

126 College Lane
Hurstpierpoint
West Sussex
BN6 9AJ

12th September 2026

Re: Planning application DM/26/2178

Erection 6no. dwellings with associated access, landscaping, parking and areas of open space. - Land Between 149 And 161 College Lane Hurstpierpoint West Sussex

Dear Ms Dubberley,

We write in response to the notification of planning application detailed above, noting the deadline for comments of 30th September 2026.

We have several objections to this development, as follows.

1. Notwithstanding the recent grant of planning permission for 7 houses on land to the rear of 149 College Lane, the site lies outside the defined settlement limits of the village, the northernmost boundary of which in this area still lies at the boundary of 143 College Lane as far as we can tell. This being so, it is not possible to argue that the development constitutes filling-in of an existing gap. It should not be argued that the development should be permitted because it is adjacent to the built-up boundary. *Adjacent* is not *within*, and allowing this development will set a precedent for the next, and the next, and the next until Hurstpierpoint merges with Burgess Hill. The boundary has been agreed as part of the local plan and, while the local plan is valid until a revised version is adopted, it should be respected.
2. We note further the comment in the Design and Access Statement "In planning terms, the site constitutes a logical infill opportunity, building upon the established precedent set by the adjacent consented seven dwellings development to the south". This is incorrect. The seven dwellings were granted permission as a contiguous development tagged on to the existing built-up boundary. The planning officer at the time said explicitly that this would not change the boundary of the built-up area and would not in itself be used as justification for further development. The houses were not granted as infill and therefore cannot be regarded as a precedent.
3. We note also the planning officer's comment that ""an argument could be made that the site could be viewed as an infill development given the recent approval of houses to the south and the existing development to the north." We disagree strongly. Once again, the development would be outside the built-up area.
4. Similarly, it is not possible to argue that the development is contiguous with the existing built-up boundary, or indeed with the 7 houses to the rear of number 149. The plans for the new development show clearly that there will be a gap between those seven houses and the proposed development.
5. Further on the point of infill, for a site to be regarded as infill it should fit seamlessly into an established, pre-existing line of development. This is not the case with the proposed development, as the land to the south of it is an open field, and number 149 is set back from the road with a large garden in front.
6. Continuing the infill argument, the applicant frames the proposal as a "logical infill opportunity". However, true rural infill outside a built-up area boundary is universally accepted to mean **one or two dwellings** designed to close a minor physical gap. Introducing six houses—a mix of two, three, and four-bedroom homes—constitutes an over-development of a greenfield countryside plot. This is a minor housing estate,

not limited infilling. We therefore consider the development to be contrary to **Hurst C3 - Local Gaps and Preventing Coalescence and DP13 – Preventing coalescence.**

7. This site has previously been rejected, in 2014, by the district council as a potential site for new homes (14/03359/FUL). It is significant that the 2014 ruling commented that the site is on the extreme edge of the built-up area, and that developing it would have a detrimental impact on countryside views. The proposal was ruled to be counter to the NPPF (paragraphs 7, 14, 17 and 55), policies C1, H11 and T4 of the Mid Sussex Local Plan, and policies C1, C3 and H1 of the then-emerging Neighbourhood Plan. The decision went to appeal, and the objection was upheld by the planning inspectorate in 2015. The same argument used to refuse the application in 2014 applies to the proposed development. We consider the development to be contrary to Mid Sussex District Plan **DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside.**
8. We note that the effect of development on countryside views was taken seriously enough in other recent applications along College Lane that permission was only granted on the condition that views were maintained between buildings (Comment form original 2023 refusal of DM/23/0162: “the side extensions would **harmfully obscure important gaps between buildings, which provide connections to the countryside and contribute positively to the character of the surrounding area.** The proposal therefore fails to comply with Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, Principles DG49 and DG50 and Figure 9E of the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD and the National Planning Policy Framework.”). It is surely more significant if views are to be lost along a stretch of the Lane on which there are currently no houses. We therefore consider the development to be contrary to **Hurst C3 - Local Gaps and Preventing Coalescence, DP15 – Homes in the Countryside and DP13 – Preventing Coalescence.**
9. We note also the relevance of the refusal of appeals APP/D3830/W/17/3191742 and APP/D3830/W/18/3194173 further along College Lane, the main basis of both being the requirement to maintain unobstructed countryside views to maintain the semi-rural character of the area.
10. Sewerage along College Lane and the surrounding area is already insufficient and will certainly not cope with the connection of further dwellings. We experience regular and numerous overflows of raw sewage into the fields behind the proposed development. The submitted plans suggest that sewage and wastewater will be discharged together into the existing sewer that runs northwards along College Lane. The sewer that backs up and overflows regularly feeds into this and, despite repeated representations to Southern Water by our neighbours over several years, nothing has been done to solve the problem. The College Lane sewer has previously collapsed further south along the lane. Similarly, 2025 saw repeated closures of Malthouse Lane to the north, with a constant stream of tankers coming to and fro to ease pressure while a failed sewer was repaired, suggesting poorly maintained and/or outdated drainage. Additionally, as surface water run-off currently drains into this sewer, College Lane north of number 122 regularly resembles a river during heavy rain. Water pours out of the manhole cover opposite number 126 at such times, and the section of lane between the corner to the north of number 167 and the College floods regularly.
11. The fact that foul water will drain into the main combined waste and foul water sewer on College Lane means that the already over-stretched system will not cope. In our experience, the lane between the site and Hurstpierpoint College floods around 6-10 times per year. We therefore consider the development to be contrary to **DP41 – Flood Risk and Drainage**
12. Traffic congestion along the lane is severe when Hurstpierpoint College is in session. During peak hours long queues of traffic build up in the narrow section between numbers 36 and 86. At peak times this part of the lane is nearly impassable, added

