

Wards Cross House
Hogmoor Lane
Hurst
RG10 0DH

February 26th 2026

Ms C Davies
Planning Officer
Wokingham Borough Council

Dear Ms Connie Davies

Shorewood Homes Planning Application 260353
Land Northwest of Broadwater Lane and West of Hogmoor Lane.

I am writing to object to the Shorewood Homes planning application to build 5-7no houses on this site in Hurst.

1. The previous Appeals on these sites

The land on the west of the site north of Broadwater Lane was the subject of an appeal in 2025 (APP/X0360/W/25/335898) that was dismissed and the land to the west of Hogmoor Lane was the subject of an appeal in 1999 (T/HAPP/X0360/A/98/298932/P9) that was also dismissed. in 1999. The application made by Shorewood is for a Permission in Principle which is a type of application that I believe to be unsuitable for this kind of planning situation and to also be an approach that in no way alters the conclusion that was previously arrived at by both Inspectors to the effect that development on this site should not be permitted.

2. Applying the PiP process when Heritage is involved

I understand that the PiP process is designed to establish only the principle of development and this involves three factors, the Location, the Land Use and the Amount of development. The PiP process is not expected to involve Technical Details which include the numbers, positions and types of houses that are to be built and the more detailed intentions of the developer in this respect are not admissible or relevant at this stage. The Planning Practice Guidance states that PiP should not be granted where there are **“clear reasons why the site is unsuitable for development”**. Heritage constraints, especially where harm is likely to be substantial or unavoidable, fall into this category. The effect of the NPPF is to require that heritage impacts are assessed at the early stage of establishing the Principle of Development. If an Inspector has previously found that any development of the type proposed would harm the setting of heritage assets then these previous conclusions should be applied by planning authorities when considering a proposed PiP. Shorewood Homes originally submitted application 240583 to develop the site north of Broadwater Lane in 2024. It was refused by Wokingham Borough Council and then went to Appeal in 2025. At this Appeal (Reference APP/X0360/W/25/335898) Mr Burnham the Inspector found *inter alia* that development of the area near Broadwater Lane would cause harm to the setting of heritage assets as follows:

3. Extract from Appeal Inspector's Report 2025

Para 25. However, from Broadwater Lane, these buildings (Buttercups, Bower Cottage, Parkers Cottage, Elder Cottage), are currently experienced and perceived within a largely quiet, open and rural environment because of the character and appearance of the appeal site. There is nothing to indicate any history of development on the appeal site and it is likely that these buildings will have always been set against that backdrop. This relationship can be appreciated both from within the appeal site and from Broadwater Lane.

Para 26. The attributes of the site contribute positively to the setting and therefore the significance of the four listed buildings. Historic England guidance on the setting of Heritage Assets advises that settings of heritage assets which closely resemble the setting at the time the asset was constructed are likely to contribute particularly strongly to significance.

Para 27. That positive contribution would be significantly undermined through increased noise and activity on the site as well as the physical presence of nine well sized houses. This would be the case even if some dwellings were to be set back from Broadwater Lane and even if a scheme of landscaping were to be implemented.

Para 28. The proposal would cause harm to the setting of Buttercups, Bower Cottage, Parkers Cottage and Elder Cottage. The arising harm to the significance of the assets would be less than substantial.

Para 29. The harm would be towards the higher end within the less than substantial category for Bower Cottage & Parkers Cottage given they are fully opposite the appeal site and have a close relationship with it and because of the forward positioning of plots 6 and 7. The harm would be at the lower end within the less than substantial category for Buttercups given the development would be set further back at this end of the site and this would also be the case for Elder Cottage given its positioning slightly further along on Broadwater Lane not fully fronting the site.

Para 30. Overall, there would be conflict with Policy TB 24 of the MDLP which amongst other things states that the Council will conserve and seek the enhancement of designated heritage assets in the Borough and their settings by requiring works to or affecting the setting of heritage assets to demonstrate that the proposals would at least conserve the important character and special architectural or historic interest of the building including its setting.

