PLANNING REF : 260353
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Parkers Cottage
: Wards Cross Hurst, Reading
: RG10 0DS
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Edward Levy
DATE SUBMITTED : 07/03/2026

COMMENTS:
Dear Sir/Madam,

As a custodian of one of the 300-year-old listed buildings directly opposite the proposed site, Parkers Cottage, I write to formally object to the above planning application for residential development on land north of Broadwater Lane and west of Hogmoor Lane, Hurst. My objection is based principally on the serious and unacceptable harm the proposal would cause to the setting and significance of nearby Grade II listed buildings and other heritage assets, and on the failure of the scheme to respect the historic rural character of this sensitive location.

The application site lies immediately adjacent to, and in close intervisibility with, a number of designated heritage assets including Wards Cross House, Elder Cottage, Parker's Cottage, Bower Cottage, Buttercups and The Old Posting House, as well as non-designated but historically important buildings such as Long Barn and Munfin House. These buildings derive a substantial part of their significance not only from their fabric, but from their open, rural, agricultural setting, which has remained largely unchanged for centuries.

This point was examined in detail at the October 2025 appeal, where an independent Planning Inspector concluded that development on the Broadwater Lane frontage would significantly undermine the setting and significance of the listed buildings, with the resulting harm assessed as towards the higher end of "less than substantial". Crucially, the Inspector made clear that this harm would arise even if dwellings were set back from the road and even if landscaping were introduced. These findings are recent, authoritative, and directly applicable to the current proposal.

The present application does not overcome those conclusions. Reducing the number of dwellings on Broadwater Lane and redistributing
development to Hogmoor Lane does not remove the harm; it simply displaces and extends it. The open field that forms the application site currently provides a quiet, pastoral foreground and backdrop to surrounding heritage assets. Introducing modern housing, domestic activity, vehicle movements, lighting and engineered access roads would irreversibly erode this historic relationship.
On Broadwater Lane, the proposed dwellings would remain highly visible from Elder Cottage, Parker's Cottage and Wards Cross House. The
narrowing and fragmentation of the open landscape to the north would materially diminish long-established views and the experience of these buildings within a rural context that closely reflects their historic
setting.

On Hogmoor Lane, the harm would be no less severe. Four modern dwellings along this narrow rural lane would intrude directly into

the setting of the Hurst Area of Special Character and into the immediate surroundings of Wards Cross House, the Old Posting House, Long Barn and Munfin House. Hogmoor Lane is characterised by dispersed historic buildings set within generous plots and open countryside. The proposed linear frontage of closely spaced modern houses would introduce a suburban form and grain that is wholly out of keeping with this historic settlement pattern.

The harm would be further exacerbated by the site's elevated ground levels and the requirement to raise finished floor levels for flood mitigation. This would result in dwellings that sit conspicuously above the lane, visually dominating neighbouring historic properties and intensifying the suburbanising impact. Landscaping cannot reasonably be relied upon to mitigate this harm: it would take decades to mature, is not within the applicant's long-term control, and has been repeatedly criticised by Inspectors as an inappropriate means of concealing fundamentally unacceptable development.

The applicant's heritage assessment substantially underestimates these impacts and seeks to revisit matters that have already been conclusively determined at appeal. The rebuttal heritage evidence prepared by Dr Richard Massey demonstrates convincingly that the proposal would cause unacceptable harm to both designated and non-designated heritage assets, and that this harm cannot be mitigated through layout changes, screening or reserved matters.

In heritage terms, the application fails to preserve or enhance the setting of listed buildings, contrary to both national policy and local plan requirements. The harm identified is inherent to the location itself, not to detailed design, and therefore renders the site unsuitable for residential development in principle.

I urge you to reconsider the promotion of development on this land. Persisting with proposals that have already been found unacceptable risks further undermining the historic environment of Hurst and disregards the clear conclusions reached through the planning appeal process. Any development that results in the permanent erosion of the setting and significance of listed buildings, for no meaningful public benefit, cannot be justified.

Yours faithfully,
Edward Levy