

Appeal 6014086

Land at Lodge Rd, Hurst, Wokingham, RG10 0SG

St Nicholas Hurst Parish Council – Appeal submission

Proposal : Full application for the proposed erection of 3 no. detached dwellings with associated access, parking, landscaping and creation of a balancing pond.

The Parish Council opposed the original application in February 2026 (# 252034), and the application was subsequently refused by Wokingham Borough Council in March 2026.

The Parish Council continues to oppose this development for the reasons we set out in February 2026, as restated below.

1. Flooding

Much of the site is in Flood Zone 2 and the site was partially flooded for long periods last winter. Flooding has always been a problem in Hurst historically, but in recent years it has increased in frequency and intensity, and winter flooding occurred at or near this site in 2017 and every winter since 2021.

The reasons for flooding at this site and across Hurst generally are well known and have been described in detail in WBC's Section 19 Flood Investigation Report, 2024 (attached as Appendix 1) which concluded that Hurst has a significant and growing flood problem, and that a flood event similar to that in 2023 will occur in 1 in 3 years

In summary :

- The topography means the water table is high (e.g. no Hurst houses have cellars); heavy rain therefore generates surface water run-off; it cannot be absorbed by the ground.
- The central village area of Hurst, known as Hurst River Terrace is low and flat, with higher ground on three sides; the creation of the landfill hills to the west of the village (on the opposite side of Lodge Road to this site), before 2005 cut off the possibility of any water draining from this site in that direction into the river Loddon.
- Paragraph 9.2.1 of the S19 Report states that there is a lack of capacity along the "*main river and ordinary watercourse systems*". In addition the condition of the drainage assets across the whole of the village is assessed and in Section 3.2.1 and described as "*poor*" or "*very poor*". Watercourses, ditches, bridges and culverts are all badly maintained.
- Paragraph 3.3 of the S19 Report states that there is a "*vast drainage network*" of "*main rivers*" but there is just one exit route for all the surface water – Twyford Brook at the north. The village is hemmed in on the other three sides, and water has nowhere to go.
- Specifically, Thames Water's pumping station at the Twyford Brook "pinch-point" is judged to be "*woefully inadequate*". Therefore, when there has been a lot of rain, water backs up from this single pinch-point, causing flooding in multiple locations around the village, including this site.

- The problem at this site specifically is exacerbated by the poor state of repair of the Hatchgate Ditch, close to the site and into which much of the surface run-off from the development would be expected to flow. Recent surveys by residents suggest that Hatchgate Ditch no longer functions effectively as a main river for drainage purposes.

Hurst village has therefore become what has been described as a “surface water entrapment triangle”. This proposed development sits squarely within that water “trap” and the applicant fails to demonstrate that the proposed attenuation basin would significantly mitigate the risk of flooding, on the site itself and adjacent areas.

In addition, the applicant’s proposal that the foul water be treated on site and discharged into the local ditches would increase the risk that flooding would extend beyond the site itself, and further exacerbate local flooding.

The Section 19 Flood Investigation Report explicitly states that WBC’s Flood Management Strategy Action Plan 5.3 is aimed at “*ensuring that planning decisions take full account of flood risk*”. This application does not do that adequately, as evidenced by the Environment Agency’s objection to the original application, as well as WBC’s refusal of the application.

WBC concluded that the proposed development “*failed to demonstrate that it would have an acceptable flooding and drainage impact, contrary to Core Policy Strategy CP1 and CP3. MDD Local Plan Policy CC09 and CC010, and Section 14 of the NPPF*”. The Parish Council agrees with these conclusions.

2. Impact on existing settlements

The development was described in the application documents as “in-fill” along Lodge Road. This is not the case, given that the area along Lodge Road is currently not developed other than one or two detached and established houses. The only real development is to the south of the site around Nursery Close. This section of Lodge Road is a fully rural setting. The site itself is also outside the established settlement area and therefore would be contrary to the WBC policy CP11.

The area represents part of the spatial separation between Whistley Green and Hurst village and this has been an area that has been key to the maintenance of the distinction between the two settlements. This was the unequivocal finding of the Planning Inspectors who refused the appeals for the two recent development proposals adjacent to this site (APP/X0360/W/22/3309202 and APP/X0360/W/25/3364304).

3. Landscape and Visual Impact

The development as proposed would limit the visibility across the fields from Lodge Road to Tape Lane in Hurst. The view from Lodge Road, across an open greenfield site, would be restricted, and this would significantly change the rural character of the route. The development would replace the countryside feel with an urbanised built form, and be contrary to a wide range of local and national planning policies, as highlighted in WBC’s refusal of the application.

4. Sustainability

As noted in the previous applications for this and adjacent sites, the location within Hurst is not sustainable. There are no local amenities readily accessible without the use of a car –

there is no bus service on Lodge Road and the local bus that passes nearby is limited and infrequent (bus 128/129) – hourly at best. There is no path on the east side of Lodge Road and the permissive path on the west side is not easily accessible and involves crossing a busy highway. The local shop is not accessible except by use of a car or by crossing Lodge Road and using the permissive path. The local school is also not accessible without crossing the road or by car. The most direct route to the local primary school is along Sawpit Road. However the path on Sawpit does not extent along its full length and therefore the pupils would need to walk along the road for some distance. The local infant school has been subject to capacity constraints and any children might be required to attend primary schools some distance away. The secondary schools are also only accessible by car – cycling along Lodge Road in either direction to the local secondary schools is not really practical given the speed and volume to traffic along Lodge Road.

The proposed development therefore does not meet the criteria for a sustainable development, and is again therefore contrary to a wide range of local and national planning policies, as listed in WBC's refusal of the application.

5. Local Plan

The applicant refers to the lack of an approved local plan as support for the presumption in favour of development. The Wokingham Local Plan has now been approved by the Inspectors and is close to formal adoption; it therefore should have substantial weight in considering the appropriate development sites in the parish. In this Local Plan Hurst has again been identified as an area for limited development and as noted above the change in the spatial separation arising from the development would be inconsistent with its limited development status.

Conclusion

The Parish Council continues to oppose this development, for all of the reasons set out above, and which strongly support WBC's finding that the development would be contrary to a very wide range of WBC planning policies and the NPPF.

The Parish council therefore requests that the Inspector refuse the Appeal.

14 September 2026.