

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 12 July 2026 18:56
To: Planning
Subject: Formal Objection to P.I.P. Application DC/26/0782 by McDowell, The Warren
Categories: Comments Received

[REDACTED]

**Flat 9 The Warren
Horsham Road
Handcross
Haywards Heath
RH17 6DX**

Planning Department
Horsham District Council
Submitted by Email Sunday 12th July 2026

From [REDACTED]

Dear Sirs

Planning Application Reference: DC/26/0782

**Application for multiple new residential and commercial developments at The Warren,
Horsham Road, Handcross, Haywards Heath, RH17 6DX**

I am a co-owner of and resident at The Warren and I write to **OBJECT** to this application.

I wish to record that this application is not valid as it does not meet the criteria for a Permission in Principle application, as set out in the written submissions made to Horsham District Council by Lower Beeding Parish Council and several local residents. The application should have been withdrawn and Horsham District Council should not have allowed it to remain validated for the reasons that have repeatedly been brought to its attention.

Whilst my objection is contained herein, I also emphatically endorse the objection report submitted by [REDACTED] of Longhouse, Handford Way.

I also fully endorse the objections submitted by my neighbours and fellow co-owners of The Warren,
[REDACTED], Flat 3, The Warren
[REDACTED], Flat 5, The Warren

[REDACTED], Flat 7, The Warren

[REDACTED], Flat 11, The Warren

Introduction

I am a co-owner of The Warren and also a resident there. I have owned and lived at The Warren for over eleven years. I own a share of the freehold of The Warren extending to the estate boundaries and also hold a lease of almost 990 years over specific parts of the estate. I am therefore directly affected by the proposed development.

I spent over ten years of my working career in construction and construction engineering on large domestic and civil engineering projects before moving into logistics for major engineering contractors undertaking electrical, mechanical and plumbing works at Gatwick Airport. Although I now work in airport logistics, this professional background has given me a practical understanding of construction, site development and the impact that projects of this nature have on existing communities.

As one of the owners who contributes towards the maintenance of The Warren, I have personally overseen maintenance projects, including the restoration of one of the sandstone chimney stacks, and I have been undertaking a complete renovation of my own property. I am therefore very familiar with the overall condition of The Warren.

A significant reason I chose to live here was its peaceful woodland setting and exceptional natural environment. The surrounding landscape is fundamental to the character of The Warren and to the enjoyment of those who live here.

I was not informed of this planning application by the applicant. I, together with several other co-owners, only became aware of the proposal a matter of days before the original deadline for public comments. Fortunately, because the required site notices had not been displayed correctly, the consultation period was extended, allowing affected residents a proper opportunity to understand the extent of what was being proposed.

Before addressing the planning issues in detail, I must state that I fundamentally disagree with the applicant's portrayal of The Warren as a neglected and endangered building requiring extensive enabling development in order to survive.

As co-owners, we have collectively maintained and cared for the property whenever necessary, often carrying out preventative maintenance before problems developed. Any difficulties experienced have generally arisen where maintenance has been unnecessarily complicated whilst the applicant Simon Ranger has been responsible for coordinating communal works. The Warren is not a building at risk and does not require the scale of development proposed in order to remain occupied and maintained.

No 1. The application is not capable of being determined as a Permission in Principle application

This objection begins with what I believe is the most fundamental issue.

The application exceeds the statutory limitations for a Permission in Principle application because the site area exceeds **1.0 hectare**.

Both Lower Beeding Parish Council and a number of local residents have already drawn this matter to the attention of Horsham District Council, yet the application continues to be treated as valid.

In my view, the area submitted with the application materially understates the land that would be required to implement the development.

The application seeks permission for four substantial residential units above a new garage block together with further residential development elsewhere on the site. However, the submitted plans largely identify only the building footprints.

The application does not properly account for the land inevitably required for:

- * residential gardens;
- * access roads;
- * parking areas;
- * pedestrian routes;
- * landscaping;
- * servicing
- * the circulation space necessary for the occupation of the proposed dwellings.

The applicant himself explained the intended extent of this development to me several months before the application was submitted.


various supporting documents suggest that significantly larger areas of land would ultimately become part of the residential curtilages.

If those areas are included, as they plainly should be, the total development site extends well beyond the area relied upon for this Permission in Principle application.

The consequence is that the Council is being asked to determine a proposal without an accurate understanding of its true extent or its likely impact upon the surrounding landscape.

This creates unacceptable uncertainty.