Para 31. I must give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings. Harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme.

5 Extract from report by Ridgeway Heritage Consultancy 2025

The Grade II-listed buildings along Broadwater Lane and, to a lesser extent, Wards Cross House, have direct visual connections with the Application Site, and in this sense may be considered to have shared or collective settings. This visual relationship with an historic landscape context survives in most cases, and remains legible. Residential development within the Appeal Site will obstruct views from Broadwater Lane across open land to the north, and will therefore dramatically affect the historic and current setting of these buildings and their visual relationship with their historic landscape context. Such impact should be considered on a collective as well as an individual basis. In quoting Policy TB21 of the MDD Local Plan, the Officer's Report explicitly states that 'the gap in the settlement pattern on the northern edge of Broadwater Lane is a special feature of the Area of Special Character'

6. The setting of the Heritage Assets Parker's cottage and Bower Cottage.

The Appeal finding concerning this Heritage setting would appear to disallow this PiP application even without going into further detail of the type of development proposed. This is because, as the Inspector makes clear, any development within the area of the site in front of Bower Cottage and Parker's Cottage will adversely affect the quiet, open and rural environment that is the main attribute of the setting. This setting may be considered to be a rectangle stretching at its base from Parker's Cottage 60 metres west to Bower Cottage and then northwards across Broadwater Lane and across the field for a distance of 200 meters to where the hedge runs up from Hogmoor Lane. The view due north from Bower Cottage is interrupted at 70 metres by the hedgerow that is the boundary of a medieval field with an unusually shaped square field surrounded by an ancient ditch. Any construction or development within this area of Heritage setting has been disallowed by this recent Appeal decision because it would cause harm to the setting. An addition to the list of Heritage Assets that would be affected by harm to the setting but not specifically noted by the Inspector is Wards Cross House, on the corner of Hogmoor Lane. This Grade 2 listed farmhouse was built at the same time as Parker's Cottage and Bower Cottage. It is known to have had tenurial rights over the land identified as being the setting of Parker's and Bower cottages and no doubt the farmer kept his cows in the cowshed at Longbarn which was previously attached to Wards Cross. The outlook from the garden and the windows of Wards Cross House is straight across the site to the West, the only barrier being a featherboard garden fence. There would be direct intervisibility between the proposed house on Plot 3 and the residents of Wards Cross House, the house standing just 10 metres from the garden fence.

These developments would be in conflict with MDL policies TB24 and TB26 and CC02.

7. There are several precedents where Appeal Inspectors have found that harm to heritage settings alone led to the refusal of PiP applications at the PiP stage. (In the case of Broadwater Lane the site has already been dismissed largely because an Inspector has confirmed that harm would be caused to the setting of the Heritage Assets and the AOSC).

Example 1. APP/Y2620/W/21/3282963 – Land South of Church Street, Corpusty, Norfolk (2022)

Outcome: *Appeal dismissed.*

Reason: *Unacceptable harm to the setting of multiple heritage assets.*

Key heritage findings:

- The site lay within the setting of **Grade I St Peter's Church, Grade II listed buildings, and the Corpusty Conservation Area.**
- The Inspector held that PiP still requires a **"meaningful assessment of heritage impact"** at the *location* stage.
- Even without detailed design, the *principle* of residential development was judged to cause **less-than-substantial harm**, but with **no public benefits** capable of outweighing it at PiP stage.
- The statutory duty under **s.66(1)** was decisive.

This PiP was refused *solely* because the site's heritage sensitivity made any future acceptable scheme unlikely.

