

Munfin House
Hogmoor Lane
Hurst
RG10 0DH



Ms Rachel Owen
Case Officer
The Planning Inspectorate
C/o QUADIENT
69 Buckingham Avenue
Slough
SL1 4PN

5th July 2025

Dear Inspector

Appeal 6011047 against Refusal by Wokingham Borough Council of Permission In Principle Application 260353 for the erection of a minimum of 5no and maximum of 7no dwellings on Land North of Broadwater Lane and West of Hogmoor Lane, Hurst and the Formation of an Access from Broadwater Lane

I am writing as the long-standing resident of Munfin House, Hogmoor Lane, to register my strong objection to Appeal 6011047. My concerns relate to the harm to the setting and significance of heritage assets and non-designated assets and the Hurst Area of Special Character; the loss of an open, rural setting; the unacceptable impact on residential amenity and the environmental and flooding risks associated with the proposed development.

1. Harm to the Setting of Munfin House (Non-Designated Heritage Asset)

Munfin House is a non-designated heritage asset, recognised locally for its age and interest as an amalgamation of two early Victorian cottages. It contributes to the historic pattern of this area of Hogmoor Lane. Its significance is inseparable from the immediate rural frontage directly in front of the house and the quiet agricultural landscape. The open fields provide long views to Broadwater Lane and Whistley Green and form the essential setting of the building. The development would directly erode the key attributes that Wokingham Borough Council has identified as defining this area as part of Valued Landscape.

The Appeal Site forms a direct part of this rural setting, lying immediately in front of Munfin House at a distance of approximately 20 metres. The proposed development would result in the complete loss of these open fields, replacing them with modern dwellings, engineered access roads, hard surfacing, and domestic activity. This represents an overwhelming and irreversible change to the surrounding traditional nature of the Lane.

The intervisibility between Munfin House and the Appeal Site is close and direct with no effective boundary treatment or screening. The proposed dwellings would sit prominently in the foreground, interrupting historic views and eroding the ability to appreciate Munfin House within its intended rural context. This constitutes clear harm to a non-designated heritage asset under WBC Policy TB26 of the MDDL and NPPF paragraphs 205–207.

2. Harm to Residential Amenity

The proximity of the proposed development, only 20 metres from my home, would materially harm my amenity in several ways:

- **Loss of privacy:** The proposed houses would directly overlook Munfin House creating a close, intrusive relationship wholly at odds with the current rural openness.
- **Loss of outlook:** The open agricultural field that forms the immediate setting of my home would be replaced by built form, parking, lighting and domestic paraphernalia.
- **Noise and disturbance:** The introduction of multiple dwellings, vehicle movements and domestic activity would significantly reduce tranquillity, which is a recognised element of rural amenity and heritage setting.
- **Visual dominance:** The scale and massing of the proposed dwellings would appear overbearing in the foreground of Munfin House and overwhelm my outlook

These impacts are severe, cumulative and unacceptable.

3. Harm to Other Heritage Assets

The Appeal Scheme would also harm the setting and significance of several designated heritage assets:

- Elder Cottage
- Parkers Cottage
- Bower Cottage
- Wards Cross House

These buildings derive significance from their rural surroundings, historic field patterns and the dispersed, low-density character of Hogmoor Lane and Broadwater Lane. The introduction of an oddly shaped Site with an internal access road between two modern housing developments would be incongruous and erode the qualities of their setting. This is contrary to WBC Policy TB24 of the MDDL and the Framework.

The proposal would also harm the setting of Long Barn a notable old agricultural building and curtilage-listed non-designated asset that lies immediately next to the Appeal Site and has a historic relationship with the open fields and agricultural setting.

4. Harm to the Area of Special Character (AoSC)

The Appeal Site lies within the setting of the Hurst Area of Special Character, a landscape defined by rural openness, historic lanes and traditional buildings. Development of this nature would:

- Urbanise the rural foreground
- Introduce incongruous built form
- Sever historic field patterns
- Disrupt long views towards Whistley Green and the wider AoSC

This is directly contrary to the AoSC's defining characteristics and to local policy protections.

5. Flooding, Drainage and Attenuation Basin Concerns

The Appeal Site is known to have a high surface water level and poor drainage characteristics. Residents of Hogmoor Lane have experienced serious flooding incidents after heavy rainfall in the past, particularly in 2023 when the Lane had to be closed to traffic. The proposal would fundamentally alter the field's function as a natural floodplain and it is of concern that this proposal deliberately omits flood mitigation measures in the form of a large attenuation basin. This means that permission would have to be given for housing without any guarantee that the basin and associated drainage infrastructure can operate safely without increasing flood risk to neighbouring properties, including Munfin House.

6. Impact on Hogmoor Lane as a Rural Amenity

Hogmoor Lane is a valued rural amenity that leads to a network of footpaths and bridleways. It is, used daily by walkers, riders, runners, dog-owners, cyclists and is valued by local residents of Hurst and other areas. Its quiet, undeveloped character is central to its appeal. The proposed development would:

- Introduce suburbanising features in the form of a separate modern housing estate which would be clearly out of keeping with its surroundings
- Introduce an access road running parallel to the Lane which would be incongruous in an area where all other properties have their own individual access
- Replace quiet tranquillity with the noise, disturbance and the paraphernalia of modern living
- Diminish the rural experience for the many people who use the Lane for recreation

This represents a significant loss of public amenity.

I would also like it to be noted that at the time of writing, 15 large silage bales have recently been stored on WBC Highways land immediately in front of the Appeal Site and obstructing views across the open field. This is not the usual or natural outlook from Hogmoor Lane.

Conclusion

The Appeal Scheme would cause harm to the setting of heritage assets, residential amenity, landscape character and the local historic rural surroundings. It conflicts with local and national planning policies and the modest housing benefit does not outweigh the substantial harms. I respectfully request that the Inspector dismiss Appeal 6011047.

Yours faithfully

Anne Eustace

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