

Dear Councillors,

I am contacting you on behalf of Wimblehurst Road Residents Association who have been working collectively with residents of the Richmond Road Conservation Area together with residents of North Heath Lane and Allcard Close. These roads are within close proximity of the Former Novartis Site in Horsham.

All of our group have been long term residents of the area and are very aware of the traffic and road safety issues affecting the area.

The Former Novartis Site was purchased by West Sussex County Council in 2016. Previous Planning Applications submitted by the Council for the site were subsequently withdrawn but presently there are now two Outline Planning Applications for the site which have been submitted to HDC Planning. These are referenced as DC/25/0415 and DC/25/0629.

Outline Planning Application DC/25/0415 is expected to go for consideration at an HDC Planning Committee Meeting in October. Outline Planning Application DC/25/0629 is currently being amended so it is not yet decided when this will be considered at an HDC Planning Committee Meeting.

Our residents are supportive of the Former Novartis Site being developed but we are not supportive of what is currently being proposed and have submitted a response of Objection to both Planning Applications.

With what is presently proposed our key concerns for the site are:- Over-development, Highways, Access and Parking, Drainage and Environmental Considerations, Privacy, Light and Noise, and Loss of General Amenity.

We have outlined these issues in more detail in the attached document together with a list of dates where our responses to both Planning Applications can be viewed on the HDC Planning Portal.

Our residents group would very much appreciate your time and attention if you are able to read through the attached document to help you evaluate the impact the development as proposed will have on the surrounding infrastructure.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]
Chair, Wimblehurst Road Residents Association.
c/o Chandos House, 14 Wimblehurst Rd, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 2ED.

Wimblehurst Road Residents Association

A briefing for HDC Councillors regarding outline Planning Application DC/25/0415
Former Novartis Site, Parsonage Road, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 5AA

15 September 2025

Introduction

This briefing has been prepared by members of the Wimblehurst Road Residents Association working collectively with residents of the Richmond Road Conservation Area together with residents of North Heath Lane and Allcard Close. The Richmond Road Conservation Area includes Wimblehurst Road, Gordon Road, and part of Hurst Road. All of these roads are in close proximity to the Former Novartis Site.



Application Overview

In 2016 West Sussex County Council purchased the Former Novartis Site in Horsham. Previous Outline and Reserved Matters Planning Applications were made for the site by West Sussex County Council but these were subsequently withdrawn.

Muse and Lovells are the companies which have been appointed to develop the site. Both of these companies are owned by the Morgan Sindall Group. According to Sussex Police as proposed these two Planning Applications will house more than 1000 people.

Outline Planning Application DC/25/0415 will be presented to a HDC Planning Committee in October.

This Outline Planning Application is for the proposed construction of 244 residential units, 326 car parking spaces and 254 cycle parking spaces. This Application, referenced as Phase 3 within the planning documents, is to be developed by Muse. It is to be accessed from Parsonage Road and covers the area from the rear of the original, locally listed Art Deco office building on the site up to the railway lines bordering the site.

Additional development of the site is being proposed via separate Outline Planning Application DC/25/0629. This is for the section of the site accessed from Wimblehurst Road and is referenced as Phase 1 & Phase 2 within the planning documents. This is to be developed by Lovells. As presently proposed on the entire Former Novartis Site there will be a total of 450 residential units and 578 parking spaces.

HDC has indicated that Application DC/25/0629 is currently being amended. For this reason a date is yet to be decided for when the Planning Application goes to the HDC Planning Committee.

Residents Position

Our residents' group is supportive of the Former Novartis Site being developed but we are not supportive of what is currently being proposed and have submitted a response of Objection for both Planning Applications.

Our key concerns are:- Overdevelopment, Highways, Access and Parking, Drainage and Environmental Considerations, Privacy, Light and Noise, Trees and Landscaping, and Loss of General Amenity.

Planning Application DC/25/0415 (Phase 3)

Highways, Access and Parking

A development of this size will have a substantial impact on the surrounding road network which will be unable to accommodate the huge resultant increase in traffic. Wimblehurst Rd, Richmond Rd, Parsonage Rd and North Heath Lane are already subject to an excessive amount of traffic movements each day which has increased substantially since the start of the Mowbray and other nearby housing developments.

The longer downtime of the newly improved level crossing gates in Parsonage Road, just 13 metres from the site entrance, causes significant traffic jams in Parsonage Rd, Wimblehurst Rd and North Heath Lane.

Parsonage Road is a crucial element as a through route to the A281 Brighton Road and the A264 Crawley Road. The railway crossing already has had a substantial impact on traffic flows which will be made worse by the over-development of the site.

Travel to the majority of schools and retail outlets will require pedestrians and cyclists to use the level crossing. As the gates open it will cause delays in the movement of vehicles as drivers wait for pedestrians and cyclists to move forward and clear the level crossing. It is not possible for drivers to overtake cyclists in the section of the road

leading up to the Foundry Road roundabout, and this slows down the rate at which the road leading up to the level crossing can clear.

Due to the congestion and traffic moving in both directions along Parsonage Rd the sight-lines for traffic leaving the site will be compromised. Vehicles will have difficulty turning right into the site from Parsonage Rd as will traffic turning right out of the site. This type of issue is one of the major causes of traffic accidents. The proposed increased splay of the junction access will have impact on traffic turning right. We note that no Stage 1 Road Safety Audit has been undertaken for this junction.

