

PLANNING REF : 251705
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Sunset Cottage
: Sunset Cottage Hogmoor Lane, Hurst, Reading, Berkshire
: RG10 0DH
SUBMITTED BY : Miss Lisa Grantham
DATE SUBMITTED : 26/07/2026

COMMENTS:

Objection to Planning Application 261624 - Permission in Principle for two dwellings and associated access, Land north-west of Hogmoor Lane, Hurst

I am writing to formally object to the above application, submitted by Shorewood Homes Ltd, which seeks permission in Principle for two dwellings and a new access on land north-west of Hogmoor Lane, Hurst.

This application follows a long history of refused proposals on this land including an application on this site that was refused by the Council in November 2024, and the developer's subsequent appeal was dismissed in October 2025.

This new application, submitted a matter of months after that appeal was dismissed, proposes a substantially reduced number of dwellings and is framed as a Permission in Principle application rather than a full planning application. I suspect this is a tactic to secure agreement in principle to develop part of the field and establish a new access from Hogmoor Lane and to then attempt further development in future. Reducing the number of dwellings does not, in my view, address the fundamental harms previously identified by the Council, its consultants and the Planning Inspectorate, and I ask the Council to refuse this application.

I believe this development will harm to the setting of the Hurst Area of Special Character; will harm the setting of Long Barn and Munfin House as non-designated heritage assets; and harm the rural landscape character of Hogmoor Lane. I also raise fundamental concerns regarding highway safety and flood risk and believe these are so significant that they should be considered, and should lead to refusal, now.

1. Location Outside Development Limits - Not an Infill Site

The site lies outside the defined settlement limits of Hurst, in designated countryside. Development here is unplanned and contrary to the spatial strategy of the Council's Development Plan.

The applicant describes the site as an "infill" plot. However, the site has a frontage length of approximately 92 metres, which is generally regarded as too large to be considered infill. The gap is wide enough to read as a separate, standalone development site rather than a small break in an existing line of houses. The Inspector at the 1999 appeal on this land stated that the site was too large to be termed a normal infill site.

There has been pressure to develop this field, or parts of it, for approximately 70 years. Planning permission has consistently been refused.

2. Heritage Character of Hogmoor Lane

For the reasons set out below, the proposal conflicts with Policy TB26 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan, which requires that development retains and enhances the traditional, historical, local and special character of a building or area and its setting.

Hogmoor Lane is a long-established historic route thought to be medieval in origin, and appears on mapping dating from 1760. It is lined with listed and traditional buildings, including The Old

Posting House, Wards Cross House, Long Barn, Munfin House and Little Farm, with White Rose Cottage and Thatched Cottage nearby in Poplar Lane.

The Council's Heritage Consultant, in his Appeal Statement on the previous application, noted that the Lane is rural and verdant in character, with 'very much a feeling of being isolated and travelling along a historic route,' and described the listed buildings of the Long Barn and Wards Cross House farmstead group as prominent and reinforcing the historic agricultural character of the surrounding area.

The application site is important to the rural character of Hogmoor Lane, as one of the key areas of open farmland that has remained unchanged and has shaped the Lane for centuries.

The introduction of large, modern houses on this site would fundamentally damage the Lane's historic character, replacing open land with suburban development, interrupting rural views and eroding the traditional agricultural setting.

The application site sits at least 0.5 metres above the level of the Lane, and the finished floor levels of the proposed houses are set a further 0.15 metres above that. The new houses would therefore dominate the area and overwhelm their traditional neighbours.

3. 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 containing several listed and historic buildings. The open field that forms 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 built development along the Hogmoor Lane frontage would damage this rural setting: the historic outlook across open agricultural fields would be replaced by built form, and the quiet, agricultural landscape would be lost to modern suburban development.

The Council's Heritage Consultant identified the field, in his Appeal Statement, as valuable open land that defines the AoSC's rural character. He stated that 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.

