

Dear Mr Chalk

Planning Application WA/20/26/PL

Nestled c/o Batcheller Monkhouse, Stretton House, Pulborough

Land South of The Black Horse Pub, Binsted Lane

1. I am Mr Clive Smith, owner and landlord of the Black Horse public house, Binsted. Please accept this **objection** to application WA/20/26/PL which seeks retrospective planning permission for a glamping facility on land immediately to the south of the public house.

Summary of My Representation

2. The application site benefits from a planning permission (granted in respect of application WA/21/25/PL) which authorises the installation of 6 glamping units and a very limited range of supporting infrastructure. The applicant has, in fact, installed larger units with a range of external amenities including free standing structures. They have also installed a storage container and LPG tank, and materially altered the layout and landscaping. None of these changes and additions are authorised and retrospective planning consent is now sought to regularise that position. This appears to be in response to Arun District Council (the council) opening an enforcement case to investigate the non-compliance with the approved scheme.
3. The applicant claims that:

The amended scheme does not materially alter the nature or impact of the development...¹

4. I disagree and I invite the council to consider carefully the impact of the changes proposed, which it will be able to assess 'in situ'. The effect of the unauthorised elements is to create an urban and intensive form of development with much greater impact on the countryside setting than the approved scheme.
5. I understand that the principle of a limited glamping operation has been established and that there is no merit in restating objections to the use itself. What is relevant is that there is a material difference between what was approved and what is now proposed (and which the applicant has installed). My representations are therefore focused on those differences and in particular the unacceptable impact they have on the environment and the tranquil nature of Binsted.

¹ Planning Heritage, Design and Access Statement Batcheller Monkhouse March 2026

The Existing Consent

6. When consent was granted in July 2025 the officer report² set out an assessment of the proposal as one that would:

Diversify the rural economy with a small-scale, sustainable, tourism-related development that does not unduly compromise the character of the area nor the significance of nearby heritage assets

7. The specific details of the proposal were important in reaching that conclusion as set out in the report. The glamping units themselves were to be of a specific size and design with no external facilities except an integral veranda. They would not be enclosed with fencing.
8. The applicant's assurance that there would be no impact from external lighting was taken at face value by the council. No consideration was given to the potential for external lighting brought to the site by visitors but since no outdoor facilities were anticipated this was not unreasonable. It was important to the planning judgement that the proposal would respect Binsted's "unlit village" objective, and a low-key external lighting scheme was eventually approved as required by condition.
9. It was also important that the proposal was not a 'noise generating use' and any adverse impact from noise was considered to be unlikely. Activity in and around the site would be limited to arrivals and departures and quiet conversations mainly inside the units themselves.
10. A further 'positive' for the proposal was that the only surfacing of the site would be the small gravel car park, and that internal pathways would be natural grass. Native hedge planting was to be undertaken as part of the requirement for biodiversity net gain. The LPG tank was to be buried below ground. No external storage (except for bicycles) was proposed.
11. Bearing those details in mind, the report concludes that

Being raised off the ground on 'stilts' adds to the lightweight design of the huts and reduces their perceived impact on the environment. This, in combination with the limited number of huts, their layout, spacing, and additional planting that would populate the site, would ensure that although the site would be developed, the rural and agricultural character of the area would not be unduly compromised.

² Recommendation Report for Planning Permission WA/21/25/PL

and that:

the site would remain almost entirely verdant with wildflower meadows, grass tracks, and additional tree planting spread across the site.

12. The officer report makes clear that the recommendation to approve the application depended on its specific details. The planning judgement was based on these, in particular the conclusion that adverse impacts (including on heritage assets) would be limited. Had any of these details been different, it would have been perfectly reasonable for the council to reach a different conclusion.
13. In short, the picture created by the applicant and accepted by the council was of a simple, low-key and self-contained group of units sitting within their countryside setting and doing little or nothing to change the nature of that setting. The case officer therefore felt justified in recommending approval because the site would remain, to repeat his words, "almost entirely verdant".

