

PLANNING REF : 252934  
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Paddock View  
: 1 Nursery Close, Hurst, Berkshire  
: RG100EQ  
SUBMITTED BY : Mr James Fife  
DATE SUBMITTED : 02/02/2026

COMMENTS:

I write as a neighbour abutting onto the site for proposed development.

Objection to Unjustified Residential Development in the Countryside

1. Conflict with the Spatial Strategy and Countryside Policies

The application site lies outside the defined settlement boundary and the proposal therefore constitutes unjustified residential development in the open countryside, contrary to the adopted spatial strategy. The land is not allocated for housing, does not form part of the Council's Housing Land Supply, and performs an identified role in maintaining the open countryside setting along Lodge Road. Development in this location is not supported by policy and no exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated to justify a departure from the development plan.

2. Limited Development Location and Policy Non-Compliance

Hurst is identified as a limited development location where growth is strictly constrained. As noted by the Appeal Inspector in the recent decision relating to the neighbouring 99-dwelling scheme, the borough's development limits have already been exceeded and Hurst has made a significant contribution. The current proposal does not meet any of the recognised exception criteria that might otherwise justify development in such a location and would add further pressure to an already constrained settlement.

3. Harm to Landscape Character and Settlement Separation

The proposal would erode an important open countryside gap and cause harm to the rural character and appearance of Lodge Road. The site has previously been found to play a valuable role in maintaining the separation between the northern and southern parts of the settlement and in providing a rural approach along Lodge Road. Built development on this land would significantly diminish that function, resulting in visual and spatial coalescence and an urbanising impact on the countryside.

4. Conflict with the 2020 Appeal Decision on the Same Site

A Planning Inspector dismissed an appeal for residential development of five dwellings on this site in January 2020 (APP/X0360/W/18/3194044). The Inspector identified intrinsic harms relating to countryside incursion, landscape character and settlement separation which have not been addressed or overcome by the current proposal. The Inspector further concluded that the development would be unacceptable even if the tilted balance were to apply. The current scheme retains the same access arrangement,

countryside incursion and spatial relationship with Lodge Road, and there has been no material change in circumstances to justify a different conclusion.

## 5. Flood Risk and Drainage Unsuitability

The site is subject to significant fluvial and surface water flood risk. The Flood Risk Assessment confirms that approximately 90% of the site now lies within Flood Zone 2 according to the updated Environment Agency flood maps. The southern part of the site functions as a floodplain and is regularly inundated for extended periods of the year. Raising or developing this land would inevitably displace floodwater onto neighbouring properties and gardens, exacerbating flood risk elsewhere.

The proposal relies on mitigation and surface water attenuation within areas already known to flood and fails to demonstrate that the development would be safe for its lifetime or that safe access and egress could be maintained during extreme rainfall events. The drainage strategy is inadequately explained and lacks sufficient detail to demonstrate effectiveness.

Of particular concern is the foul drainage strategy. The applicant proposes the use of a package treatment plant discharging treated effluent into an "existing ditch", identified as Hatchgate Ditch. This ditch is blocked, and no evidence has been provided to demonstrate that it is capable of receiving or conveying additional effluent. No details of the proposed treatment plant are provided and the submitted drainage drawings fail to show the foul effluent system altogether. This represents a serious omission and raises concerns regarding pollution, flooding and long-term maintenance.

## 6. Highway Safety and Access Concerns

The proposal introduces a new vehicular access directly onto Lodge Road, a 40mph semi-rural road. Contrary to the application's description, this access is not in the location of the existing entrance but would be an entirely new access point positioned midway along the site. This would create additional turning movements in a location where drivers do not anticipate frequent access points, increasing the risk of collisions.

Although minimum visibility standards may be met, this alone does not demonstrate that the access would be safe and suitable for all users. The increased conflict with through-traffic, cyclists and pedestrians is a material concern, particularly given the road speed and rural character. No speed reduction or traffic calming measures are proposed.

## 7. Lack of Pedestrian Safety and Unsustainable Travel Patterns

There are no safe or convenient pedestrian routes from the site. Any pedestrian movement would require immediate crossing of the busy 40mph Lodge Road, making walking unsafe. As a result, all journeys to and from the site would realistically need to be made by private

car, directly conflicting with the Council's commitment to sustainable and green travel.

The site is poorly related to services, employment and public transport. The previous appeal decision concluded that the location was not sustainable in accessibility terms, and there has been no material improvement in walking routes, bus frequency or road conditions since that time. The site is too far and too dangerous for realistic walking or cycling to Twyford Station, particularly during peak hours, and the development would likely generate an additional three to six cars, exacerbating parking pressures in Twyford.

#### 8. Failure of the Tilted Balance

Even allowing for the Council's housing land supply shortfall, the proposal fails under the tilted balance. The limited benefit of providing three market dwellings attracts only modest weight and does not outweigh the significant and enduring harms identified. These include harm to countryside character, settlement separation, flood risk resilience, highway safety and sustainability. The harms are site-specific, substantial and long-term, and there are no material considerations that justify granting planning permission.

#### 9. Coalescence of Settlements

As previously identified by the Planning Inspector, development on this site would contribute to the physical and visual coalescence of Hurst and Whistley Green by forming a "bridge" between two distinct settlements. Nothing has changed since the earlier appeal decision to alter this conclusion, and the proposal remains fundamentally harmful in this respect.