

Land To The West of Shoreham Road Small Dole West Sussex
DC/25/1019 | Outline planning application for up to 45 dwellings (including
affordable homes) with all matters reserved apart from access.

Objections

Unsustainable location. DC/25/1019 is remote from local services and centres. Small Dole has no schools or medical facilities and has only 1 small shop. This conflicts with the aims of sustainable development with its need to minimise travel, and to reduce the reliance on the private car: If you live in Small Dole you need access to a car. I have lived in Small Dole for over 30 years and know people of all age groups; car use is normal and essential.

Harm to the Landscape. There will be adverse landscape impacts on the surrounding countryside / setting and the settlement character of Small Dole. (The site is very close to, and very visible from, the SDNP). Residents in Shoreham Road, Downsvie and New Hall Lane will all be particularly affected. The developer admits that the landscape views from New Hall Lane will be affected until the tree planting matures in 15 years. NPPF para. 189 about National Parks says "development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas"

In conflict with the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan, which rejected the site for development and was made in 2021. The addition of this site will create an over allocation of new homes in this small hamlet increasing the population by 23%. With our local doctors, dentists, schools, drains, water supply and roads already struggling with the expanded population, to build in breach of a democratically approved, carefully thought-through and independently examined Neighbourhood Plan is sheer folly.

We were told Neighbourhood Plans have real legal weight. The Henfield Neighbourhood Plan runs until 2031 yet we have at this early date a developer seeking to overturn the result of local democracy.

Road safety. Access to the site will be via a junction created in the A2037 a short distance below the brow of the hill. Road vehicles often speed through this stretch from the Henfield direction and will be suddenly confronted with stationary vehicles manoeuvring into and out of the site.

Background

Previous planning decisions: The site was refused planning permission in 2015 by HDC (DC/15/0353) on the grounds of conflicting with the aims of sustainable development and damage to the landscape / countryside setting.

As recently as 30 April 2025, planning permission for the development of 2 houses adjacent to the site was refused by HDC on the grounds of unsustainability and landscape harm and confirmed by the Planning Inspector on appeal.

Reference: Appeal Ref: APP/Z3825/W/24/3356684

Brooklands, New Hall Lane, Small Dole, West Sussex BN5 9YH

Also on 11 August 2025 Appeal Ref: APP/Z3825/W/24/3357209

Jandola, New Hall Lane, Small Dole, West Sussex BN5 9YH, a property in New Hall Lane. A proposal for an single additional dwelling was refused. The inspector confirmed the proposed development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area.

The Henfield Neighbourhood plan

The Henfield Neighbourhood plan **examined the site and rejected it as being in an unsustainable location and harming the landscape.** The Vision statement for Small Dole states: "The village setting is much valued, set within farmland, ancient woodland, nature reserves, and the historic common. Green spaces, including high quality agricultural land within, and on, the **western side of the village** need to be protected as an amenity for the community."

This plan was democratically 'made' in 2021.

Reference: Henfield Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2031, Small Dole Report 28 May 2019.

Due to its geography rather than size, Small Dole straddles two Neighbourhood Plan areas (Upper Beeding and Henfield). When the Neighbourhood planning was being undertaken, both Parish Councils discussed the impact of new development on the village and agreed that planning needed to take into account the **overall sustainability** and size of the settlement. They resolved that the two Neighbourhood Plans must not 'over-allocate' sites for Small Dole with too much new development from large sites coming forward in both plans. The decision

taken and widely consulted-on in each parish, was to limit large site development to one site only in Small Dole, namely Oxcroft Farm (within Upper Beeding parish). Residents of Upper Beeding Parish and Small Dole voted for their respective Neighbourhood plans in May 2021 and both have now been 'made'. Both groups will no doubt have had in mind the above commitment when they made their decision. **This site + Oxcroft represents a 23% population increase of the hamlet of Small Dole.** The population of Small Dole at the 2021 census was 786. With the allocation of a further 60 houses (Oxcroft + this site) an increase of about 180 can be anticipated, that is +23% in one go. This would fundamentally change the character of the hamlet. Such over-allocation in a small hamlet is one of the things that the Neighbourhood Plans sought to avoid in the case of Small Dole.

Henfield NHP versus Horsham Local Plan

Henfield Neighbourhood plan is the only up to date plan that governs this site's development and therefore has significant weight. The so-called emerging draft Horsham Local Plan, which allocates this site for development, has been rejected by the Planning Inspectorate and, at the time of writing, is likely to be withdrawn. It therefore has little weight.

During HDC's Local Plan consultation in 2024, there were 75 objections and only 1 supporter, the developer. Objections were received from Andrew Griffiths MP, Henfield Parish Council and Upper Beeding Parish Council as well as a multitude of residents.

Horsham cannot demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply and has not met its building Delivery Target over the last 3 years (mostly due to the water shortage).

For both these reasons it comes under the Presumption in Favour of Development in NPPF Para 11d which requires granting permission unless policies that protect assets of particular importance (listed in Footnote 7) provide a strong reason for refusing the development proposed. Footnote 7 includes 'designated heritage assets ' and National Parks. In this case the setting of the National Park is harmed (views into and out of the South Downs National Park) and therefore the Presumption in Favour should not apply. (Brooklands and Jandola appeals confirmed this argument)/.

NPPF para. 189 about National Parks which says "development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas"

Most importantly, NPPF Para 14 says that where there is a properly made Neighbourhood plan adopted within the last 5 years, it 'is likely to significantly

and demonstrably outweigh' the presumption in favour of development. That is also a strong Planning argument against this development proposal.

There is clearly a danger that if this development is approved in conflict with the legal, democratically-approved Neighbourhood plan, in the absence of a valid local plan, there will be no plan-led conditions placed upon the developer in terms of housing numbers, site layout and landscape harm mitigation.

SHOULD HDC BE MINDED TO APPROVE THIS PROPOSAL, then it is very important that the conditions of development include protection of the green space to the north of the site, in perpetuity, with no possibility of an increase in housing numbers as a 'phase 2' , locking in the Wates Indicative Coloured Site Layout Plan: 23088 / C101E.

Other matters

Water Neutrality: A bore hole is proposed to overcome the water neutrality issue. I am sceptical that water can be taken from underground so close to the 2 enormous redundant waste tips located to the south. Even if tests are satisfactory there is a risk that adverse publicity might affect the saleability of these dwellings.