What Is Now Applied For

14. What the applicant has installed, and what they now apply for retrospectively, is very different from what was approved. The Planning, Heritage, Design and Access Statement (PHDAS) refers to 15 'deviations' from the approved plans. These are not minor or inadvertent changes. They show a deliberate intention to create a materially different form of development, for commercial reasons.
15. The PHDAS does not evaluate the impact of the changes now proposed. It lists them and assumes they will be found acceptable. It does not explain why the changes are necessary or assess their effects on the site. Nor does it explain why they were not included in the earlier application, when the applicant clearly intended to introduce them. Some of the changes have a significant impact in their own right. Taken together, they transform the scheme's impact and result in a materially different form of development.
16. The internal footprint of each of the 6 units is larger. All units now have two bedrooms, rather than a mix of sizes. The base of each unit is fully enclosed. This creates a much more solid and building-like appearance, entirely unlike the 'lightweight' structure previously found acceptable. Each unit also has additional outdoor facilities, alongside a relocated hot tub. These include an outdoor cinema area with a 100" screen (according to the applicant's promotional material) and a wood-fired sauna building with a wood store and prominent chimney. Opaque wooden fencing screens each unit and creates a self-contained 'compound'. This reduces openness and affects views from adjacent property and from Binsted Lane.

17. The introduction of 1.8m high chestnut lathe fences and gates around every plot, and around the outdoor saunas, changes the character of the scheme. The units no longer sit within an open landscape setting. Instead, the fencing creates an 'urban grain' of series of enclosed, private spaces within what was intended to be retained as an open meadow.
18. Grass footpaths have been replaced with substantial gravelled tracks. A shipping container has been installed for storage and surrounded with (currently ineffective) timber screening. The LPG fuel tank is now an intrusive above-ground structure and surrounded by a solid concrete and timber security fence, as shown in the photograph below.



Figure 1 In situ development looking south 14 April 2026

19. The overall effect of these changes is highly significant. The consented scheme gives priority to the openness of the site and places the glamping units lightly within the setting. The effect of the current application, as can now be experienced on site, is to subordinate the landscape setting and overwhelm it with intrusive built form. It cannot plausibly be described as 'almost entirely verdant' given the intrusive and inappropriate scale of what is now provided.
20. The applicant's lack of concern for the setting is apparent in their choice of fast-growing but inappropriate prunus and pittosporum species for hedging and screening. The PHDAS for the consented scheme spoke about using native hedgerow species to meet the biodiversity net gain requirement. In the more recent document, the term 'native' has been dropped. The applicant seeks to regularise a planting scheme that is not appropriate for this location.

21. I should also point out that the glamping unit closest to the Black Horse has been incorrectly located approximately 5m closer to my boundary than is shown in either the original application or in the new proposal. The council should check this with the applicant and if necessary seek a revised plan to avoid what would otherwise be a continuing breach of planning control even if the new application were to be approved.

Why the application should be refused

22. The scheme for which permission is now sought represents a significant intensification beyond that which the council considered acceptable. It introduces a range of urbanising features that harm this sensitive rural environment and conflict with relevant policies. Had these additional features been included in the original proposal, the planning assessment would have been fundamentally different.
23. The external facilities (including the outdoor saunas and cinema areas) enlarge the already over-sized glamping units. They also encourage activities that create light pollution, noise and smoke. This is materially different from the Black Horse public house, which has long been part of village life and carefully manages its impacts within controlled opening hours.
24. The Environmental Noise Impact Assessment which supports the application is, at best, of limited value. It measures only noise from conversations inside the units. It does not assess noise from the outdoor facilities, including the hot tubs, saunas and (most obviously) outdoor projection equipment. Even if noise levels do not reach a threshold considered unacceptable to adjoining householders, they may still be wholly unacceptable in a tranquil rural area.
25. Smoke from the various wood fired heaters, in particular the outdoor saunas, is produced from the low level chimneys and frequently blows toward my business, causing a nuisance to users of our outdoor seating areas.
26. Light pollution from the proposed (and in situ) facilities is a material concern. For much of the year, the additional outdoor facilities will rely on external lighting for their use. Visitors can bring their own equipment and use it in an uncontrolled manner. This is not speculation: the impacts are already evident, along with highly intrusive decorative lighting installed on the fence surrounds.
27. Policy TOU DM1 of the Arun Local Plan 2011-2031 (ALP) requires that:

In all cases, development in the countryside will demonstrate that it is required and is compatible with its countryside location and is sensitively designed to minimise potential impact on the countryside.

28. Whilst the consented scheme might comply with the test set out in TOU DM1, the new proposal most certainly does not. It is not sensitively designed and does not minimise the potential impact on the countryside. That should be self-evident since it creates a

greater adverse impact than the consented scheme with no compelling justification for doing so.

29. The new proposal also conflicts with Policy CL4 of the Walberton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019 – 2031 (the neighbourhood plan) which says that:

Proposals relating to land outside the settlement boundary will need to demonstrate that the proposed use is sustainable and will not have an adverse impact on the rural landscape, nor conflict with housing and other policies but will promote the unique characteristics of the area. In all cases appropriate levels of parking facilities must be provided.