Section **66(1)** sits in **primary legislation**, not in the NPPF or other policy documents. It is found in the **Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990**, within **Part I, Chapter VI: Special considerations affecting planning.**

- **Section:** 66 – *General duty as respects listed buildings in exercise of planning functions*
- **Subsection:** (1)

The legislation states that when considering whether to grant planning permission for development affecting a listed building or its setting, the authority “**shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.**”

Case Law has emphasised that Section 66(1):

- Imposes a statutory presumption in favour of preservation.
- Requires “special regard” meaning that the decision maker must give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of [preserving the listed building or its setting.
- The duty requires that:
- When considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the decision-maker must have *special regard* to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- “Preserving” in this context has been interpreted by the courts to mean doing no harm to the significance of the listed building or its setting

Example 2. APP/Y2620/W/21/3282964 – Land North of Heydon Road, Corpusty, Norfolk (2022)

Outcome: *Appeal dismissed.*

Reason: *Harm to the setting of designated heritage assets.*

Key heritage findings:

- The Inspector found that the site’s contribution to the **Conservation Area’s rural setting** was fundamental.
- Even though this PiP did not consider detailed design, the **location** was inherently harmful.

8. Division of the site for discussion purposes.

Although it does not appear possible for this PiP application to progress further because of the effect it would have on the setting of the Heritage Assets it seems obligatory to discuss its other proposals. The site may conveniently be divided into two areas for discussion, the West that borders Broadwater Lane and is now proposed for 3 houses, and the East bordered by Hogmoor Lane and proposed for 4 houses. The two areas are connected by a road that winds across the field and around the Root Protection Area of the oak tree in the garden of Longbarn.

9. The west section of the site bordering Broadwater Lane

The developer has, contrary to PiP requirements, itemised the change in housing provision compared with the original site plan and reduced the number of houses from 4 to 3. The houses are considerably smaller than in the previous application because of the requirement that the PiP total maximum floor space per site is 1000 square metres. Not only have the proposed houses been reduced in number but their siting has been moved northwards away from the main road by some 27 metres. Landscaping in

the form of hedges and trees has inserted between the houses and the road. The Appeal Inspector was clear that noise and activity on the site as well as built form even though set back from the road would in his judgement adversely affect and cause harm to the setting and landscaping could not mitigate this. Furthermore the houses are laid out across the site parallel to Broadwater Lane so that looking from the main road they appear to form a continuous straight line across the site with the garages in between the houses completing the visual obstruction across the site. The setting of the Heritage assets would thereby be completely degraded and the sense of tranquil rurality would be lost.

10. The road across the site and the bell mouth entry.

This visual obstruction across the site is only absent in one place which is where the proposed road across the site runs between plots 1 and 2. This road is accessed from Broadwater Lane opposite Bower Cottage in the form of a bell mouth through the verge with a width of 15 meters. The verge itself was judged by the Inspector at Appeal to be part of the Area Of Special Character and part of the setting of the listed buildings. The road is part of the WBC Green Route Enhancement Area. A bell mouth is a modern access device that is completely out of place in this Heritage setting which it would degrade and urbanise in appearance. The bell mouth would give access to a tarmac road winding across the Heritage site, between the houses and round the Root Protection Area of tree T1 in the corner of the garden of Longbarn. The road would then proceed to the back of the proposed 4 houses facing Hogmoor Lane. This road would be a prominent and ugly anomaly in this tranquil landscape, causing harm to the integrity of the Heritage setting on Broadwater Lane and urbanising this ancient field.

10 The Hogmoor Lane site

The east side of the site borders Hogmoor Lane and although the PiP is not expected to specify building plans the developer has indicated that they wish to build 4 houses here. These houses are proposed to be lined up side by side in the 80 metre gap between Longbarn and Appletree cottage and on the opposite side of Hogmoor Lane to Badgers Lodge and Munfin House.

Hogmoor Lane is part of the River Loddon circular walk and is a route used by many hikers and dog walkers. The lane itself is thought to be ancient, probably of Saxon origin, because its surface is sunken well below the level of the fields surrounding it. From the lane there are long-reaching views of the fields and the Area Of Special Character.

