

Date: 5 January 2026

ST NICHOLAS HURST PARISH COUNCIL - CONSULTATION SHEET
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Application Number: 253074

Address: Land adjacent to School Road and Orchard Road, Hurst, RG10 0SD

Proposed Development:

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 car parking spaces for the local primary school. Details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale to be considered.

Consultation Period Ends: 23 January 2026

SUMMARY

Following the allowing of the 2024 appeal in respect of development of this site, the objective of the Parish Council is to seek to ensure that the development conforms to all of Wokingham Borough Council's policies for this type of development, including WBC's comprehensive "*Design Guide*", which incorporates the formally adopted "*Design for Hurst*".

We therefore **OBJECT** to this application, based on three specific Reserved Matters, where we believe that the current proposals need to be significantly amended to conform to WBC planning policies:

01 – Design Statement

08 – Parking Management Plan

09 – Drainage Strategy

The Parish Council's discussion and specific objections in each of these areas are set out below.

01 – DESIGN STATEMENT

The Design for Hurst (Section 12, page 24) sets out the following guidance to support WBC Local Plan policies:

- The local character and historical context of the buildings in Hurst can be reflected in design and the way that materials are used to give acceptable proportion, mass and detail in them.
- Stimulus for the design and construction of new buildings of originality will come from recognition of the merit of local traditional materials and vernacular style, shape and proportions.
- A sympathetic variety of house types and details lend interest to the street scene.

- Modern buildings, whether in design or in the imaginative use of traditional materials may be accepted where they enhance the location and add to the quality of the environment.

The Applicant's own Design Statement provides a good summary Key Character Elements of Hurst village, reflecting the wide mix of building styles, architectural features and varied materials palette. Although the Design for Hurst document is not explicitly referenced by the Applicant, the Key Character Elements identified by the Applicant are consistent with the description of Hurst in that document. (The very diverse materials palette seen in Hurst does now include some limited recent use of black weatherboarding on one development, which post-dates the Design for Hurst document, although that is not shown in any of the Applicant's photographs.)

The Applicant's Design Statement, however, also uses the assessed Key Character Elements of Twyford as part of its Guiding Principles. The Applicant should be aware that Hurst and Twyford are separate settlements, and substantially different in terms of age, size, layout and design. The character of Twyford is not relevant for the design of a development in Hurst and should not be used by the Applicant to guide the design of this development.

Layout

We consider that it would be preferable to set units 15-23 further back from School Rd. This is a busy road, with a lot of vehicle and pedestrian traffic, in particular at school drop-off and pick-up times, and the new homes will be significantly affected in terms of both **noise** and **privacy** (both of which are subject to various WBC Design Guide and other planning criteria).

- ***The Parish Council asks WBC to assess the position of units 15-23 specifically in respect of the noise and privacy aims of the Design Guide, and ensure that they are set back far enough from School Road to minimise these impacts on both residents and passers-by.***

Materials Palette

Having identified the Key Character Elements of Hurst reasonably well, in broad conformity with the Design for Hurst, the Applicant then seems to have completely ignored these in respect of the proposed materials palette! There is almost no diversity in materials used and no reference to the existing Hurst materials palette. Every single housing unit comprises:

- RAL 7016 casement windows
- Cream stone cills
- RAL 7016 composite vertical panelled doors
- C18 slate grey weatherboarding

The garage doors on the larger units also all seem to be anthracite grey.

There is excessive use of the slate grey weatherboarding, large areas of which are included on almost all the buildings. The appearance of the whole development is dominated by this weatherboarding, its uniform greyness exacerbated by the identical anthracite windows and doors on every home.

There are no sash windows or dormer windows in the design, and no external timber framing, despite all of these having been identified in the Applicant's own Key Character Elements analysis. There is no mixing of brick colours or patterning in the brickwork, and no reference to the various vernacular styles prevalent in the village, as highlighted in the Design for Hurst.

In summary, in terms of the uniform materials palette, the unimaginative sameness of design, and the lack of diversity of feature or colour, this development could be anywhere in the country. It certainly does not reflect the current character and appearance of Hurst. It also makes no reference to the Key Character Elements which the Applicant itself identified for Hurst. It manifestly does not "*respond to its context*" or "*create a sense of place that is distinctive and memorable and help to enhance the character of the surrounding area*" (WBC Design Guide, Section 4).

