

Stefan Galyas

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 20 November 2025 14:24
To: Stefan Galyas
Subject: DM/25/1185 - Objection

[REDACTED]
Dear Mr Galyas,

I am writing as a long-standing homeowner at Southdowns Park to object to planning application DM/25/1185, which seeks a 36-month change of use of the existing tennis courts to three padel courts, together with associated works, at St Francis Sports & Social Club.

Apologies if this is a double submission, there were 'server issues' both times I tried to add this as a comment to the portal.

I appreciate the value of sports facilities in the community, but this particular proposal is not compatible with the location. The scale, nature and intensity of use would result in an unacceptable impact on both residents and the character of the wider setting.

1. Noise Impact and Loss of Residential Amenity

Padel creates a very distinctive, sharp, repetitive noise from ball and racket impacts and rebounds from the walls. Even where headline decibel figures appear satisfactory, the impulsive, percussive quality of the sound makes it far more intrusive than typical recreation noise.

The acoustic report does not give confidence that the true worst-case impacts have been assessed. It appears not to consider the elevated areas of Southdowns Park or the properties positioned directly on rising ground with clear exposure to the courts. With play proposed from early morning to late evening, seven days a week, residents would be subjected to a constant background of impact noise wholly at odds with the calm environment of the development.

2. Incompatibility with the Historic Setting

Southdowns Park is a distinctive Victorian complex set within landscaped grounds, valued for its quiet, semi-rural character and outlook toward the South Downs. Introducing three high-use, noise-generating courts so close to dwellings would seriously diminish that character.

Comparisons with larger leisure sites elsewhere are misleading. Facilities such as the Triangle or Handcross Racket Centre are located in purpose-built recreational areas, set well away from tightly clustered residential buildings. This proposal is fundamentally different.

3. Enjoyment of Homes and Outside Space

Residents' right to enjoy their homes and gardens peacefully is a legitimate planning consideration. The type of noise generated by padel – sudden, repeated impacts – is particularly disruptive and would reduce the sense of quiet enjoyment that currently exists across Southdowns Park.

4. Increase in Traffic and Parking Pressure

Padel is experiencing rapid growth, and the site would attract users from outside the development. This will inevitably lead to increased vehicle movements and competition for parking within an area that already experiences pressure, especially in the evenings. This additional activity would add further disturbance for residents.

5. A “Temporary” Approval Still Causes Long-Lasting Harm

A three-year disruption should not be regarded as insignificant. Once in operation, temporary permissions are often extended, creating a near-permanent change by incremental steps. The impact on residents would therefore likely extend far beyond the nominal 36-month period.

6. Clear Planning Precedent on Padel Noise

A number of local authorities have recently refused, amended or heavily conditioned padel proposals for exactly these reasons. Examples from Adur & Worthing, Arun, and Brighton & Hove all highlight concerns over noise in residential contexts. A planning appeal on Hayling Island was also dismissed in 2025 due to unacceptable noise impacts. These cases collectively show a clear planning direction: outdoor padel courts are incompatible with quiet residential or heritage environments.

Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, I urge the Council to refuse application DM/25/1185. The proposal would undermine the established character of Southdowns Park and cause demonstrable harm to the living conditions of residents.

Kind regards,

