

**Planning Reference 252934**  
**Land at Lodge Road, Hurst, RG10 0SG**  
**Application for the proposed erection of 3 detached dwellings**

Submitted by: Jean Dolinski  
Address: 34 Martineau Lane, Hurst, RG10 0SF

Date: 06 February 2026

I wish to object to this application on the following grounds:

**Sustainability**

Hurst does not have a bakery, a Co-op or a Post Office, and residents feel frustrated once again by a developer who shows their ignorance by stating inaccurate facts about what services exist in the village.

The Transport Assessment argues that the quality of alternative transport choice does not matter, it purely has to exist. This is utter nonsense. The fact that you can walk 1.3km down an unlit road with no footpaths to a tiny village store (which does not now have a Post Office) does not mean that you will. The fact that you can walk 40 minutes to Twyford station (using an isolated, muddy and unlit permissive path and then an unlit section of the onward route between northern Hurst and Broad Hinton) does not mean that you will. The fact that you can choose to use an infrequent and sometimes unreliable bus service to and from the village (having had to walk down unlit footpaths and roads with no pavements to access the bus stops) does not mean that you will.

The Planning Statement argues that as more people now have electric cars, and the new houses will have EV charging points, then that in itself makes this site more sustainable than it was six years ago when the appeal against the refusal for 5 houses on this site was dismissed. Electric cars still add to increased traffic on the roads and the sales of new EV cars still lags behind government targets. Sustainability consists of a wider choice of travel modes and options available, and the applicant cannot rely solely on the argument that the use of electric vehicles reduces emissions.

The development will have 11 car parking spaces for 3 houses. These car parking spaces will be full of cars that will be used to access this site on a daily basis. No residents of these houses will walk, cycle, or take the bus anywhere.

**Flooding**

Think of development sites in Hurst with the highest risk of flooding and this site would be at the top of the list. And yet the developer is trying to argue that it is suitable.

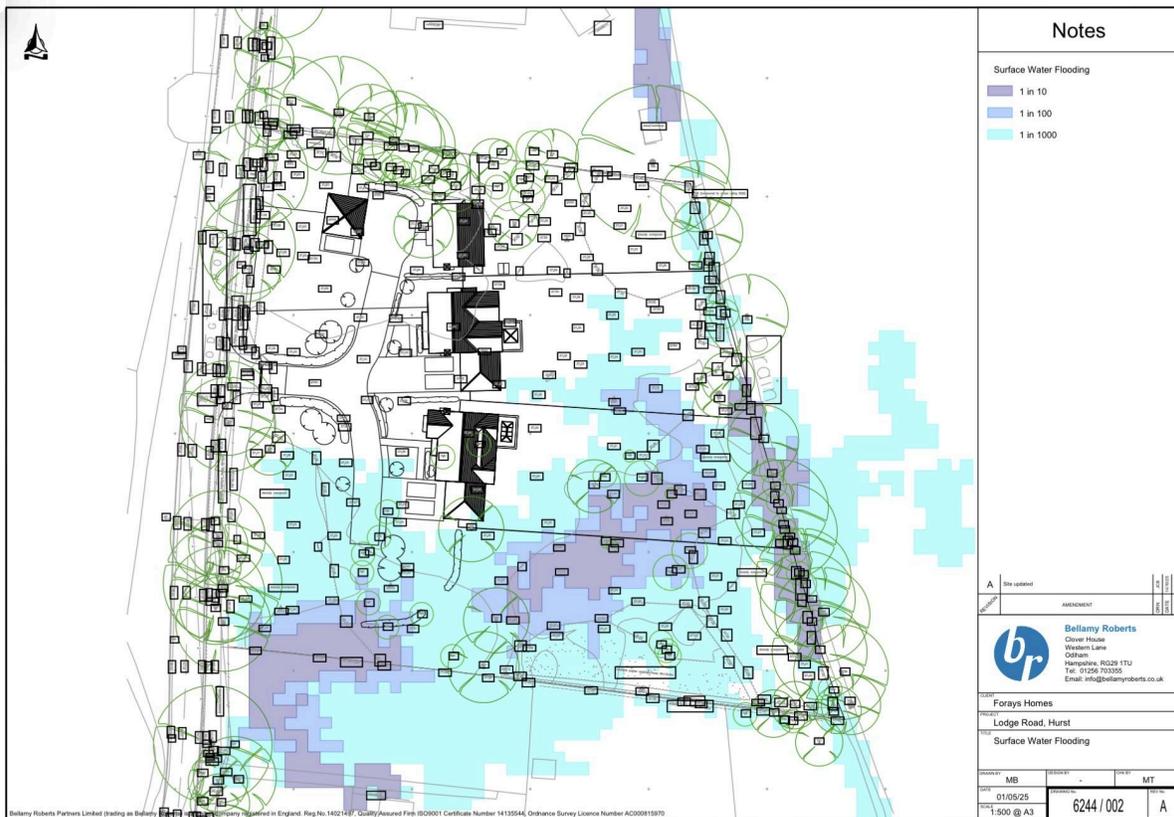
It is an indisputable fact that half of this site is in Flood Zone 2. The applicant accepts that the Sequential Test is failed. This should be the end of the argument. There is no merit in trying to apply the Exception Test for a development which has failed the Sequential Test and will provide such a negligible addition to housing numbers and no other benefits at all. The following diagram is the site and the extent of Flood Zone 2, as accepted by the applicant:



