[redacted]

Sent: [redacted]
30 June 2026 17:44
To: East 2
Cc:
Subject: [redacted] - Planning Inspectorate Reference: 6005400 – Land South of Bax Close DC/24/1196

[redacted]

30th June 2026

Dear Inspector Catcheside,

Appeal Reference: DC/24/1196
Land South of Bax Close, Storrington

We write jointly as the elected ward councillors representing Storrington and Washington in relation to the above appeal.

We recognise that the appellant's revised access proposal has been submitted in an attempt to reduce potential impacts on the protected oak tree T2. We also recognise that appellants are entitled to submit additional evidence during the appeal process where the Inspector considers it appropriate to accept it.

However, we remain concerned that the revised proposal represents a material change to the means of access. It introduces a new 1 in 10 access ramp that was not before Horsham District Council when the application was determined and which raises additional planning considerations relating to accessibility, highway safety, drainage, environmental effects and the practical operation of the existing highway.

These are not minor amendments. They go to the heart of whether the proposed means of access is acceptable.

While we appreciate that the Inspector has discretion to consider late evidence, we respectfully suggest that the timing and significance of this amendment are relevant when deciding the weight that should be attached to it. The revised access arrangement has not been subject to the same level of scrutiny that would normally accompany a proposal of this nature during the planning application process. As a result, the local planning authority, statutory consultees and interested residents have had more limited opportunities to assess and comment upon the wider implications of the revised design.

We are particularly concerned that the principal justification for the revised proposal has not itself been shown to have been achieved.

During the hearing, Horsham District Council's Arboricultural Officer confirmed that the revised access arrangement could not be relied upon to protect the long-term health of T2. In our view, that is a significant consideration. If the revised design cannot be demonstrated to achieve the objective for

which it was introduced, it is difficult to conclude that it overcomes one of the principal reasons for refusal.

We would also invite the Inspector to consider the wider planning context.

The current appeal has understandably focused on adapting the Bax Close access in an attempt to overcome the constraints created by the protected oak tree. However, there is an existing field access from Amberley Road which is not constrained by T2. While that access does not form part of the current appeal proposal and we recognise that it is not for the Inspector to determine an alternative scheme, its existence does demonstrate that other options may be available to the appellant.

An alternative access arrangement has the potential to avoid many of the planning issues that have dominated consideration of this appeal, including the impact on T2, the need for a steep access gradient, highway and pedestrian safety concerns within Bax Close, on New Town Road and at the junction with New Town Road and Amberley Road, disturbance to existing residents, and the associated issues of vehicle noise and air quality.

For that reason, we do not consider that dismissal of the present appeal would necessarily undermine the principle of residential development on this site. Rather, it would provide the appellant with an opportunity to bring forward a revised proposal based on an alternative means of access that could avoid many of the constraints associated with the current scheme and be considered through the normal planning process.

Our comments are therefore not intended to oppose the principle of development in this location. Instead, they relate to whether the revised Bax Close access has been demonstrated to provide an acceptable planning solution and whether sufficient weight can properly be attached to a significant late amendment that has not been fully examined.

For these reasons, we respectfully invite you to conclude that the revised access proposal has not been shown, on the evidence currently before the appeal, to overcome the concerns that led to the refusal of planning permission. Should the appeal be dismissed, we hope the appellant will give serious consideration to bringing forward a revised proposal that explores an alternative means of access capable of addressing these longstanding constraints.

One final point is that it has come to our attention that Land South of Bax Close is included in the schedule of suggested modifications to Horsham District Council's Regulation 19 Local Plan, published in the HDC Cabinet papers on 26 June 2026 - before you have made your decision.

We are concerned that this could have predetermined the outcome of the application using the existing access via Bax Close. We have raised our concerns with Horsham District Council at a high level and await an answer but trust that you will be able to come to a decision which is only based on the issues raised at the appeal.

Thank you for considering our representations.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

HDC Councillors writing as Storrington & Washington ward councillors

[redacted]

Councillor for Storrington and Washington Ward

[redacted]

Horsham District Council

Horsham District Council, Albery House, Springfield Road, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 2GB
Telephone: 01403 215100 (calls may be recorded) www.horsham.gov.uk Chief Executive: Jane Eaton

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