

36 Martineau Lane
Hurst
Reading RG10 0SF

19 January 2026

Development Control
Wokingham Borough Council
Shute End
Wokingham RG40 1BN

Sent by email to: planning.enquiries@wokingham.gov.uk

LETTER OF OBJECTION

PLANNING APPLICATION No: 253074 – Land adjacent to School Road and Orchard Road, Hurst RG10 0SD

PROPOSAL: “Application for approval of Reserved Matters pursuant to Outline Planning Consent 230074 (allowed at appeal APP/X0360/W/24/3342812) for the erection of 23 dwellings with associated access and 15 carparking spaces for the local primary school. Details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale to be considered.”

I write by way of reinforcement to my appended original letter of OBJECTION dated 25 February 2023 to Planning Application 230074 and with specific regard to the Applicant’s proposed drainage strategy.

The Willowmead surface water drainage solution is lightweight and implicitly dependent upon on a wholly on-site sustainable SuDs system and water attenuation within the Site; whilst that of the onsite foul water infrastructure is wholly reliant upon being discharging into the public foul water sewer in School Road and onwards to the inadequate Sawpit Road SPS and into the rising fowl water main northwards across the western side of the Tape Lane field. Such is the Applicant’s ignorance of local infrastructure knowledge there appears to be a dependency on a discharge into a mythical “Church Lane”.

I note that under Reserved Matters that there is no detail to corroborate the viability of this SuDS drainage strategy – it is little more than a piece of unsubstantiated boilerplate text. I see no current comment on approval of the proposed Drainage Strategy Report on the part of either Thames Water or the Environment Agency.

It is self apparent that currently as a field, with a high-water table, that is subject to pluvial flooding – that a significant and relatively high increase in water volume discharged from impervious surfaces (ie roof tops, driveways and hardstands) will heavily impact upon flooding on residual permeable land constrained by an increased water table level. As the Applicant asserts, the volume of rainfall (subject to climate change) will not significantly change, however the volume and rate of water discharging into permeable areas will significantly increase reinforcing the fact that onsite pluvial flooding will only get worse if the principle of a wholly sustainable on-site SuDS drainage system is adopted. The so-called Drainage Solution (integral to the Drainage Strategy Report) will without doubt result in an increased surge in off-site surface water discharge – just as it already does in the very near vicinity of the Hurst Village Halls in school Road and at the junction of Church Hill and Orchard Road (See photographs on Pages 6 – 7 below).

How can a further new housing development in this location possibly enhance the capacity of an inadequate drainage infrastructure and mitigate flood risk beyond the Site ? Of course not.

As for the aesthetic qualities of the proposed housing I cannot imagine a more incongruous build quality – what's with the grey cladding and what looks like the reverse side of 4 large side gates tacked onto the front elevations of plots looking onto School Road. Absolutely dreadful.

Despite contempt for the Public Consultation Period ending on 30 January 2026, the Applicant's contempt for proposed Conditions clearly extends to school children and other residents, by parking on a public footpath impeding safe access between St Nicholas CE Primary School and safe car parking at Hurst Village Halls, and damage to trees the subject of TPOs.



I therefore urge you to refuse these ill-considered and pre-empted Planning Application Conditions under Reserved Matters.

Jonathan Norris

COPY OF INITIAL LETTER OF OBJECTION DATED 25 FEBRUARY 2023

36 Martineau Lane
Hurst
Reading RG10 0SF

25 February 2023

Development Control
Wokingham Borough Council
Shute End
Wokingham RG40 1BN

Sent by email to: planning.enquiries@wokingham.gov.uk

LETTER OF OBJECTION

PLANNING APPLICATION No: 230074 – Land adjacent to School Road and Orchard Road, Hurst

“Outline planning application for the proposed erection of 24 dwellings with associated access and 15 carparking spaces for the local Primary school. Access only to be considered (with Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale to be reserved).”

I write to register my **OBJECTION** to this planning application for the following reasons:

Location

The notion that this green space at the very heart of the rural community and that of its longstanding use for the grazing of horses outside of the Development Limits has simply served its purpose and can now be developed without causing irreparable harm to the rural character and landscape is fanciful.

The introduction of 2 new access roads either side of the School Road / Tape Lane road junction in a location already heavily impacted by kerbside parking at peak times and cutting across the busiest footpath in the village will simply worsen School Road traffic movement and parking issues from the village pond through to Hurst Village Halls – not to mention the risk of accidents.

How can a “generous offer” of the use of another car park by parents of school children be of any benefit to a child or their parents by increasing the serious risk of causing them harm whilst walking along the footpath between the School and Hurst Village Halls. What parent would wittingly wish to accept such a risk or be party to an accident. This is not so much an offer, as a sweetener to elicit support for this planning application.

This “offer” however with regard to the use of a car park by parents of school children is a clear acknowledgement that on street parking adjacent to the site is thwart with road safety issues and concerns. Undoubtedly such a new car park will simply promote increased traffic movements across the footpath and seriously compromise the established principle of Safer Walking Routes.

The introduction of 2 new vehicular access points within 30 metres of each other, crossing the existing footpath full of young school children and their families walking, talking, running, riding bikes and scooters,

pushing prams, walking dogs and opening car doors would be grossly irresponsible by any definition of planning policy.

The addition of a car park, let alone a housing development, in this location defies common sense. The only beneficiary of this housing development would be the developer, not the elderly as originally proposed in earlier consultations.

