

[REDACTED]

Sent: 06 February 2026 17:45
To: Planning
Subject: Planning Objection: DC/25/1957

Categories: Comments Received

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to formally object to the above planning application.

1.

Principle of Development

The site lies within the High Weald AONB, a nationally protected landscape where the statutory duty under s.85 Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires decision-makers to give great weight to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty. Residential development in open countryside in this location is contrary to the core spatial strategy of restraint and to national policy under the NPPF (Sections 15 & 16).

This field has a long planning history of refusal, consistently on the grounds of landscape harm. The current proposal does not materially differ in terms of landscape impact from previously dismissed schemes.

2.

Landscape Harm & AONB Impact

The High Weald is characterised by:

- Undeveloped pastoral fields
- Historic field patterns
- Strong tree cover and hedgerow networks
- Low-density settlement pattern

The progressive introduction of hardstanding, caravans, fencing, lighting, and urban paraphernalia has already eroded rural character. The proposed dwelling would represent a further urbanising encroachment into open countryside and would fail the High Weald Management Plan objective of conserving historic landscape character, soils, and field patterns.

The Design Guide principle that development should be “good enough to be seen” does not justify development that is fundamentally harmful in landscape terms. Screening and planting cannot mitigate the intrinsic change from open agricultural land to domestic curtilage.

3.

Heritage Impact

The site sits opposite a Grade II listed building. Under s.66 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, special regard must be given to preserving the setting of listed buildings. Introducing a modern dwelling and associated domestic features would harm the rural setting and historic relationship between the listed structure and surrounding agricultural land.

4.

Drainage & Flooding

The installation of hardstanding and site intensification has already altered natural drainage patterns. Surface water is reportedly pooling and affecting neighbouring land and the private road. This indicates:

- Loss of permeable ground
- Increased runoff
- Potential failure to comply with SuDS principles

No robust drainage strategy or hydrological assessment appears to demonstrate that runoff rates and water quality impacts are controlled. This is particularly concerning given proximity to a natural lake and environmentally sensitive areas.

5.

Trees & Ecology

Tree loss has occurred on adjacent land, and there is a Tree Preservation Order in the immediate vicinity. Development pressure, excavation, services, and changes in hydrology risk further harm. Insufficient ecological and arboricultural assessment has been provided considering the site's relationship to woodland and nearby water bodies.

6.

Cumulative Harm & Pattern of Development

Multiple applications, including retrospective [REDACTED], demonstrate an ongoing pattern of incremental intensification. The cumulative impact — fencing, gates, structures, caravans, and storage — has already shifted the character of the land away from agriculture toward mixed residential/commercial appearance. Granting permission would legitimise this gradual erosion of countryside character.

7.

Use Creep & Compliance Risk

Previous decisions and conditions (including equestrian-only restrictions) show clear concern from the authority regarding use intensification. The history indicates a high risk that residential permission would lead to further unauthorised activity and enforcement burden.

8.

Amenity & Environmental Health

Concerns exist regarding waste handling (including manure storage) and runoff affecting neighbouring land and drainage networks. These matters raise environmental health considerations and require proper assessment before any intensification is considered.

9.

Conclusion

The proposal:

- Conflicts with AONB protection policies
- Harms the setting of a listed building
- Fails to demonstrate safe drainage
- Risks ecological and tree harm
- Represents unjustified countryside residential development
- Adds to cumulative urbanisation of a sensitive rural site

For these reasons, the application should be refused

Best Regards