Directly opposite the proposed site stands Munfin House, a long and elegant house registered as a non-designated asset. The clear views over Hogmoor Lane and the fields beyond provide a rural and tranquil setting for the house. Housing development on this site would substantially harm the setting of Munfin House and take away the amenities of Hogmoor Lane enjoyed by hundreds of casual walkers every year.

11. Drainage on the site: Surface water.

The field being proposed for this development is situated in a wet area where surface water frequently pools in small lakes and then runs into the ditches leading down Hogmoor Lane and then on to the Twyford Brook. The proposal is to create an attenuation pond close to Plot 7 where excess water from the swales on site can be held before release into the ditches. One problem that may arise is that too much water from the fields and the hard surfaces around the houses may cause exceedance in the pond that will then overflow into the ditches and cause flooding lower down the lane where flooding is already quite common every few years. A second problem is that the pond is not included within the site boundary (it was excluded in order to keep the area under 1 hectare for planning reasons) and it is unclear who will own the pond and who will be responsible for its maintenance. The pond itself may cause further problems with insects breeding there in the summer and it may also prove a danger to small children.

12. Drainage on the site: Groundwater levels affecting house building height

The report from Simpsons submitted with the application indicate clearly that the site is at risk from ground water flooding and recommends that houses should be built with finished floor levels raised above the surroundings (underlined in report below taken from application).

2.3 Groundwater Flooding

2.3.1. Figure 2.3 and 2.4 below shows the latest groundwater flood maps from Wokingham Borough Council's Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) dated May 2023. The maps show the site to remain in an area that is at potential risk of groundwater flooding, which is no change from the situation identified in the flood risk assessment submitted with the planning application. The flood risk assessment identified that the risk of groundwater flooding did not pose a significant issue to development taking place as finished floor levels of dwellings would be set above existing ground level to provide protection from groundwater flooding.