The Bell Cornwell Flooding Sequential Test and Exception Test document claims to “conclude with absolute confidence that the failure to pass the Sequential Test does not automatically disengage the tilted balance”. Their arguments are weak, and the failure of the Sequential Test should automatically disengage the tilted balance since the very purpose of the test is to steer development to areas with the least risk of flooding.

The failure of the Sequential Test was a strong reason for refusal of the appeal on the adjacent site (Land East of Lodge Road), and did indeed lead to the disengagement of the tilted balance. This application has therefore had to try and differentiate itself from an adjacent site with exactly the same characteristics. Geographically they are adjacent to each other. Parts of both sites are in Flood Zone 2. There are absolutely no differentiating factors and even their own documents show that one of the houses will have half of their garden in Flood Zone 2. Where is the common sense? Who is going to buy a house with full knowledge that flood waters will be lapping right up to their back door and their back garden will be waterlogged for much of the year?

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The applicant accepts that the application of the Exception Test is not a tool to justify development in flood risk areas when the Sequential Test has already been failed. And yet they then go on to do just that - to try to persist with an argument that the failure of the Sequential Test is irrelevant and that the wider benefits of their development somehow justifies the application of the Exception Test. However there are quite simply no wider benefits of this development - the site is in an unsustainable location within the countryside, and the addition of a mere 3 houses in the overall target numbers is negligible. If the adjacent site was dismissed for 99 houses, then why would this site be more acceptable for only 3?

The application site aims to discharge runoff and treated foul water into Hatchgate Ditch. Much was made at the larger Lodge Road appeal inquiry as to the functionality and connectivity of Hatchgate Ditch and Hurst residents are in ongoing discussions with WBC and the EA on this subject. Until this is resolved no application which relies on Hatchgate Ditch should be allowed to proceed, in case the rest of Hurst is disadvantaged. This applies for drainage and definitely for sewage - the rest of Hurst does not want effluent from this development backing up into Martineau Lane and Sawpit Road because the onward connectivity of Hatchgate Ditch does not function in the manner that the applicant assumes.

### **Appeal Decision 31 January 2020 for 5 houses on this exact site**

The main issues were:

- The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area. The Inspector stated that the site is an important component of the open space which separates the northern and southern arms of Hurst and Whistley Green. He rejected any notion that the site was developed on three sides. Development of the site would have had a harmful impact to both the character and appearance of the area and would be at the upper end of the moderate scale.
- Whether the site is sustainable. The Inspector noted that the site was about as far away from the village store as it is possible to be in Hurst. He described Sawpit Road as “not a pleasant pedestrian route” and noted the lack of footpaths and street lighting generally in the village. In terms of cycling he said that Lodge Road had the potential to be an intimidating route and that the busier roads generally would attract only the most confident of cyclists. Cycling was therefore not at all likely to be a significant alternative mode of transport for occupants of this site. The bus service was considered not to be convenient enough to replace the reliance on private vehicles. The site was quite simply not considered to be sustainable.
- The overall appeal conclusion was that the harms of this development would demonstrably outweigh the benefits and that it was the “wrong development in the wrong place”.

So what has changed between 2020 and now? In terms of sustainability and the open character of the area, absolutely nothing has changed. And the flooding issues have in fact got worse with the updating of the flood maps in March 2025. Hurst is still a limited development location and has already made a sufficient contribution to housing supply in the borough. This application has only come forward at the present time because the Council cannot currently demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply. However this does not mean that the wrong development in the wrong place suddenly becomes the right development in the right place.

## **Conclusion**

This application should be refused for the following reasons:

- The location is unsustainable, and the site has an extremely poor relationship with services in the centre of the village. Existing services in the village are basic anyway, and travel to other locations is inevitable in order to access higher services.
- The site is outside of development limits within a countryside location.
- Development of this site will close part of the green gap along Lodge Road.
- The site is in Flood Zone 2 and 3 and the Sequential Test is failed.
- The tilted balance is disengaged due to the failure of the Sequential Test.
- Even if the Exception Test were applicable, the addition of only 3 houses is a negligible number to justify development, and there are no other significant benefits to development of this site.

The applicant claims that this site is “perfect” for development. It is about as far away from “perfect” as any site in Hurst could be.