

The Planning Inspectorate

COMMENTS ON CASE (Online Version)

Please note that comments about this case need to be made within the timetable. This can be found in the notification letter sent by the local planning authority or the start date letter. Comments submitted after the deadline may be considered invalid and returned to sender.

Appeal Reference: APP/Z3825/W/25/3371828

DETAILS OF THE CASE

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|------------------|--|
| Appeal Reference | APP/Z3825/W/25/3371828 |
| Appeal By | MR, MS MICHAEL, MARIA AND GOSSAGE PILLA AND GOSSAGE |
| Site Address | Land at Hillybarn Farm, Hillybarn Road The Mount Ifield West Sussex RH11 0LF |

SENDER DETAILS

| | |
|---------|---|
| Name | [REDACTED] |
| Address | Hillybarn farmhouse The mount Ifield wood Crawley West sussex RH11 0LF |

ABOUT YOUR COMMENTS

In what capacity do you wish to make representations on this case?

- Appellant
- Agent
- Interested Party / Person
- Land Owner
- Rule 6 (6)

What kind of representation are you making?

- Final Comments
- Proof of Evidence
- Statement
- Statement of Common Ground
- Interested Party/Person Correspondence

Other

YOUR COMMENTS ON THE CASE

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[REDACTED]
Hillybarn Farm House
The Mount, Ifield Wood
West Sussex
[REDACTED]

Date: 29/09/25

The Rt Hon Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities – Steve Reed
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA
[REDACTED]

Also sent to: The Planning Department Horsham District Council

Re: Strong Objection to Planning Application DC/25/0447 — Land at Hillybarn Farm, The Mount, Ifield.

Dear Secretary of State,

I write as a local resident representing other local residents to OBJECT in the strongest possible terms to planning application DC/25/0447 — Erection of 4 no. new build dwellings and amended access details.

This proposal is unacceptable in principle and in practice for the following material reasons. For ease of consideration, I have set out the overriding planning objections below and request that the application be refused and that, having regard to the significance of the issues raised, the Secretary of State gives serious consideration to calling in the application.

1. Inadequate and unsafe access; unacceptable highway safety impacts

The site is served only by narrow, single-track rural lanes (Hillybarn Road / Prestwood Lane / The Mount) which are heavily used by vulnerable road users — horse riders, dog-walkers, joggers and pedestrians. Multiple local representations confirm that current road width, surface condition, and lack of passing places make the lanes unsuitable to accommodate the significant increase in vehicle movements (construction traffic and future resident traffic) that this development will generate. The application has been placed on the county highways consultation list and must be refused unless a full, independent safety audit demonstrates the access can be made safe — which, on available evidence, is unlikely. The council must not permit development that materially increases risk to vulnerable road users.

2. Severe and demonstrable harm to landscape and rural character

The proposed houses would sit on prominent high ground and are visible from many public vantage points. The cumulative visual and light intrusion would cause clear harm to the rural character of The Mount and surrounding countryside. National and local planning policy require protection of valued landscapes, and the council must give substantial weight to this harm. The repeated local objections and parish comments underscore that the scheme is out of keeping with the locality and would be an obvious visual intrusion.

3. Unresolved water neutrality and water supply issues

Local residents report existing low water pressure; the applicant proposes to rely on rainwater harvesting and tanks to mitigate "water neutrality." This approach is not proven for permanent residential occupation in a location already suffering supply constraints and periods of low rainfall. The council must demand robust evidence from the water undertaker and an independent hydrological assessment before consent. Granting permission without

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resolved water supply and drainage solutions would risk harm to existing residents and would be contrary to the precautionary approach required.

4. Inadequate ecological evidence and risk to protected species and habitats

There is clear local evidence of bats, birds of prey and other wildlife in the immediate area and ancient woodland adjacent to the site has been noted in parish records. The application documentation must include up-to-date, seasonally appropriate ecological surveys (bat emergence/roost surveys, breeding bird surveys, hedgerow and ancient woodland impact assessment, and any surveys for reptiles/GCN where ponds exist). Without such surveys and without appropriate mitigation/compensation measures, the council cannot be satisfied that there will be no harm to protected species and habitats and thus the application is premature and should be refused.

5. Potential contamination and historic importation of material

Local minutes record enforcement inquiries (EN/22/0121) relating to the importation of material and raised land levels near the site. The Preliminary Contamination Risk Assessment referenced in parish minutes raises further questions. The council must require a full contaminated-land investigation, including trial pits and soil chemistry testing, and a remediation scheme where necessary — prior to any determination. Without such investigation, the risk to human health and controlled waters would be unacceptable.

6. Unacceptable proximity to established commercial dog-boarding kennels; land-use conflict

There is an established boarding kennels operation close to the site. Creating new residential properties in immediate proximity to an existing commercial kennel will inevitably result in complaints and potential restrictions on the kennel that would be unreasonable and contrary to the current lawful use. The council should refuse development that creates such incompatibility unless the applicant can demonstrate there will be no loss of amenity or inevitable conflict.

7. Lack of local services / unsustainable location

The site is remote from shops, schools and frequent public transport; the only realistic means of travel is the private car. The council must weigh the sustainable access considerations and not approve isolated new housing that increases car dependence and places further strain on local amenities. Parish records and local newsletters emphasise the community's concern about cumulative pressure from other major proposals in the area.

8. Precedent and cumulative impact

Granting permission here would set a harmful precedent for further erosion of rural character by piecemeal, small-scale proposals. With large proposals already proposed to the west of Ifield, the council must take a cautious approach and refuse schemes that are materially harmful in isolation and cumulatively.

What I request the Council to do

1. REFUSE application DC/25/0447 for the reasons set out above (highway safety, landscape harm, unresolved water neutrality, inadequate ecological surveys, contamination risk, harmful land-use conflict and unsustainable location).

2. Prior to any decision, require the applicant to submit and the council to verify the following minimum information: full transport assessment with independent safety audit; seasonally appropriate protected-species surveys (bats, breeding birds, reptiles/GCN if applicable); full contaminated land investigation and remediation plan; independent water supply / water neutrality verification from the water undertaker; and an arboriculture/ancient woodland impact assessment.

3. Consider whether, given the significance of the issues and local interest, the Secretary of State should call in the application for determination at national level.

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In Closing — A cautionary note to the decision-makers

This site is not a garden-subdivision within a settlement. It is a rural location where any harm to highway safety, landscape character, water resources, or protected species is likely to be irreversible or expensive to mitigate.

The council must apply the precautionary principle: where there is reasonable evidence of harm (as here) permission should be refused until the applicant proves beyond reasonable doubt that the development will not cause unacceptable impacts. The numerous, consistent and detailed local

objections must be given substantial weight.

For the avoidance of doubt, I request that this objection is added to the application file and that I (we) are notified of the date when this application will be considered by committee. I also request that the Parish Council be given an opportunity to speak.

Yours faithfully,

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