Wimblehurst Rd and North Heath Lane are narrow roads with no room for overtaking. Cycling is being advocated within the plans to help cope with the increase in traffic but as the roads are narrow it will inevitably make cycling unsafe.

Although both Wimblehurst Road and North Heath Lane are busy bus routes there is only one bus refuge (north of Heath Way) and this is not specifically dedicated to buses. As a result, when a bus stops travelling in either direction it immediately causes traffic to form a queue behind it.

There is the additional impact of traffic flows along this route to both Holbrook School and Bohunt School, which is situated on the Mowbray development. Parent parking at drop-off and pick-up times to schools along North Heath Lane and Holbrook schools also cause congestion.

These issues together with the vastly increased traffic caused by the development will greatly increase air pollution in the wider area beyond the site location.

In 2021 it was resolved by WSCC Highways to fix the incorrect, contradictory HGV 7.5tonnes Regulatory Weight Limit Signage around the locality of the Former Novartis Site and the surrounding areas. This special project is still in progress and we have concerns on how this will affect any construction traffic routings to the site. It is to be noted that Wimblehurst Road has a Regulatory Weight Limit of 7.5tonnes and we are concerned that this road may be used by construction traffic even if there is a notional prohibition.

Overdevelopment

There is only one access to the Parsonage Rd area of the site (Phase 3) with no through traffic between this and Phase 1 & 2 of the site. If traffic cannot immediately move out from the Phase 3 area into Parsonage Rd it will cause a backup of traffic within the site.

The width of the internal on-site roads is not wide and refuse vehicles and multiple daily supermarket and courier delivery vans will cause difficulty in on-site overtaking of stationary vehicles whilst unloading adjacent to a customer's residence.

According to Sussex Police as proposed these two Planning Applications will house more than 1000 people. This substantial rise in population will cause increased

difficulty for new residents to access doctors' surgeries, the dental practices in North Heath Lane and Crawley Road and places for school children in already over-subscribed schools.

Although there are four secondary schools in Horsham currently there is limited capacity to admit boys which would mean boy pupils above Year 7 needing to be taken to school outside of Horsham. At the present time there are not enough school places generally and this has not been addressed by the developers.

The nearest hospital with 24hr A&E services is the East Surrey, a 40 minute drive from the site. The lack of A&E facilities within a reasonable distance and impeded access for emergency vehicles on the site and along densely trafficked roads should be a significant cause for concern.

Drainage and Environmental Considerations

Historically the use of the Phase 3 area of the site was for commercial pharmaceutical manufacturing use. The proposal for 244 new homes in this area will increase the demand for water by 100%. This land is not conducive to soak-aways so surface water will be pumped into the drainage network via SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) to avoid surface water flooding.

The increased water capacity will put significant strain on the existing sewer network in the nearby Richmond Road Conservation Area. There already has been a collapse of the sewer system in this location causing leakage and sinkage in the road structure resulting in many ongoing repairs. The sewage pipe network in this area is of the same age as the surrounding housing, ie Victorian/Edwardian.

So far this year Richmond Road has been excavated three times due to burst water mains. One of the failures within the system caused the closure of Richmond Road for nearly a week while emergency repairs were carried out. More repairs are still ongoing at this present time.

There has also been evidence of flooding in the cellars and low-lying rooms of these properties in both Richmond Road and Wimblehurst Road leading to the installation of sump-pumps and remedial tanking.

It is of concern how drainage from the proposed development of the Former Novartis Site will impact the health of the Horsham Park Attenuation Pond and how this will be monitored. While supporting wildlife this pond acts as reservoir collecting excess rainwater from the surrounding area. It is unclear how drainage from the proposed development will impact the capacity and health of the pond.

Privacy, Light and Noise

Some of the proposed housing units in Phase 3 will be situated very close to the neighbouring Industrial Estate of Foundry Lane, the Balfour Beatty railway maintenance yard

and the Parsonage Road level crossing. HDC Environmental Health have stated that the latest noise assessment regarding this was insufficient.

We are of the opinion that there is a lack of clarity from the Applicant over the potential noise nuisance from the diesel-hauled trains compared to virtually silent electric multiple units in the adjacent Thameslink coaching stock sidings.

Trees and Landscaping

The Landscape and Design document submitted by the Applicant for Phase 3 details the materials used, types of trees and shrubs to be planted. From this it appears to be a green site. Under current planning law new developments need to have a 10% gain in bio-diversity. But according to the calculations in the planning documents there will be a 34.63% biodiversity loss.

Although it is not part of this Planning Application it is proposed that the protected mature Atlas Cedar trees that line the boulevard in the area of the site accessed from Wimblehurst Road are removed. This will cause even more bio-diversity loss in the area.

Sussex Police and Network Rail have raised safety issues regarding anti-social behaviour in the green area on the site close to the railway. We are not convinced that a reliance on public monitoring by residents, as advocated within the planning documents, is a sensible solution to potential anti-social behaviour.

Sussex Police have stated that due to the size of the proposed development they will struggle to police it without contributions from the developers. If these are not forthcoming, the force says it will object to what is being proposed.

Our group's responses to Outline Planning Application DC/25/0415 can be viewed on the HDC Planning Portal and are dated:-

23rd April 2025, 17th June 2025, 18th July 2025, and 13th August 2025.

Our group's responses to Outline Planning Application DC/25/0629 can be viewed on the HDC Planning Portal and are dated:-

19th May 2025, 17th June 2025 and 30th June 2025