

NOTICE OF OBJECTION

PLANNING REFERENCE: 261624

SUBMITTED BY: ROBERT LEIGH

ADDRESS: HOGMOOR LANE RG10 0DH

DATE: 28 JULY 2026

LAND [NORTH] WEST OF HOGMOOR LANE HURST

Dear Sirs,

This document constitutes notice of objection to the above 'Permission in Principle' planning application.

It comprises:

- (a) A commentary on certain matters which I consider Wokingham Borough Council must consider in relation to the application; and
- (b) An appendix (Appendix 2) in which I summarise the Planning Inspector's findings in January 1999 when permission was refused for a similar development affecting this open, rural setting. Much of what the Inspector said in 1999 is I believe relevant and pertinent today.

The document should be read as a whole.

Timing of a 'Permission in Principle' (PiP) application in relation to the application site

I am bound to question the appropriateness of utilising the 'PiP' process in respect of a site for which planning permission was very recently refused (Ref:260353, and moreover has been refused on each occasion that an application has been submitted for development of the site) and in respect of which there is an on-going appeal (Ref: 6011047).

Accordingly, the Council may consider deferring its determination in respect of this application until the outcome of the Inspector's decision on the on-going appeal is known.

Appropriateness of a 'Permission in Principle' (PiP) application in relation to this site

This is not (as the application appears to suggest) an 'in-fill site'. The site's frontage to Hogmoor Lane is just shy of 100 metres in length, and there is no linear development of houses on either side of the site which would classify it as 'in-fill'.

At one end of that frontage is situated The Long Barn which is classified as a Non-designated heritage asset dating from at least the 17th century and together with Wards Cross House provides evidence of a historic farmstead linked to the field of this application site. At the other end is the delightful 19th century (or possibly older) Appletree Cottage formed by a combination of two smaller semi-detached cottages.

Both these properties add to the rural nature of Hogmoor Lane and in my opinion would be adversely affected by any housing development on the application site

Development Creep

It has been pointed out to the Council by a number of objectors that, as submitted, the applicant site plan shows an access way which could be utilised to increase the amount of development on or adjoining the application site thereby increasing the possibility of further phases of a housing development being undertaken on the larger greenfield site of which the applicant site forms part.

Rural Nature of Hurst

I moved into the village over 30 years ago principally to enjoy the rural nature of the village and its tranquillity compared to the City of London atmosphere where I then worked.

Hogmoor Lane, including the application site, is an epitome of that rural nature. The Lane, which is single track with a width of approximately 3/3 ½ metres, is used by people on horseback, cyclists, walkers, dog walkers and others.

The application site enhances that rural feeling, giving as it does views across open agricultural land and mature oak trees a few hundred metres away.

That characteristic is at significant threat from this application.

Flooding

I have lived in Hogmoor Lane Hurst for over 30 years. During that time, the Lane has been badly flooded on a number of occasions making it impossible to access my home by car for periods ranging between 24 and 72 hours.

The application gives very little detail as to how the applicant intends to mitigate against the risk of flooding/increased flooding, and in particular no 'flood mitigation infrastructure' is shown on the site layout plan.

Furthermore, if it is the case that such infrastructure will not form part of the application site, where will it be located, on whose land, by what authority and who will be responsible for its ongoing maintenance and repair?

Accordingly, I am bound to question whether the Council can treat this application as being complete.

Domineering and overbearing development

Munfin House, which I understand is a Non-designated heritage asset that was formed by the amalgamation of two 19th century brick rural cottages, is located directly opposite the open agricultural field of the application site.

As previously stated the Lane is no more than 3/3 ½ metres wide and the frontage of Munfin House sits very close to the Lane overlooking the rural agricultural field. The field is at least 2/3 feet above the height of the Lane (and therefore of Munfin House) and building regulations require floors of new housing to be raised by a minimum of .15 metres.

I note the Council's own Heritage Officer recognises Munfin House's historic form and materials together making a positive contribution to the setting of the Hurst Area of Special Character.

This proposal replaces the open agricultural foreground with two large suburban houses that would overwhelm the setting of Munfin House and irrevocably alter its character.

And on a personal level, I have experience of a domineering and overbearing development as the photos in Appendix 1 will show.

Highway Safety

The junction of Hogmoor Lane with the A321 is hazardous with inadequate sight-lines, leading onto a busy main road with average traffic speeds of circa 36 mph.

The proposed development of 2 large modern houses will increase the number of cars in the Lane by, I would estimate, 8. It could be greater – those across the Lane from me have over 6 cars in their driveway alone.

8 cars would trigger an increase of at least 16 to 20 vehicle movements per day, not including delivery vans, visitors and the like.

In my opinion, the Y junction at the top of the Lane can not safely handle such an increased quantity of traffic and, again in my opinion, none of the solutions put forward by the applicant are satisfactory or in one case affordable.

I ask the Council to refuse this application.

Yours Sincerely,

Robert Leigh

APPENDIX 1 – TO NOTICE OF OBJECTION

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LAND [NORTH] WEST OF HOGMOOR LANE HURST

EXAMPLE OF DOMINEERING/OVERBEARING DEVELOPMENT IN HOGMOOR LANE





APPENDIX 2 – TO NOTICE OF OBJECTION

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LAND [NORTH] WEST OF HOGMOOR LANE HURST

SUMMARY OF AND COMMENTARY ON PART OF INSPECTOR'S DECISION IN JANUARY 1999

‘...the main issues in this appeal are (1) the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the rural area, (2) the effect of the proposal on highway safety in Hogmoor Lane and at its junction with the A321 and (3) whether a shortfall in housing land supply warrants the release of this site.