Car Park

Whilst the new car park is presented as a benefit to the parents of school children attending St Nicholas Primary School, it is evident from on-site parking arrangements that these spaces will all be required in any event by residents and owners of larger works vehicles given that overnight parking on School Road and Orchard Road would be unsafe. Given typical garage usage within Martineau Lane, it is likely that only a few of the new garages will be used as such and that in time garage conversions will become apparent. What with a reduction of at least 6 kerbside parking spaces it is unlikely that this car park will offer any net capacity benefit to parents of school children. Any net benefit from the use of this car park is pure marketing rhetoric.

Bus Service

The bus service will inevitably be further impacted by additional vehicular access movements, car parking / school drop-off / pick-up mayhem, and in turn will in itself further impact on the movement of traffic reduced to a single file westwards along School Road, with the west bound bus stop, albeit of necessity outside the Hurst Village Halls.

Similarly, the eastbound bus stop adjacent to the Sawpit Road Sewage Pumping Station will be obliged to continue to park on a soft grass verge on a narrow dangerous road bend to enable oncoming traffic to pass. The addition of cars travelling to and from this proposed housing development will just make matters worse – not forgetting the awaited development of 4 new houses on Sawpit Road once that developer has addressed their outstanding Conditions / permissions.

Site Access

It is evident that access to this housing development will be physically very restricted and visually impeded. Hence, School Road access will be dangerous to school children, pedestrians and family groups walking along the footpath between the School and Hurst Village Halls and in crossing access roads – not forgetting of course cyclists, cars attempting to park /drive off, the occasional bus, trade vehicles and bin collection access or through traffic simply trying to navigate its way through a 5-way road access network amidst a load of kerbside parking.

Similarly, site access from Orchard Road will be dangerous but to a lesser extent.

Community Impact

The village hall area within Hurst has always been at the heart of the village community and for the past few years has benefited from being able to temporarily close part of School Road in order to support the Hurst Show and ad hoc street parties.

The inability to do so in the future will cause demonstrable harm to the community given that the collective facilities available at the School, along School Road, Hurst Village Halls (and pending new Community Hub) and at Martineau Village Green.

It is a sad day when the delivery of a series of unrelated speculative 'scattergun' developments within Hurst such as this are driven by developers without the collective support of the local community that they purport to care so much for.

Transportation

Such is Hurst's overwhelming dependency upon the use of cars for everyday purposes this housing development site is no different to any other part of the village but that is no justification for compounding the harm caused to an already unsustainable rural location.

The use of a car, or exceptionally a bike, is therefore a prerequisite of living in Hurst.

Hurst is renowned for being reliant on more cars per capita than any other part of Wokingham Borough due to its location and lack of commercially viable bus service.

Country roads throughout Hurst are generally poorly maintained with unexpected potholes covered by flood water such that cycling requires careful consideration with regard to purpose, safety and weather conditions. For the majority, everyday cycling is not a realistic option other than for the occasional leisure purposes.

The ability to travel to local town centres in a timely manner for the purpose of onward travel, secondary schools, health centres, weekly shopping trips and use of leisure facilities is only feasible by private car or by taxi at considerable expense.

Sewerage

It would appear of late that sewerage and drainage planning application solutions in Hurst appear to be side-lined on a *manyana* pretext whereby the solution is alleged to be resolved by some futuristic and mythical planning Condition or side stepped by a Statement of Common Ground.

- On that point, the Sawpit Road Appeal (Ref: APP/X0360/W/21/3280255) was upheld on the pretext of a number of Conditions – and yet here we are today three months after ground was first broken, work has since been stopped due to the absence of a discharge application to date.
- By way of a further example I refer to the Outline Planning Application 220458 *Land East Of Lodge Road Hurst RG10 OEG* ...

[Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy](#) clearly states on p21 para 8.5 ...

"There are no suitable [sewerage] connection points to the south of the development site. If there were, it would not be appropriate to send foul flows to them as they flow to the existing pumping station [Sawpit Road SPS] in the village centre, which would have been designed only for the existing flows and loads that it receives."

... which coming from a fellow developer is hardly a ringing endorsement for additional sewage discharge into the nearby Sawpit Road Sewage Pumping Station which this housing development [PA 230074] will clearly presume to be reliant upon.

Notwithstanding that, the sewerage network passing this site has a history of flooding in properties in Tape Lane and Sawpit Road, hence the prospect of another simplistic Condition is of no consequence or reassurance.

Yet again, this outline planning application 230074 also affords no suggestion as to how this housing development will dispose of sewage from this rural location.

Surface water

Similarly, the Applicant does not indicate how surface water, hitherto absorbed into the field, will be discharged away from the site, mindful of Thames Water's hierarchy preference for rural SuDS drainage. In the absence of an acceptable Thames Water surface water network, does this mean that neighbouring properties will be adopted as soakaways and the Primary School playing field potentially placed at risk of flooding – a risk that the development site has encountered in the past.

The site's current use for grazing purposes outside of the Development Limit is long established, well founded and an ideal use of land that is prone to surface water flooding.



Views of site flooding.

PA 230074

View of School Road flooding
adjacent to Hurst Village Halls.

PA 211532



Biodiversity

This is undoubtedly a greenfield site that has without doubt afforded an excellent habitat for wildlife in a quiet rural setting and without question will be the subject of an irreplaceable loss in biodiversity.

Conclusion

This location is outside of the Development Limits for good reason and as such this proposed development affords no benefit to the village, school or parents; and would be in any event be a major contributor to road safety concerns in School Road and compound congestion along a key traffic route across the village.

This is yet another speculative and opportunistic development that demands that Wokingham Borough Council step up and deliver the right developments in the right location in accordance with Local and Neighbourhood Plans.

Jonathan Norris