For official use only (date received): 10/02/2026 17:57:35

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/25/3376429

DETAILS OF THE CASE

Appeal Reference	APP/Z3825/W/25/3376429
Appeal By	MR SHAWN KELF
Site Address	Land To The Rear of The Rectory High Street Rusper West Sussex RH12 4PX

SENDER DETAILS

Name	[redacted]
Address	Morriswood Old Holbrook HORSHAM RH12 4TW

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

Dear Inspector,

Appeal Ref: DC/24/1835 – Land to the rear of The Rectory, High Street, Rusper
Response to Appellant's Heritage Rebuttal Statement – Section 3 (The Old Rectory – NDHA)

I write to respond specifically to Section 3 of the Appellant's Heritage Rebuttal Statement, which concludes that the proposed development would cause no harm to the significance or setting of The Old Rectory (a non-designated heritage asset), the Grade I listed Church of St Mary Magdalene, or the wider Rusper Conservation Area.

Please note that these are my personal opinions as the local ward councillor for Rusper and Colgage and not the offical opinion of Horsham District Council.

For the reasons set out below, I respectfully disagree with the Appellant's conclusions. In my view, Section 3 materially underestimates the contribution that the appeal site makes to the historic setting, openness, and legibility of these heritage assets, contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and established heritage principles.

1. Underestimation of the Role of Setting

The Appellant asserts that the significance of The Old Rectory is largely contained within its own curtilage and that the appeal site makes "no meaningful contribution" to its setting. This interpretation is overly narrow.

National policy makes clear that setting is not limited to land within the ownership or curtilage of a heritage asset, but includes surrounding land that contributes to how an asset is experienced and understood. The appeal site forms part of the historic spatial context within which The Old Rectory is appreciated — as a high-status Victorian residence historically associated with the church and glebe land, and set apart from denser village development by open land.

The openness of the appeal site contributes to this understanding, even where views are filtered or partial.

2. Historic Relationship Between the Old Rectory, Church and Glebe Land

Section 3 places significant reliance on the argument that the historic relationship between The Old Rectory and the Church of St Mary Magdalene is now largely documentary and of limited relevance due to intervening development and tree screening.

This argument misunderstands the nature of historic relationships. These are not dependent solely on direct, uninterrupted visibility. Rather, they are understood through:

Spatial separation and hierarchy;

Historic land function;

Openness and landscape character;

The ability to read the settlement's historic form.

The appeal site remains part of the historic glebe land associated with the church and continues to function as an open, undeveloped element within the conservation area. This contributes to the legibility of the relationship between ecclesiastical buildings and their surrounding land, even where modern change has occurred elsewhere.

3. The “Already Compromised” Argument and Cumulative Harm

The Appellant places substantial weight on the presence of the rectory and church car parking as evidence that the heritage value of the glebe land has already been eroded. This does not withstand scrutiny.

The rectory is not speculative or unrelated development; it is an ecclesiastical dwelling directly linked to the historic function of the land. Its siting, scale and landscape treatment were designed to respect the character of the conservation area and maintain openness around it.

Importantly, heritage harm is cumulative. The existence of one sensitively designed ecclesiastical building does not justify further development that would fundamentally alter the character of the land. On the contrary, the remaining openness of the appeal site now carries greater weight, as it represents one of the last undeveloped elements of historic glebe land within this part of the conservation area.

4. Openness and the Conservation Area

Section 3 accepts that development would alter the openness of the site but argues that this would not amount to harm. This conclusion conflicts with the Rusper Conservation Area Appraisal, which identifies:

Open land;

Green buffers;

Rural glimpses; and

Spacious settings around key buildings

as fundamental components of the area’s character.

The appeal site performs precisely this role, forming a transition between the historic village core and the surrounding countryside. The introduction of nine dwellings would result in a permanent loss of this openness and would urbanise a sensitive rural edge within the conservation area.

5. Gateway and Approach to the Village

The Appellant’s assessment does not adequately address the site’s role in shaping approaches to Rusper, particularly from the Surrey–Sussex Border Path. Glebe Field acts as a gateway space, allowing the historic settlement pattern of the village to be read as a transition from countryside to village core.

Development in this location would sever that historic transition and diminish the experiential quality of entering the conservation area.

Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, Section 3 of the Appellant’s Heritage Rebuttal Statement fails to properly assess the contribution of the appeal site to the setting and significance of The Old Rectory, the Church of St Mary Magdalene, and the Rusper Conservation Area.

The proposed development would result in clear heritage harm through the loss of openness, erosion of historic relationships, and urbanisation of a sensitive rural edge. In my respectful view, the Council’s original refusal on heritage grounds was sound, and the appeal should be dismissed.

Yours faithfully,

[redacted]
Horsham District Councillor Rusper & Colgate Ward,

[redacted]