Either:

- * the application site has been understated; or
- * essential elements of the development have deliberately been omitted from the plans.

Neither possibility should be acceptable in a Permission in Principle application.

It is simply not credible to suggest that these new residential buildings could exist independently of roads, parking spaces, footpaths, gardens or associated landscaping. The submitted plans leave the

decision-maker guessing about the eventual form of the development and the true extent of the land required to make it operational.

For these reasons alone I respectfully submit that the application should not have been validated and should now be declared invalid.

No 2. The proposal conflicts with the Development Plan and national planning policy

Even if the Council were to conclude that the application has been validly submitted, the proposal is fundamentally contrary to adopted planning policy.

The application site lies within the **High Weald National Landscape (formerly the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)**, one of the country's highest landscape designations. Great weight should therefore be given to conserving and enhancing its landscape character, scenic beauty and tranquillity.

The site also lies **Outside the Built-Up Area Boundary** and has **not been allocated for housing development** through the development plan process.

Importantly, the land was never identified or promoted through the preparation of the Lower Beeding Neighbourhood Plan.

That Neighbourhood Plan carefully considered where future development should be directed within the parish. This site was not selected.

Instead, this application seeks to introduce substantial new residential and commercial development into an unallocated woodland setting without the benefit of the plan-led process.

That approach directly undermines the purpose of neighbourhood planning.

Paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework recognises the importance of neighbourhood plans and confirms that where development conflicts with a made Neighbourhood Plan, permission should not normally be granted unless material considerations clearly and demonstrably outweigh that conflict.

In this case, no such overriding justification exists.

The proposal therefore conflicts not only with the spatial strategy of the Development Plan but also with the carefully considered planning decisions already made by the local community through the Lower Beeding Neighbourhood Plan.

No 3. Harm to the High Weald National Landscape (AONB), Woodland Character and Residential Amenity

One of the things that makes The Warren special is not the building itself, but its setting. There are many houses of a similar age and architectural style in the local area, but what distinguishes The Warren is that it sits within the surrounding mature woodland and the wider landscape. It is precisely that setting which this application would fundamentally and permanently alter.

Over the eleven years that I have lived here, one of the greatest pleasures of living at The Warren has been the peace, tranquillity and close connection with nature. These qualities are inseparable from the existing woodland setting.

The proposal would fundamentally alter that character.

Rather than being surrounded by mature woodland, The Warren would become enclosed by substantial new residential development, additional garages, access roads, parking areas and a commercial unit. This would urbanise what is currently a quiet woodland environment and would permanently erode the rural character of the site.

This is not simply the addition of a small number of buildings. It represents a fundamental change in the way the site functions and how residents experience it.

The application would result in the loss of the existing cohesive character of the natural landscape and would significantly diminish the tranquillity which currently exists.

The development would therefore cause substantial harm to landscape character, visual amenity and the enjoyment of neighbouring properties.

I respectfully submit that these harms considerably outweigh any limited benefits claimed by the applicant.

No 4. Loss of Woodland, Wildlife Habitat and Ecological Value

The woodland surrounding The Warren supports a remarkable variety of wildlife.

It is common to observe woodpeckers, buzzards, kestrels, sparrowhawks and other birds of prey. Only a few weeks ago I watched a Goshawk flying the full length of the entrance drive immediately ahead of my vehicle, using the woodland corridor that currently exists. I believe it had been hunting in the woodland to the north side of our drive.

Bats are frequently seen feeding around the buildings during the evening and regularly fly past the eaves of my home and past my windows.

The area also supports frogs, newts, numerous insects and many pollinating species.

One of the most remarkable species found here is the glow-worm (**Lampyrus noctiluca**). I continue to observe glow-worms close to the woodland immediately affected by this proposal, including on the footpath leading to my property only days before writing this objection.

Glow-worm populations are widely recognised as being in serious decline throughout South East England due to habitat fragmentation, artificial lighting and development pressure.

The applicant has already undertaken extensive and aggressive woodland thinning over recent years. Large mature trees have been removed together with substantial numbers of younger trees and understorey vegetation. Areas which previously formed continuous woodland have become increasingly open.

As a result, traffic noise from Horsham Road has become louder and far more noticeable within The Warren. Vehicle headlights are now regularly visible through woodland that previously screened them. The woodland has progressively lost much of its natural character.

Only after the applicant personally showed me his development proposals did the reason for this extensive clearance become apparent.

The roads that now appear within this application had already begun to be formed several years ago.