30. It is (quite literally) evident that the operation of the glamping site as now proposed conflicts with this policy and also has an adverse impact on the ‘unlit village’ environment of Binsted contrary to the requirements of Policy VE8 of the neighbourhood plan which says that:

Development proposals which detract from the unlit environments of the Parish will not be supported. New lighting will be required to conform to the highest standard of light pollution restrictions in force at the time. Security and other outside lighting on private and public premises will be restricted or regulated to be neighbourly in its use including floodlighting at equine establishments and on sports fields or sports grounds.



Figure 2 External light impact 9.00pm 17 Jan 2026



Figure 3 External light impact 2.23am 8 April 2026

31. The extent of the light pollution from the development is shown in the photographs above both of which were taken from my property looking along the western site boundary.
32. Taking these adverse impacts together, the effect of the proposal on local heritage assets is also materially different. In his consultation response on the approved scheme the conservation officer considered the impact of the approved scheme to be 'neutral' in respect of the settings of the listed buildings. Given the greater visual impact, uncontrolled external lighting and potential for additional noise in the local environment this assessment must be reconsidered.
33. The existing permission was granted on the basis that the scheme could deliver at least a 10% biodiversity net gain. This was to be achieved through native hedgerow planting and 8 native trees. In fact, the applicant has used extensive non-native prunus and pittosporum species. This prioritises fast growth over biodiversity, which the recent consultation response from the council's ecology officer fails to acknowledge. The applicant says that no statutory biodiversity net gain condition can be attached to retrospective applications. However, Policy ENV DM5 of the ALP requires that:

Development schemes shall, in the first instance, seek to achieve a net gain in biodiversity and protect existing habitats on site. They shall also however incorporate elements of biodiversity including green walls, roofs, bat and bird boxes as well as landscape features minimising adverse impacts on existing habitats (whether designated or not). Development schemes shall also be appropriately designed to facilitate the emergence of new habitats through the creation of links between habitat areas and open spaces.

34. The new proposal does not demonstrate how it satisfies this policy requirement. It utilises unsuitable species for screening and does not include any elements to encourage wildlife or promote biodiversity as required. More importantly, the introduction of features such as outdoor saunas, cinema screens and uncontrolled external lighting is likely to have an adverse effect by disturbing wildlife and habitat both on site and on adjacent land, for which no justification can be provided.

Intentional Unauthorised Development

35. The council will be aware that intentionally carrying out development in the knowledge that it is unauthorised can be a material consideration in the planning balance. This is reinforced in the consultation draft version of the new National Planning Policy Framework, which states that ‘substantial weight’ may be given against the grant of planning consent in such circumstances.³ Here, the breaches are clearly intentional. They required decisions (for example, selecting and ordering the accommodation structures) that cannot realistically have happened by mistake or misunderstanding.

Conclusion

36. In granting consent for the approved scheme, the planning balance was struck on the basis of a modest development with very low impact on the character and environment of the area. As it turns out the approved scheme was not enough to satisfy the applicant’s commercial aspirations, as they must have known when the application was made.

37. The ‘as built’ development which they now seek to regularise is a significant intensification that harms the environment, ignores policies designed to protect unique features of the area and compromises the very rural character which it seeks to exploit.

38. The council should give little weight to representations about the operation’s commercial benefits. Those comments (including from the council’s own economic development unit) do not address the issues for determination which is not whether glamping can continue on this site, but whether a significantly more harmful form of operation should be permitted. There is no economic or other justification for that outcome. Refusal of this application would not prevent the site operating successfully in accordance with the existing consent.

39. I urge the Council to refuse this retrospective application and require the removal of the unauthorised ancillary structures and lighting to restore the site to its originally approved, low-impact operation.

³ National Planning Policy Consultation Draft Policy DM8 December 2025

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To:
Subject:
Attachments:

Elaine Walby on behalf of Planning.Responses
30 April 2026 13:00
Planning Scanning
FW: WA/20/26/PL
Letter of Representation on behalf of Mr Clive Smith(Binsted) FINAL.docx

PL- Rep

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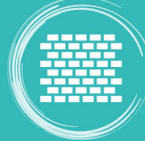
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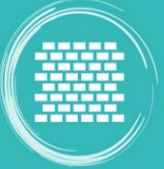
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From: cliveblackhorse Smith [REDACTED]
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To: Planning <Planning@arun.gov.uk>
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