- ***The Parish Council requests that WBC rejects the uniform materials palette component of the Applicant's Design Statement and instructs the Applicant to develop a diverse materials palette that reflects the clear objectives of Section 4 of the WBC Design Guide and the guidance in Section 12 of the Design for Hurst.***

08 – PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Parking Management Plan relates to the 15-space public access car park, provision of which is an undertaking by the developer that forms an integral part of the approved development plan. The Parish Council has three concerns regarding the proposed Parking Management Plan:

- i. The detailed specification of the car park has not been included in the Plan; rather, there is just an undertaking not to commence work on the development until a detailed specification has been approved in writing by WBC. In our view, a detailed car park specification should be available as part of this Reserved Matters application. Conforming to the rest of the development, this specification should exclude any form of street lighting.
 - ii. Under this Plan, the Applicant will not be obliged to commence construction of the car park until the 20th (out of 23) dwellings in the development is occupied. In our view, this constitutes a material risk that the car park will not be constructed or will be constructed to a specification inferior to that initially agreed.
 - iii. The car park will be maintained by the developer for an initial "Maintenance Period" after which responsibility for maintenance will be transferred in perpetuity to a management company. The length of the maintenance period is not specified, and no details are provided about the management company, and how this will be constituted and funded. In our view this gives rise to a risk that the costs of maintaining the car park will end up being borne by either WBC or SNHPC.
- ***The Parish Council requests that WBC rejects the Parking Management Plan and instructs the Applicant to deliver an amended Plan that addresses the three points set out above.***

09 – DRAINAGE STRATEGY

Flooding has become an increasingly serious problem in Hurst, and roads adjacent to the site of this development have been badly flooded in recent years, including Orchard Rd and Tape Lane. It is therefore imperative that the drainage strategy for this development is effective, to prevent a further worsening of the flooding problem in the village. The key issue is not flooding on the site itself, but the impact of the site drainage strategy on locations downstream from the site.

During 2025 both the Environment Agency and WBC updated their flood risk assessment data. This followed several winters of severe flooding, and new information being brought to light by an S19 Report into a severe flooding event in 2023, and further analysis during a lengthy planning appeal in 2025. It is not clear that the Applicant's Drainage Strategy Report takes account of the updated information now available. For example, the applicant is still working to 1 in 100-year risk of flooding, whereas the S19 Flood Report concludes that there is a 1 in 3-year risk of severe flooding.

- ***The Parish Council requests that WBC confirms that the Applicant's Drainage Strategy is based on the most recent data and analysis available from both WBC and the EA.***

The Applicant's proposed Drainage Strategy relies on use of infiltration, porous driveways and soakaways only to manage surface water run-off. There is no provision for exfiltration to existing ditches or drains. This is unrealistic - Hurst has a high water-table!

The recent development of the four new houses on Sawpit Lane, 200m from this site, also relied on these same SUDS options. However, within a matter of months after occupation, an application was made to connect the site to the Hatchgate Ditch (via a pipe across Church Hill), as the SUDS used could not manage the volume of surface water created during heavy rain.

It is inevitable that if the Drainage Strategy is implemented as proposed at this site, an application will follow subsequently for a connection to the existing drainage system, with the water almost certainly ending up in Hatchgate Ditch. Recent planning appeals have highlighted the shortcomings of Hatchgate Ditch after heavy or prolonged rain, and these will be made substantially worse by the addition of 23 new houses upstream.

- ***The Parish Council requests that WBC rejects the Applicant's Drainage Strategy and instructs the applicant to develop a drainage strategy that recognises the need for connection to existing drains and watercourses; and proposes methods to mitigate the adverse downstream impact on the of surface water exfiltrated from this development.***

OTHER MATTERS

The Parish Council has no material comments regarding the other conditions in the application.

However, we would urge WBC to ensure that the other conditions proposed are implemented in conformity with the application, in particular the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan and the Construction Management Plan.

In respect of the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan, we note that the whole site was sprayed with weedkiller in the autumn, and while this might have facilitated some of the aspects

of the site survey work, it did not demonstrate the level of environmental awareness that is reflected in the proposed Ecological Management Plan (e.g. protection of existing trees and roots, sympathetic native tree, hedge and wildflower planting).

The Construction Management Plan envisages that the development will take up to 52 weeks to complete and so there is a lot of scope for disruption for the Primary School and pre-school, as well as nearby residents, users of the village hall, and passers-by. The Plan sets out the ways in which this will be minimised (deliveries outside school hours, on-site parking for builders' vehicles, specified working hours, etc.) and it is essential that these are adhered to by the applicant and its employees.

It is also essential that all construction traffic is made aware that Tape Lane is access-only and this road should therefore not be used by any construction traffic whatsoever. (This is single-lane road and sees a lot of pedestrian traffic, particularly at school drop-off and pick-up times.) The Parish Council expects this to be enforced both by the developer's prime contractor and by all relevant authorities.