I will summarise and comment on each of these issues in turn:

1. THE EFFECT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ON THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE RURAL AREA

The Inspector said this:

*“Policies C2 of the Structure Plan, LTV2 of the Loddon Area Local Plan and WCC1 of the Deposit Local Plan aim to restrict development in the countryside outside settlement boundaries. Policies C6 of the Structure Plan, LC1 of the Local Plan and WCC2 of the Deposit Local Plan **afford especially rigorous protection** [my emphasis] to areas designated as green gaps between settlements. Policy LBE2 of the Local Plan states **that development which would adversely affect the character of an area will not normally be permitted**.....*

*The appeal site is on the north west side of Hogmoor Lane, **outside the settlement boundary of Hurst as defined in the Local Plan**....National advice in Planning Policy Guidance 7 **...states that new housebuilding in the countryside should be strictly controlled**. The site lies also within the green gap between Hurst and Twyford. The aim of the green gap policy is **to maintain physical and visual separation between settlements in order to retain their distinctiveness and their open rural setting**..... The appeal site has a frontage of about 80m-90m to Hogmoor Lane, which I consider forms a **substantial gap in the street scene, greater than what would normally be termed an infill plot, and which makes a significant contribution to the semi-rural character of the Lane**. Viewed from the Lane the **appeal site appears as an integral part of the green gap between the village and Twyford**.....*

*I consider therefore that the proposed development would conflict with the Council's aims to restrict development in the countryside and to maintain the separate identity of neighbouring settlements. **I conclude therefore that the proposed development would conflict with Policies C2 and C6 of the Structure Plan, with Policies LTV2, LC1 and LBE2 of the Loddon Area Local Plan, and with Policies WCC1, WCC2 and WBE1 of the [emerging] Wokingham District Local Plan.**”*

Location Outside Development Limits, Not an Infill Site

The proposal is unplanned development outside the settlement limit of Hurst in designated countryside and is contrary to the spatial objectives of the WBC Development Plan. It is contrary to Policies CP1, CP9 and CP11.

The application describes this as an infill site but the Planning Inspector at the 1999 appeal stated that the Site is too large to be termed a normal infill site.

There has been pressure to build on the field or subdivisions of it for the past 70 years. Planning permission has always been refused on this land.

Harm to the Setting of the Hurst Area of Special Character

The Hurst Area of Special Character (AoSC) is a locally designated area of heritage interest that includes several listed and historic buildings. The open field of the application site has remained unchanged since at least the 16th Century and forms an important part of the AoSC's wider rural setting.

The introduction of two large houses of modern construction along the Hogmoor Lane frontage would damage this rural setting. The historic outlook across open agricultural fields would be replaced by dominant built form (see examples of this in Appendix 1) and the quiet, agricultural landscape would be lost to modern suburban development.

The Council's own Heritage Consultant has identified the field as valuable open land that defines the AoSC's rural character. He has said that any development here would harm the setting and significance of the AoSC, particularly the sensitive views from Broadwater Lane and Hogmoor Lane and would fail to preserve or enhance the area's traditional and historic character.

Location, Landscape Character, Valued Landscape and Hogmoor Lane

The application site and surrounding field are included within Haines Hill Valued Landscape. The WBC Landscape Specialist has described the field as having a higher quality landscape than the surrounding area.

The specialist also stated that the outlook from Hogmoor Lane across the application site towards Whistley Green and the veteran trees in the rest of the AoSC is particularly important.

The Landscape Character strategy (WBC LCA C2 Hurst River Terrace) is to conserve the low pattern of development around Hurst and Whistley Green and to discourage further linear development.

The introduction of 2 large houses of modern construction with associated domestic gardens, close-boarded fencing, vehicle movements and everyday residential activity would erode the rural tranquillity and irrevocably change the character of the Lane.

2. THE EFFECT OF THE PROPOSAL ON HIGHWAY SAFETY IN HOGMOOR LANE AND AT ITS JUNCTION WITH THE A321

I refer to my comments on 'Highway Safety' in the earlier part of this Notice of Objection, reproduced here for the sake of completeness:

"Highway Safety

The junction of Hogmoor Lane with the A321 is hazardous with inadequate sight-lines, leading onto a busy main road with average traffic speeds of circa 36 mph.

The proposed development of 2 large modern houses will increase the number of cars in the Lane by, I would estimate, 8. It could be greater – those across the Lane from me have over 6 cars in their driveway alone.

8 cars would trigger an increase of at least 16 to 20 vehicle movements per day, not including delivery vans, visitors and the like.

In my opinion, the Y junction at the top of the Lane cannot safely handle such an increased quantity of traffic and, again in my opinion, none of the solutions put forward by the applicant are satisfactory or indeed in one case affordable.”

3. WHETHER A SHORTFALL IN HOUSING LAND SUPPLY WARRANTS THE RELEASE OF THIS SITE

The Inspector said this:

“On balance, I do not consider that the possibility of slippage in the programme of housing provision would be sufficient to outweigh the other fundamental objections to the scheme identified above. I conclude on this issue that a potential shortfall in housing land supply would not warrant the release of this small site.”