David Goddard
College Lane, Hurstpierpoint
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Mid Sussex District Plan 2021–2039: Further Examination Hearings, 3–6 November 2026

Hearing statement: MM75 Land south of Hurst Wickham Barn, College Lane

Thursday 5 November 2026, 11:45 session (with MM72 and MM73). Written statement; I cannot attend.

I am a resident of College Lane and cannot attend the hearing. I ask that this statement be treated as my evidence on MM75 under the Inspector's agenda for Hurstpierpoint. It addresses only MM75, and I do not repeat my earlier representation.

Why MM75 is unsound

It would build on the last open land beside a Grade II listed farmhouse. Wickham Farmhouse (list entry 1025662) is now surrounded on three sides by modern housing. The land east of College Lane is its last link with its rural setting. The policy's answer is a "vista", with no heritage assessment to show it is enough.

The footway stops where the problem starts. The policy provides a footway south. North of the site, the pavement stops and the lane is one car wide for about 365 metres, with no verge and no room for a path.

It lies in a gap the Secretary of State has protected. In 2014 he refused 81 homes on the same lane, finding that the gap "continues to serve a useful and much valued planning purpose" and was "already particularly narrow and vulnerable".

It is one step in a sequence. MM75, MM73 and MM72 are 119 homes on one lane (more at 100 for MM72), with 2.6 hectares of further land in the applicant's ownership next to them. No evidence tests the total.

My request: find MM75 unsound and delete it in full.

Considering the sites together

The Inspector's agenda groups MM72 to MM76, and its questions about the road network, the separate identity of settlements and utilities can only be answered for the sites as a whole. MM72, MM73 and MM75 are contiguous and share one lane, 119 homes in all (more if MM72 rises to 100). They sit alongside MM74, MM76 and the DPSC1 and DPSC3 allocations in the same parish. Yet each policy is written as if its site stood alone, and no evidence tests their combined effect on College Lane, the High Street, Stonepound Crossroads or the Goddards Green sewerage system. National policy tests whether the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. That is a test of the total, not of each site separately. The Council's own Regulation 19 plan records that "small scale, sometimes piecemeal development" has increased population but "not reached a critical mass to support new facilities and services". Splitting this area into small allocations repeats that pattern. Policy DPH2 recognises the risk. It supports expansion beyond built-up area boundaries only where it meets identified local housing, employment and community needs and is shown to be sustainable, and it requires developers to satisfy the Council that "a larger site is not brought forward in phases that individually meets the threshold but cumulatively does not". The threshold is 10 dwellings. Judging each site on its own numbers does what that policy warns against. A site of 9 or 35 homes should not be treated as modest when it adds to the others.

(a) Movement

The site and the lane. MM75 allocates 35 homes on 1.87 ha along the whole eastern side of College Lane, between Hurst Wickham Barn and the Track. The Track is the access to MM72, directly across from it. MM73 is reached along MM75's northern edge. Together the three sites are 119 homes on one lane, more if MM72 is raised to the 100 homes its developer's website refers to.

First-hand evidence: the single-car stretch. North of this site, College Lane has a stretch where only one car can pass. I live on College Lane. At school drop-off and collection times, traffic regularly queues there for five to ten minutes. Children and parents walk in the carriageway because there is nowhere else to stand. Every journey from MM75 towards Hurstpierpoint College, Malthouse Lane and the north must use it. That includes the daily journeys to Victoria Business Park, Panattoni Park (The Hub) and Bolney Grange Business Park, and to the A23 for Brighton and Gatwick Airport, which will go up Malthouse Lane. The Hurstpierpoint Society's Highway Report (February 2024) records that College Lane is restricted to single file by parked cars, and the made Neighbourhood Plan identifies traffic, pedestrian safety and parking in College Lane as a significant local issue.

The policy's footway stops where the problem starts. MM75 requires a footway on the southern side of its access road, joining the existing footway on the east side of College Lane south of the access. That helps people walking south. It does nothing for people walking north. Going north, the pavement on College Lane stops at Bankside and does not start again. From there to around 92 College Lane, about 365 metres, the lane is only wide enough for one car and the terraced houses' front gardens run right up to the road. (The pavement ends at 50.932454, -0.163445 and the stretch ends at 50.935745, -0.163679.) The terraced houses' front gardens meet the edge of the road, so there is no verge. A footway there could only be built by taking private front gardens, and no evidence shows that land is available.