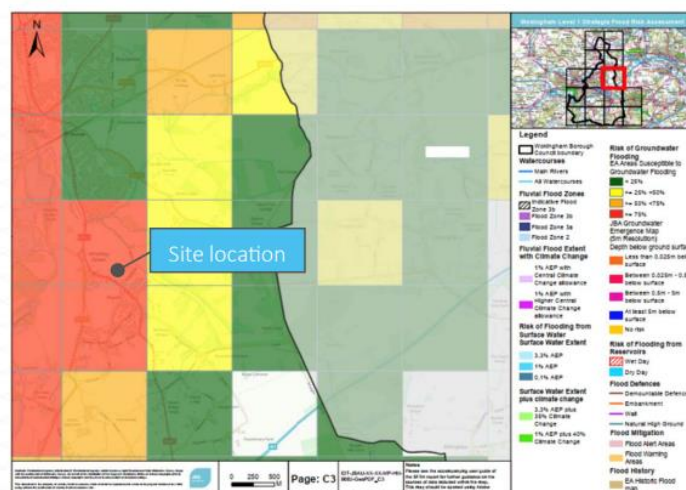


Figure 2.3 Level 1 SFRA Areas Susceptible to Groundwater Flooding Map

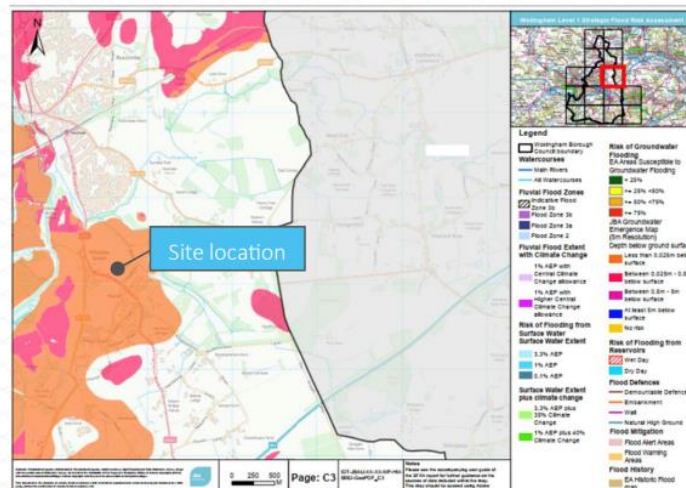


Figure 2.4 Level 1 SFRA Groundwater Emergence Map

13. Height and density of proposed houses in Hogmoor Lane

The houses proposed in the previous application from Shorewood elsewhere in the field north of Broadwater Lane were designed to have a finished floor level that was 0.7 meters above the surrounding surface of the site as advised by Simpsons in the previous application to protect against water ingress. It is expected that the same would apply to the houses in Hogmoor Lane. However the ground surface in the field west of Hogmoor Lane is already considerably higher

than the surface of the road, between 0.5 and 0.7 metres. The proposed houses would then have to be raised an additional .7 meters so that the proposed new houses would be raised by 1.4 metres above the road surface of Hogmoor Lane.

The Inspector for the 1999 Appeal noted that the garages would fill most of the spaces between the plots and the effect would be of a relatively densely built up frontage with few visual gaps and this impression would be magnified by the increased height at which the houses were set, due to the elevation of the field above the lane in addition to the flood resistant foundations. There was one less house in that plan of 1999 but the houses in the present proposal appear to take up a similar space.

14. Munfin House

Munfin House is a non-designated Heritage asset on the East side of Hogmoor Lane opposite the proposed site which provides a rural setting that has not changed for hundreds of years, being part of the field complex that links to Broadwater Lane. The lane is part of the River Loddon Circular Route for walkers who enjoy the rural aspects of this part of the walk where there are wide ranging views across the meadows. However the proposed 4 houses would completely change the appearance of the lane, blocking all the important vistas across the fields from where Whistley Green Cottage is visible at the other end of the Area Of Special Character some 500 yards away. This development would conflict with policies TB21, TB24 and TB26 all of which require the retention or enhancement of the landscape and the heritage assets within it. Munfin House is also a Heritage Asset and the lane and the open rural amenity is part of its setting which would be severely harmed by the development.

15. Sewer provision

The sewer provision for Hogmoor Lane and also Dalby Close, a fairly recent modern development to the east, runs up Hogmoor Lane and the rising main drainage is powered from a pumping station at the corner of the lane. The capacity of this system is exceeded in wet weather and not infrequently sewage is pumped out of the manhole at the top of the lane and runs down the lane where it contributes a further unpleasant element to local flooding. With this inadequate capacity it would be a major mistake to attach these new houses to the Thames Water rising main in Hogmoor Lane whereas happens often with new developments satisfactory infrastructure is not in place. Residents in Hogmoor Lane are extremely conscious of the flooding risks there as many of them have recent personal experience of flooding in their gardens and around their houses and in one well recorded incident actually inside the house.

Conclusion

The first stage of this PiP application is seeking approval for the Principle of development on the site but this appears certain to fail because an Inspector has already determined at a previous appeal that the locality is unsuitable because it forms part of the setting of Heritage assets. (The Bramshill principle requires planning Inspectors to afford Heritage harm considerable importance and weight). The Heritage Assets on Broadwater Lane and in Hogmoor Lane must be protected from harm and speculative activity.

The second stage of Technical Data Consent may not be so relevant in practice because its significance is likely to be less pivotal compared with the possible harm to Heritage assets. However the development proposals do conflict with several current policies including TB21,

TB24, TB 26, CCO2, CP9. The conflict with these policies has been confirmed by two Inspectors at Appeal in 1999 and 2025 who both found the site so unsuitable for development.

This site adds much to the rural charm of Hurst Village and its protection should continue to be provided by these policies and by the support of the Inspectors at Appeals over the years.

I respectfully request that this PiP application be refused by Wokingham Borough Council.

Yours faithfully

Dr Jeremy Lade