

Sent: 06 February 2026 12:07
To: Planning
Subject: Planning reference DC/25/2114

Categories: Comments Received

Proposal: Erection of 4 detached dwellings with associated amenity space, car parking spaces, detached carports, access road and other associated infrastructure

Location: Land at 519396 111237 Church Farm Walk, Upper Beeding, West Sussex

I oppose the above planning application for the following reasons:

1. Current planning position

The site is not proposed for housing in Horsham District Council's pending Local Plan 2023-2040 (Regulation 19).

The land is deemed "not currently developable" and to have "significant constraints" in the 2018-2031 Upper Beeding Neighbourhood Plan. This position was supported in the Horsham District Council Regulation 18 Site Assessment Report (Feb 2020).

The Neighbourhood Plan raises specific concerns that the site is:

- Located within the River Adur Water Meadows and Wickham Woods Site of Nature Conservation Importance;
- Adjacent to a listed building;
- Accessed via Church Farm Walk, which may not be able to accommodate construction traffic because it is narrow and winding.

Horsham District Council decided the Neighbourhood Plan should come into legal force and form part of its wider Local Plan in June 2021. This includes being used to determine planning applications.

Therefore, local authority strategy does not support housing on this site.

2. Access and safety

The government's National Planning Policy Framework states assessments of sites for development should ensure safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users.

Incredulously, the SDP Transport Statement supporting this planning application concludes the proposed development 'can be safely accessed and serviced from the existing highway network via Church Farm Walk'.

This is an astonishing conclusion to reach given that the relevant section of Church Lane and Church Farm Walk are both narrow, no-through, single track roads, less than 10ft wide in places and with no

pavements. Church Lane is also lined by steep grassy banks, with private driveways the only places to avoid traffic. All pedestrians must walk in the road.

Church Lane is also a designated footpath, leading to and from St Peter's Church and the connecting River Adur footpaths. The lane is therefore in constant use by residents, walkers, dog-walkers, cyclists, school groups, mothers and children using the church hall as well as by visitors to the church and the Churchside Cafe. The lane is even busier since the White Bridge reopened in November 2025, restoring a key pedestrian link over the River Adur for everyone, including children going to and from school in Steyning.

Church Lane and Church Farm Walk already pose safety challenges as single track lanes with no pavements. Cars, vans and lorries can't pass each other and drivers regularly have to reverse to make way for oncoming vehicles, compromising the safety of cyclists, pedestrians, animals, wheelchair/mobility scooter users and the drivers themselves.

In addition, the roads leading to Church Lane and Church Farm Walk (namely High Street, Saltings Way, Priory Field, Hyde Lane, Pound Lane, Deacons Way, Pepperscoombe Lane and other sections of Church Lane) are reduced to single lanes in places because of parked cars. This regularly causes safety and access issues.

It is preposterous to claim heavy construction lorries and delivery vehicles won't further compromise safety in both Church Lane and Church Farm Walk, where traffic has to navigate a blind corner to enter the street at its narrowest before passing over a speed hump and negotiating another blind bend.

It is therefore my contention the planning application does not adequately address access and safety, contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework's requirement to ensure safe and suitable access for all users.

3. Increase in traffic, noise and disruption

The proposals would lead to an influx of construction vehicles along Church Lane, Church Farm Walk and other roads in the village, bringing daily and continuous disruption over many months to streets not designed to accommodate such traffic.

The noise caused by construction traffic (and construction work) would be significant in our quiet streets.

The size and weight of large construction vehicles would undoubtedly damage the verges of historic Church Lane as well as Church Farm Walk, a narrow block-paved cul-de-sac not designed for heavy duty traffic.

The SDP Transport Statement calculates the four proposed houses would generate only one vehicle trip in and one trip out during peak hours (8-9am and 5-6pm). I must question the rationale for this calculation given that each four-bedroom home would likely have at least two vehicles, potentially increasing domestic traffic along Church Farm Walk by more than 50 per cent.

Thanks to the boom in online shopping, the ever increasing number of delivery vehicles would add to the traffic, further increasing the disruption and highway safety risk for pedestrians and residents in Church Lane and Church Farm Walk.

4. Impact on nature and natural habitat

The field is within the River Adur Water Meadows and Wyckham Woods Site of Nature Conservation Importance and is a wildlife site.

Despite this, the field was razed to the ground by a tractor-style vehicle one week before the Ecological Impact Assessment took place on August 11 last year.

Such destruction of a wildlife habitat will have negatively affected the number of creatures and birds present when the ecology assessment took place, thereby giving a false reading of the true situation.

This destruction followed a similar clearance of the field ahead of the initial ecological assessment for this site in October 2021. The findings of the 2021 assessment, and subsequent wildlife surveys in 2022, are also referenced in the latest report and again worked from an incorrect baseline.

It can take years for a wildlife field to recover after being cleared, so findings of bat, grass snake and slow worm activity show the resilience of nature in the face of adversity. As a resident of Church Farm Walk, over the years I've also watched foxes, hedgehogs, pheasants and other wildlife make their way to and from the field while the hoots and calls of owls are a near nightly event.

The ecology assessment states the permanent loss of this scrub habitat will have an adverse impact on bats and reptiles. It should be noted that bat activity included the serotine, which is classified as vulnerable, and the barbastelle, one of the rarest mammals in the UK as well as a protected species. It is illegal to disturb a barbastelle.

Horsham District Council's position on biodiversity at this site is clear in its Regulation 18 Site Assessment Report: Development is not considered to be suitable in this location given the direct loss of the Site of Nature Conservation.

Yours faithfully,



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