to which there is no pavement, so any increase in traffic will pose a significant risk to pedestrians. We have personal experience of the difficulty in walking along the lane at peak hours, and the danger that any further increase in traffic will present to those pedestrians, including schoolchildren on their way to school, who use the lane daily. Travelling east from the proposed development towards Hassocks, the Stonepound crossroads is similarly approaching capacity at peak times. Traffic congestion along the lane is exacerbated by periodic, and seemingly increasingly frequent, closures of the High Street during which traffic is often redirected along College Lane.

To make things worse, large vehicles often ignore the width restriction and block the lane while they attempt to reverse. Neighbours in the narrow section report repeated instances of cars being damaged due to large vehicles or inconsiderate driving, and one neighbour recently had their car written off while it was parked on the lane.

Most houses along College Lane have at least two cars, reflecting the semi-rural location, and the submitted plans provide for two or three parking spaces per dwelling. It is reasonable to assume an extra fourteen or so cars on the new development, increasing traffic congestion.

13. The consequences of the narrow constriction and its frequent and regular obstruction (not only during peak hours) are not properly considered in the application. We have personal experience of the dangers this poses. In one example, a neighbour required an emergency ambulance. The vehicle was unable to pass through the narrow section of the lane, requiring the paramedics to run approximately a quarter of a mile to reach the neighbour. In a second incident, we phoned the fire service to deal with a leaking petrol tank. Once again, the tender was unable to come along the lane, and the crew had to run the quarter of a mile along the lane while the tender went back though the village to approach from the College end of the lane.
14. On this point, we note that the traffic survey referred to in the submitted plans takes no account of the narrowness of the lane or the lack of pavement. And where it refers to a “frequent” bus service (at some distance from the development), the lack of pavement on the route to the bus stop is a significant disincentive for residents to use public transport.
15. We note an error in the application. Where it refers to the speed limit being 60mph on the stretch of the lane where the development is proposed, this is in fact 30mph. It has recently been reduced from 60mph in an attempt to reduce the significant danger of drivers speeding along the section to the north of the development and hitting pedestrians or cyclists coming around the blind bend opposite number 122. This speaks to the problem of lack of pavements, vulnerability of pedestrians – particularly at peak times of congested traffic – and therefore of poor pedestrian access to the north of College Lane. Indeed, we understand that the College prohibits pupils from walking along the lane because of the danger from traffic.
16. We also note that the traffic report refers to there having been no recent traffic accidents to justify increasing the traffic volume. This is not a sufficient argument, as it implies that increasing traffic volume is acceptable up to the point at which accidents start to occur. We are very fortunate that there have been no reported incidents, given the narrowness of the lane and the lack of pavements. However, anecdotal evidence is that there have been numerous near-misses, with one neighbour reporting only last week that they had to jump into the hedge to avoid a speeding car near the narrow section of the lane. We should not keep on increasing traffic. We therefore consider the development to be contrary to **DP21 – Transport**.
17. Local schools and health services are already oversubscribed. While it is not to be expected that a relatively small development such as this should address this, a sustainable plan for further development around Hurstpierpoint should address the chronic shortage of school places and under-provision of medical and dental services. Until this is done it is hard to see how development can be permitted. Repeated small-scale development (and here we note the 7 houses currently being constructed near the site) eventually leads to a critical shortage of basic services.

18. In terms of the proposed layout, we note the comment in the Design and Access Statement "The western portion of the site accommodates the new access, with homes positioned and designed to provide a cohesive continuation of the existing built form while respecting the linear settlement pattern of College Lane". We do not see how this can be the case, given that the main axis of the development will be perpendicular to the lane, not along it. It therefore deviates from the linear settlement pattern to form a small estate OFF the lane.
19. Finally, from a procedural point of view, we note that not all neighbours were notified of this application. Our house is opposite the site, yet we did not receive a notification letter. The planning portal shows that only numbers 161, 130, 132, 134 and 149 received notifications. The notification should have gone at least to all houses north of number 120.

We hope that you will take into account our objections, and that you will refuse permission.

Yours,