4. Harm to the Setting of Wards Cross House and Long Barn

Wards Cross House is a 17th-century Grade II listed building, originally a farmhouse with a strong functional relationship to the surrounding fields. Long Barn, a non-designated heritage asset dating from at least the 17th century, sits alongside it. Together the two buildings provide evidence of a historic farmstead linked to the application site.

The Council's Heritage Consultant has stated that introducing built form into the field would remove the agricultural context of this farmstead group and cause significant harm to the listed building and to Long Barn.

Historic England guidance confirms that traditional farmstead groups are important because they are 'central to local distinctiveness and understanding rural landscape character.'

5. Harm to the Setting of Munfin House

Munfin House is a non-designated heritage asset formed by the amalgamation of two 19th-century brick rural cottages. It sits

directly opposite the application site and has close intervisibility with it.

The Council's Heritage Officer has noted that Munfin House's historic form and materials make a positive contribution to the setting of the Hurst Area of Special Character.

The proposal would replace the open agricultural foreground with built development that would overwhelm the setting of the house and irrevocably alter its character.

6. Landscape Character and the Valued Landscape of Hogmoor Lane

The application site and surrounding field fall within the Haines Hill Valued Landscape. The Council's Landscape Specialist has described the field as of higher landscape quality than the surrounding area.

She has also noted that the outlook from Hogmoor Lane across the application site, towards Whistley Green and the veteran trees elsewhere in the AoSC, is particularly important.

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

The Inspector at the 1999 appeal stated that the application site made a significant contribution to the semi-rural character of the Lane, and that development would be widely visible as a significant incursion into the relatively narrow belt of open land between Hurst and Twyford.

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

7. Loss of Recreational Value

Hogmoor Lane leads onto a network of footpaths and bridleways and is well used by walkers, runners, riders and cyclists from the surrounding area. The Council's Landscape Officer has noted that it is a narrow country lane leading into the wider countryside and its recreational routes.

She has also noted that the scenic quality of the views from Hogmoor Lane, through the gap between Long Barn and Apple Tree Cottage, is important to recreational routes and footpaths including Public Right of Way STNH9.

New houses on this site would significantly reduce the recreational value of this stretch of Hogmoor Lane. The enjoyment of the route depends on its open, rural character; people walk, cycle and ride along the Lane because it feels quiet, green and historic, and the open farmland of the application site is central to that experience, providing long views, a sense of space, and the feeling of moving through countryside rather than a built-up area.

8. Flooding and Drainage

The Flood Risk Assessment contains further errors and omissions. It shows the drainage ditch along Hogmoor Lane as lying within the site's red line boundary, when it is in fact external to the site, on

Highways land and not in the applicant's control. It also shows an access next to Apple Tree Cottage that differs from the Site Layout Plan, and would require an internal road connecting the two properties. It states, 'there are no records of Hurst flooding due to groundwater listed in the WBC SFRA.' It does not appear to properly assess the fact that many of the culverts along the Lane are blocked, and it shows no awareness of past flooding events in Hogmoor Lane or of the Council's Section 19 Flood Investigation

Report 2024.

9. Safe Highway Access veteran oaks and other trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders (nos. 1728/2020 and 1788/2021) along its boundaries. The Planning Inspectorate has already found, in dismissing the previous appeal, that construction of an access of this kind would cause harm and potential deterioration to two veteran trees, contrary to planning policy. Given that this application proposes a comparable form of access from Hogmoor Lane, we ask the Council to treat the Inspector's findings on this point as directly relevant, and to satisfy itself that this application does not repeat the same harm.

11. Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, I consider that this application, despite the reduction in the number of dwellings proposed, would cause serious and unjustified harm to the character and appearance of Hogmoor Lane, to the setting of the Hurst Area of Special Character and its associated heritage assets, and to highway safety, and that it has not adequately addressed flood risk. I do not consider that a reduction in scale resolves the fundamental objections that led to the refusal and dismissal of the previous, larger application on this land.

I ask the Council to refuse this application.