As early as 2018 or 2019, the applicant requested hardcore from a building project I was undertaking at my property in order to begin constructing these woodland tracks. At that time no such roads existed.

In my view, the cumulative effect of the woodland clearance, road construction and this application demonstrates a long-term intention to prepare the site for the development now before the Council. I ask the Council to consider this history when assessing both the cumulative environmental effects of the proposal and the extent to which the present application represents a continuation of an incremental change to the character of this woodland landscape.

The proposal would further fragment woodland habitat, interrupt wildlife movement and permanently alter an established ecological corridor.

Given the scale of development proposed within this sensitive landscape, I respectfully submit that comprehensive ecological surveys should be required and that the Council should give very careful consideration to whether the environmental impacts have been adequately assessed before any planning decision is made.

The ecological claims made in the application should be treated cautiously because they are inconsistent with my direct experience of the applicant's approach to ecology.

The supporting documents place considerable emphasis upon ecological enhancement measures, including proposed beehives and biodiversity improvements. My own experience gives me reason to question the weight that should be attached to these aspirations. When a substantial honey bee colony was discovered within The Warren, the applicant's preferred course was for the colony to be destroyed rather than relocated. Following advice that this was not lawful, a volunteer Sussex beekeeper undertook several days of work to safely relocate the colony, and when putting in his expenses to our maintenance committee, the applicant Simon Ranger was reluctant to pay and had to be argued with to do so. In view of this experience, I respectfully suggest that any claimed ecological enhancements should not be afforded significant weight unless secured by enforceable planning conditions or legal obligations.

No 5. Traffic, Noise and Loss of Residential Amenity

The application would substantially intensify the use of the existing access drive.

The Warren is served by a narrow shared driveway containing several pinch points where vehicles cannot easily pass and where widening is physically constrained by existing buildings and boundaries.

Even under existing conditions, vehicles frequently have to reverse considerable distances to allow opposing traffic to pass.

Delivery vehicles now arrive from early morning until late evening, reflecting modern patterns of online shopping and home deliveries. The increase in traffic already affects the peaceful enjoyment of neighbouring properties.

The proposed additional dwellings, together with visitors, deliveries, service vehicles and commercial traffic, would significantly increase vehicle movements along this constrained access.

This would increase noise, disturbance and congestion whilst materially reducing the quiet enjoyment of neighbouring homes and gardens.

The proposal therefore results in an unacceptable loss of residential amenity.

No 6. The Planning Benefits Claimed by the Applicant Cannot Be Delivered

A significant proportion of the planning benefits relied upon within the application are dependent upon land and property that the applicant does not control.

The application repeatedly refers to the "demolition and replacement" of existing garages together with wider public access improvements.

However, numerous garages are owned or leased by third parties, including myself.

My garage is in good structural condition, fully operational and continues to be used for its intended purpose. It is not falling down, it is not beyond repair and it is not in need of replacement.

The applicant states:

"Existing garages will be demolished and replaced..."

However, I have never consented to the demolition or relocation of my garage and I do not consent now.

The applicant is fully aware that numerous leaseholders have refused consent.

Consequently, the planning assessment is based upon assumptions that cannot realistically be implemented.

The Council should therefore afford little or no weight to the claimed planning benefits arising from replacement garages or public access improvements because no evidence has been provided demonstrating that the applicant possesses the legal ability to deliver them.

Without those assumptions, the proposal must properly be regarded as the construction of substantial ADDITIONAL buildings rather than replacement development.

No 7. Matters I Ask the Council to Place on the Planning Record

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I also note that the applicant had reached at least Version 26 of his proposals before consulting fellow co-owners, despite significant elements of the scheme depending upon land and legal rights belonging to others.

Conclusion

For all of the reasons set out above, together with those contained within the objections submitted by other residents and which I fully endorse, I respectfully request that Horsham District Council refuses this application.

The proposal conflicts with the Development Plan, conflicts with the Lower Beeding Neighbourhood Plan, lies outside the Built-Up Area Boundary, would cause unacceptable harm to the High Weald National Landscape AONB, would erode the woodland character of the site, diminish residential amenity, adversely affect ecology and relies upon development that the applicant has not demonstrated he is capable of delivering.

In addition, I maintain that this application should never have been validated as a Permission in Principle application because the true extent of the site exceeds the statutory limits and the proposal cannot properly be understood from the plans submitted.

I therefore respectfully ask the Council to declare the application invalid or, alternatively, to refuse planning permission.

I would be grateful if you could confirm receipt of this formal planning objection?

Yours faithfully,