The wider network. Southbound traffic reaches Wickham Hill, then Stonepound Crossroads or the High Street. The Council's transport model finds Stonepound severe and too constrained for capacity mitigation, and its report does not, in its text, assess College Lane or the High Street. The Obtrada assessment commissioned by the Parish Council records about 6,700 vehicles a day on the High Street. The Inspector has already found the Council's paper MS-13 to be largely about junction capacity. The MM75 policy has no requirement for any measure at either place.

Traffic from DPSC1 is on top of this. DPSC1, Land West of Burgess Hill, is allocated for about 1,350 homes at the end of Malthouse Lane. Malthouse Lane leads into College Lane, and from there south to Wickham Hill, Hassocks Road and Stonepound Crossroads. Journeys to Hassocks station, Brighton and the A23 from those homes will naturally use the same lanes, the same crossroads and the same High Street that the Hurstpierpoint sites rely on. I have seen no evidence that the assessment of this site adds those trips to the lanes and junctions concerned. The Plan treats DPSC1 as part of the background. For the lanes, the crossroads and the High Street, it is the largest single addition of all.

(b) Village character, heritage and countryside

Wickham Farmhouse. The MM75 policy records that the Grade II listed Wickham Farmhouse (list entry 1025662) lies to the west of the site and that the Hurst Wickham Conservation Area lies to the north. As quoted in the Parish Council's representations, the Conservation Area Appraisal says the open fields south of Hurst Wickham, east of College Lane, are particularly important in keeping a feeling of separation from Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks. The same representations say the farmhouse is now surrounded on three sides by modern housing, and that the land east of College Lane is its last link with its rural setting. MM75 and MM72 would build on that land. The policy's answer is open space on the southern side to keep a "vista", but

no heritage assessment shows that is enough. Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 require special regard to the farmhouse's setting and special attention to the Conservation Area.

Separate identity. MM75 would take the village east of College Lane to a new built-up boundary. It lies in the gap between Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks, on the same lane as the land the Secretary of State refused for 81 dwellings in decision APP/D3830/V/14/2211499 (4 September 2014). He found that the gap serves a useful planning purpose. That land, now MM72, has been put forward three times: 93 homes (refused by the Council in 2013), 81 (refused in 2014) and now 100 in application DM/26/2433. The application's location plan also shows a further 2.6 hectares in the applicant's "additional ownership", adjoining MM72 along the Track and Belmont Lane. I expect that land to follow in stages, each looking modest on its own, which is the pattern Policy DPH2 is meant to stop. Together with MM72, this is a sequence of small steps into the gap, not a one-off allocation. The Inspector's report records the gap as some 0.9 km, measured in a straight line from the rear gardens on College Lane to the rear gardens on London Road, Hassocks, and the Secretary of State called it "already particularly narrow and vulnerable" near that land. Nothing suggests it has widened. Neighbourhood Plan Policy Hurst C3 protects local gaps, and I have seen no assessment of MM75, alone or with MM72 and MM73, against it.

Documented use of the gap. The 2014 inquiry record shows how this land is used and valued. Belmont Lane, on the edge of the land, was described as "a single width private access road and public bridleway", lined by mature trees with hazel and hawthorn (Inspector's report 2.4). Objectors raised the effect on the public footpath (7.5). The parties agreed that a wildlife and landscape corridor of 50 to 60 metres along Belmont Lane was needed (statement of common ground, report 6.1). The report cites the 1973 Inspector's view that the open view from College Lane was made towards the open break between the two settlements (9.4), and records that the land was designated white land in 1967 to remain, for the most part, undisturbed (9.3). The Secretary of State found that the gap "continues to serve a useful and much valued planning purpose" (para 14). The made Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan adds that land in the gaps "retains a strong rural character" and matters to the setting and identity of both settlements (para 4.13). The Main Modifications point to no later assessment that says otherwise.

(c) Infrastructure

Foul drainage. Wastewater from Hurstpierpoint drains to the Goddards Green works, which Southern Water's own data (BRAVA and its Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan) identify as at risk. In the 2014 decision Southern Water confirmed that the local sewer lacked capacity for development on this lane. I see regular tanker movements on Malthouse Lane and nearby lanes, and sewer failures locally. The MM75 policy asks only that a watercourse to the south be considered. It has no foul drainage requirement. Deleting the sewerage phasing safeguard through MM39 removes the only mechanism that would have stopped homes being occupied before capacity exists.

Delivery. MM75 depends on a lane with no room for a northbound footway, on a junction the Council's model cannot mitigate, and on a sewerage system with no demonstrated capacity. It has not been shown to be deliverable.

My request to the Inspector

I ask the Inspector to find MM75 unsound, because it is not justified, effective or consistent with national policy, and to delete it from the Plan in full. I do not suggest any conditional or alternative form of the allocation.