbouring Residential Amenity

The site lies directly behind residential properties on Hurst Road.

The proposal would introduce:

- increased activity,
- noise,
- vehicle movements,
- animal disturbance,
- maintenance operations,
- and general comings and goings

into what is currently a quiet open field.

The shepherd huts in particular create concern regarding prolonged occupation and intensified use close to neighbouring homes.

The proposal would therefore adversely affect the peaceful enjoyment of neighbouring residential properties.

7. Ecology and Biodiversity Concerns

The application claims exemption from Biodiversity Net Gain requirements using the “de minimis” exemption.

However, this appears questionable given:

- the scale of the field,
- the cumulative works,

- excavation of a wildlife pond,
- installation of hardstanding,
- fencing,
- and multiple structures across the site.

No ecological assessment appears to have been submitted despite the acknowledged presence of habitats and landscape features.

The Council should require a full ecological survey before determination.

8. Insufficient Archaeological Investigation

The application site lies within a designated Archaeological Notification Area. The applicant's own Heritage Statement confirms this.

This is particularly significant given the known Roman and historic archaeology associated with the wider Hassocks and Hurstpierpoint area, including the route of the Roman road corridor through the locality.

Despite this acknowledged sensitivity, no proper archaeological field evaluation appears to have been undertaken prior to submission. Instead, the applicant relies on a brief desktop-style statement and suggests that a "watching brief" could be conditioned later.

That approach is inadequate given the scale of proposed ground disturbance, including:

- excavation of a wildlife pond,
- installation of fencing posts,
- construction of hardstanding,
- tractor parking surfacing,
- stable development,
- and associated engineering works.

The proposal therefore fails to provide sufficient evidence for the Council to properly assess harm to potentially significant buried archaeological remains.

In accordance with national planning policy, archaeological significance should be properly understood before determination, not deferred until after consent.

A full archaeological assessment and intrusive site investigation should therefore be required before any planning application is considered capable of determination.

This proposal represents:

- unjustified encroachment into open countryside,
- harmful urbanisation of rural land,
- excessive and unnecessary built form,
- potential disguised leisure/residential use,
- and a harmful precedent for future development.

The cumulative impact of the structures and associated uses is wholly inappropriate for this location and conflicts with the protection of rural character and countryside policies.

For all the reasons above, I respectfully request that Mid Sussex District Council refuse planning permission.