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Sent: 24 April 2026 21:28
To: Planning Comments (SMDC)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: SMD/2026/0165

[REDACTED]

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Objection to planning application – ‘Land to the South of Mill Lane’ (SMD/2026/0165)

I write to formally object to the proposed development on land to the south of Mill Lane.

At the outset, I acknowledge that the site lies within the Green Belt and that a recent appeal decision at ‘Land off Mill Lane’ (APP/B3438/W/24/3354428) granted permission for residential development further east along the same road. It is reasonable to assume that the current application has been submitted in reliance on that decision.

However, the Inspector’s decision in that case was based on a very specific assessment of the site and its surroundings following a site visit. In particular, the Inspector concluded that the appeal site was:

“experienced as part of the main built-up area of the village as opposed to the open countryside”

and that it formed a,

“gap between properties which form part of a ribbon of built development”.

On that basis, the Inspector determined that the proposal constituted

“limited infilling in a village”

and was therefore not inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

These findings are highly site-specific and are central to the decision. **It is therefore critically important that they are not applied generically to other land along Mill Lane.**

The current application site is materially and fundamentally different. It does not form part of a continuous ribbon of development, is not experienced as part of the built-up area of the village, and cannot sensibly be described as a gap between properties. Instead, it lies within a more open and rural stretch of Mill Lane and reads as part of the countryside.

For these reasons, the two sites are **completely different** in planning terms and should not be treated the same. The conclusions reached by the Inspector in respect of the appeal site cannot be relied upon to justify the current proposal.

My immediate concern is that this application will be relying on the precedent set in (APP/B3438/W/24/3354428). SMDC Local Plan policies reiterate strict controls in relation to inappropriate development of Greenbelt land. Given this, my objection points below are based around 'why' exceptional circumstances should not apply in this case.

1. Proposed development work is not "limited infilling in a village"

The appeal decision in the application referred to above, hinged on a finding that the site constituted "limited infilling in a village" and was therefore not inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

That conclusion does not apply here.

The current site:

- Does not form part of a continuous built frontage
- It is not contained between closely related neighbouring dwellings
- Is separated from surrounding properties by substantial distances (circa 100m to the left and right))
- Lies within a stretch of Mill Lane characterised by sporadic, low-density development

The application site reads as open countryside. It is not a "gap" in development. It is a field. As such, the proposal cannot reasonably be described as "limited infilling in a village" and instead constitutes encroachment into the countryside. It therefore represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

2. Clear distinction from 'Land off Mill Lane' (APP/B3438/W/24/3354428)

The appeal site (further east along Mill Lane):

- Is directly adjacent to a continuous run of semi-detached housing
- Sits within a defined built-up frontage
- Is closely related to village facilities including the school and church
- Was experienced by the Inspector as part of the main built-up area

In contrast, the proposed site:

- Lies further west, beyond the extent of continuous development
- Has no immediate neighbouring dwellings forming a frontage
- Is surrounded by open land and large residential plots
- Represents a clear transition point into the countryside

In section 8 of his appeal decision, The Inspector placed significant weight on how the site was "experienced on the ground". In this case, the site is experienced as rural, not as part of the village.

3. Character of the area and settlement edge

This part of Mill Lane is defined by:

- Detached dwellings set within large plots
- Irregular spacing between buildings
- A loose, rural pattern of development

The proposal would introduce a suburban form of development into this setting, fundamentally altering the character of the area.

The site marks a clear transition from village to countryside. This is evidenced not only by the physical pattern of development but also by the change in speed limit from 30mph to 60mph near the site, which reflects the end of the settled area.

This transition is further reinforced by the presence of street lighting along Mill Lane, which terminates at or near the application site. Beyond this point, the absence of street lighting is characteristic of open countryside.

Development here would erode this clear settlement edge and extend built form into the open countryside.

4. Loss of agricultural land and countryside function

The site is not a redundant or previously developed parcel of land. It has previously been actively used agricultural land, having supported grazing livestock as recently as summer 2025.

This demonstrates that:

- The land forms part of a functioning rural landscape
- It contributes to the agricultural character of the area
- It is not a residual “infill plot” within a settlement

Its development would therefore represent a genuine loss of countryside, rather than the completion of an existing built-up frontage.

5. Impact on residential amenity

The site lies directly opposite my property.

The current open aspect contributes significantly to the character and amenity of this part of Mill Lane. The proposed development would introduce:

- Built property directly opposite
- Increased vehicle movements
- Associated noise and disturbance
- Headlight glare and activity

This would materially alter the character of my outlook and reduce residential ambience.

6. Urbanisation of a rural stretch of road

Beyond the dwellings themselves, the development would introduce:

- Domestic boundaries (Fences, walls, gates etc)
- Hardstanding and driveways
- Increased lighting and activity

These elements would collectively urbanise what is currently a rural stretch of the lane, further reinforcing the encroachment into the countryside.

7. Highway and safety considerations

The site is located close to a transition from a 30mph to 60mph speed limit, indicating a shift from village environment to open road conditions. The introduction of a new access and additional vehicle movements in this location has the potential to:

- Increase the risk of accidents between vehicles
- Affect visibility and driver expectations
- Introduce hazards in a transitional section of road

8. Conclusion

The appeal decision further along Mill Lane does not provide a justification for this proposal.

That decision was based on a site that formed part of a continuous built frontage and was experienced as part of the village.

This site is materially different. It is not infill. It is open countryside.

The proposal would therefore constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would result in encroachment into the rural landscape, harming the character of the area and eroding the clear settlement boundary.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that planning permission be refused.

Kindest Regards

Stuart Dick
Andrea Nicholson