Planning Department

Horsham District Council

Albery House

Horsham

[redacted]

Cllr Samantha Bateman

[redacted]

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[redacted]

29 June 2025

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Objection to Planning Application for Tilt-and-Turn Cameras at Jenger's Mead Car Park, Billingshurst: DC/25/0367

I am writing to formally object to the proposed installation of tilt-and-turn surveillance cameras at Jenger's Mead Car Park in Billingshurst. While the intention to enhance public safety is appreciated and the owner's desire to protect its parking revenues is acknowledged, this proposal raises several concerns that conflict with the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the unique character of the area.

1. Location Within a Conservation Area

The proposed site lies within the Billingshurst Conservation Area, as designated by Horsham District Council and Billingshurst Parish Council. This status reflects the area's historic and architectural significance, and developments within this area must preserve or enhance its character. Note this extract from Horsham District Council's own, Billingshurst Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (July 2017) "The Billingshurst Conservation Area encompasses the historic core of the village, characterised by a mix of traditional buildings, narrow lanes, and open spaces that reflect its rural origins and gradual development. The area's special interest lies in its architectural variety, historic street pattern, and the strong sense of place it provides." The introduction of modern, mechanised surveillance equipment within the Conservation area risks undermining the integrity and heritage value of the community's centre, contrary to Section 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment of the NPPF.

2. Intrusion on Community Life in a Central Public Space

Jenger's Mead is more than a car park—it is the heart of the village, where residents gather, shop, and connect. It is where, for example, the Billingshurst show begins its procession. It is where the annual Nativity sets out. There are no other locations in the village centre, other than the Jenger's Parade, which provide opportunity for the community to congregate en masse. Installing high-mobility surveillance in this space risks creating a sterile, monitored environment that discourages natural social interaction and a vibrant local economy, contrary to the NPPF's emphasis on promoting healthy and safe communities (Section 8). Note the plans which detail the extent of Napier group's holding and the applicant's own submission that the locations of the cameras are sited to "enable full coverage of the Jenger's Mead parade (Fig.6)." Regardless of the owner's stated intent to only survey parking spaces, such cameras will have the effect of intruding on community life.

3. Threat to Privacy and Social Comfort

The tilt-and-turn functionality of the cameras introduces the potential for wide surveillance range, potentially capturing images of individuals in adjacent private residences, shops, restaurants, public walkways, and businesses. This raises serious concerns about privacy and the psychological impact of constant observation. There are no measures in place or plans to introduce enforcement measures to ensure promises to survey only parking spaces will be adhered to.

4. Lack of Justification and Community Engagement

There has been no evidence presented to justify the need for such surveillance in this low-crime area, nor has there been meaningful consultation with local residents. This undermines the NPPF's guidance on proportionate decision-making and early community involvement. If safety is the stated ambition, there must be proven need and community engagement to satisfy the need for surveillance. The police have not provided evidence that this is a high crime area that would benefit from such surveillance. Nor has the applicant submitted detailed how it will enable the footage to be accessed for community safety.

5. Incompatibility with Local Character and Setting

Billingshurst is a semi-rural community with a distinct identity shaped by its historic buildings, green spaces, and community-focused layout. The proposed cameras will be out of keeping with the ambition of maintaining a semi-rural aesthetic and conflict with Section 12: Achieving Well-Designed Places.

6. Risk of Precedent and Cumulative Harm

Approving this application sets a precedent for further intrusive infrastructure, gradually eroding the community's character and sense of place. This is inconsistent with the NPPF's goal of achieving sustainable development that respects local distinctiveness.

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Yours faithfully,

[redacted]

Cllr Samantha Bateman