

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 29 June 2026 11:59
To: Planning
Subject: Hammond Ground 3/2026/0356

⚠ External Email

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I strongly object to the above development.

The infrastructure cannot cope with any more houses.

It is so difficult to travel on the main roads to Whalley/ Great Harwood/ Padiham particularly at peak times.

Difficult to get early doctors appointments etc.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]
Sent from my iPad

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 29 June 2026 12:36
To: Planning
Subject: Planning Application 3/2026/0356 Land at Hammond Ground

⚠ External Email

This email originated from outside Ribble Valley Borough Council. Do **NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and are sure the content within this email is safe.

Dear Ms Hayes

I would like to object to the proposed development of 77 houses on Hammond Ground in the strongest possible terms. This is now the fifth attempt by the landowners to build a housing estate on this beautiful historic parkland. The first in the early 1970s was withdrawn due to the historic nature of the land. There were two applications in 2016 to build 50 units, both rejected by RVBC. Then in 2018 the Planning Inspector dismissed an Appeal by the landowners against the second rejection.

The 2018 Appeal Decision

The importance of Appeal decision cannot be expressed strongly enough. The development proposed at that time was very similar to this one although for significantly fewer houses. There was public access to Hammond Ground via a footpath around the outside of properties. The access was actually better as that footpath ran onto George Lane negating the need for pedestrians to access the site from Whalley Road close to a busy junction. I sat in the Council Chamber throughout the Appeal Hearing listening to the experts and barristers on each side arguing about whether this was 'parkland'. I also watched the Inspector visit the site and walk around the village and the rest of Read Park to help him make his decision.

The Appeal was dismissed. This was in spite of the fact that the Council could not demonstrate a 'five year supply' at that time and the 'tilted balance' applied. The parkland debate was settled. In his report the Inspector says at paragraph 35 '*Consequently, the proposed development, through the loss of parkland would give rise to substantial harm to the character and appearance of the countryside and the setting of the village*'.

The current development is for more than 50% more houses. There is a proposal for some form of 'urban park' but the integrity the historic parkland and countryside would be lost forever.

Heritage and Parkland

There have been several Heritage reports written about this piece of land so I was very interested to see what Tetra Tech had to say in their Built Heritage Statement (BHS). Sadly for the developers this report is littered with inaccuracies and false assumptions, to such an extent that its conclusions must be considered unreliable.

The first inaccuracy is in the historic maps where the site is shown in the wrong place. This is most obvious in the Hennet Map of 1828 (Appendix A, Figure 6) where the site is shown adjacent to a road that is actually Straits Lane. The clue is the road to the north which is Whins Lane and has a

distinctive bend at Houlikers Farmhouse the oldest house in the village. The site marked in red actually corresponds with an area around the current primary school several hundred yards to the east of Hammond Ground. George Lane did not exist at that time, just the estate wall which now forms part of the garden wall of some of the houses on that Lane - a fact that the Inspector accepted in 2018. This means the statement in paragraph 3.9 of the BHS that the map showed no planting in the Hammond Ground area is clearly incorrect. The earlier 1818 Greenwood map (Appendix A, Figure 5) is of a lower quality but the site is also labelled incorrectly. This time the clue, as well as the shape of Whins Lane and proximity to Straits Lane, is the lane running north to New Hall, another very old property again well to the east of Hammond Ground. The author does say these are approximate locations but then using incorrect information to make assertions about the historical place of Hammond Ground within Read Park is inexcusable. This occurs again and again at paragraph 3.17 and 5.38.

Something new I read in the BHS is the assertion that Clough Syke was deliberately planted between 1830 and 1848 to shield Read Hall from the industrial activities further east. Unsurprisingly, this argument hasn't been raised in the many expert reports submitted as part of previous applications. It starts off at paragraph 3.10 as a suggestion (based on weak evidence from the early incorrectly annotated maps) but by the time it reaches The Planning Statement it is almost presented as a fact (para 7.9) suggesting a separation between Hammond Ground and the rest of the estate. In reality, Clough Syke follows a natural watercourse dammed at some stage to form the lake and waterfall in Read Hall gardens. It is far more likely that the vegetation grew up around the source of water and were incorporated into the natural design of the park in the early nineteenth century. There are footpaths, clearly shown on the 1955/6 OS map (figure 11) and sales particulars (figures 9&10) in the BHS appendix A, that run through Stanley's to the north west corner of Hammond Ground so visitors to the gardens could enjoy the wider parkland estate. These paths still exist today but are conveniently ignored by the author of the BHS.

In paragraph 5.11 of the BHS, 1896 Sales Particulars shown in plate 6 are referenced. The title given to Hammond Ground in those sales particulars '*A Valuable Enclosure of Parkland*' is conveniently ignored. In addition there is a convenient typo. Instead of saying '*an excellent site for a complete residential property*' they quote '*an excellent site for complete residential property*' omitting the 'a' and somehow implying that in 1896 there was proposal for a housing estate when in fact it was a single residence that was being suggested (but never realised as the land remained within the estate).

The Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (DBA) also prepared by Tetra Tech clearly states in its Executive Summary that the site lies within the former Read Park. It also highlights at paragraph 3.2 that the site is included in the Historic Landscape Character as *Ancient and Post-Medieval Ornamental* a very rare HLC type covering just 0.5% of Lancashire. How on earth can anyone justify building houses on that!

Although Hammond Ground is consistently described as parkland in many of the reports in this application, the developers try to distance and separate it from the rest of Read Park. For villagers this seems very odd knowing that estate wall runs along Hammond Drive and down George Lane. The Planning Statement (paragraphs 7.74/5) doesn't like these hard edges wanting instead to soften them with a new housing estate.

At paragraph 7.101 of the Planning Statement the developers pluck a rabbit out of a hat and state that the BHS confirms Hammond Ground is not parkland. This statement attempts to refute a decision reached at a Planning Hearing by HM Inspector following many hours of debate and a comprehensive site inspection. I have also seen the full deed plans of Read Hall where the site is clearly included and

labelled Hammond Ground Read Park (I believe the owner of Read Hall has made these available). The heritage evidence shows a complete lack of understanding of the 'picturesque' movement of the early nineteenth century where great houses were surrounded by formal gardens with natural parkland beyond. The importance of the picturesque movement in explaining the history was eloquently explained in Carl Taylor's report and evidence for the Appeal Hearing.

The inaccuracies and unsubstantiated assumptions presented in the BHS are used to try to refute the clear findings at paragraph 16 of the Appeal Decision in 2018 where the Inspector accepted the historical evidence that Hammond Ground was parkland, part of the Read Hall estate with the significant stone boundary to the estate along George Lane and Hammond Drive.

As a final point on heritage there is the Battle of Read Old Bridge, when in April 1643, a small force of Parliamentarians repelled a much larger royalist army., a turning point in the Civil War in Lancashire. Contemporary accounts locate the battle close to the Hall with local tradition and 19th-century records suggesting that Hammond Ground served as a burial site for soldiers who died. Whilst modern commentators debate about the number of casualties, this is a legend passed down through the families of Read for nearly 400 years and part of our village's rich heritage. This gets a bare paragraph (4.30) in the Archaeological DBS and is dismissed on the evidence of an amateur historian in the 1940's and the suggestion that any remains would be in the North West corner of the site which isn't being developed at this time.

Properties on George Lane and Visual Amenity

Both the BHS and the Archaeological DBA describe the houses on George Lane as backing on to Hammond Ground and fronting on to George Lane. The Landscape and Visual Appraisal takes this further saying at paragraphs 5.52 and 5.55 that the development is unlikely to be visible from the principal rooms of the properties. This is incorrect. The houses on George Lane up to number 34 that were built between the 1920s and 1950s were all built back to front with their principal rooms facing Hammond Ground and their 'service areas' such as kitchens, bathrooms and washing lines facing the road. My understanding is that this was a requirement placed on them when the land was sold out of the estate so that the 'service areas' didn't spoil the view from the park and some of the properties have requirements written into their deeds. The distance between the houses and their boundary with Hammond Ground is also quite short in most cases.

This makes the properties on George Lane particularly vulnerable to housing development on Hammond Ground. The developers say that the land slopes down but [REDACTED] property that slope is very slight and we are going to have a large 5 bedroom house in front of the window of every room in our house except the bathroom, hall and landing.

The Design and Access Statement says that this is a mixed development but there are some issues with this. The inclusion of two and a half storey properties is totally out of keeping with the character of the village (and also against the recommendation at paragraph 5.58 of the BHS for a maximum of two storeys). There are no properties of this type in Read. Looking at their floor plans in the House Type Booklet they clearly have three full sized storeys. Also the 4 bed house concerned, 'the Crofton', has a large study on the first floor. At the Hillside development in Rossendale, 'the Churchill' has near identical floor plans but is sold as a 5 bed, the study now the extra bedroom. This begs the question 'why do we have 5 bedroom properties masquerading as 4 bedroom ones?' in this proposal.

Public Open Space

The Design and Access Statement and the Planning Statement propose that a substantial proportion of the land is retained as public open space with footpaths/cycleways and park benches. There are pages and pages of planting proposals. However, the application is very thin on the ground on how this space might be managed. In fact the only mention of a management company made up of future residents of the new development is in the Statement of Community Involvement in response to concerns raised by villagers. This is a very large and complex site to be managed in this way. I would also be very suspicious of promises not to develop the rest of the site in the future given the plans that were put forward for 120 houses in the Pre application Inquiry and the layouts accidentally included at page 28 of the 'Phase 1' Geo-Environmental and Coal Mining Risk Assessment (removed after the applicants realised some residents had spotted it) and page 5 of the Minerals Resource Assessment.

Read village has many very pleasant circular walks along country lanes and public footpaths through well managed farmland. When the farmer, who has farmed Hammond Ground for many years, heard about the proposals the first thing he said was that if you take the animals off that land it will never look the same. The pastoral landscape with cattle grazed trees is absolutely unique. You cannot recreate it with fake planting. All these new plants, trees and hedges would need considerable maintenance. There are no rubbish bins or dog bins in the layout and no public parking for visitors who might choose to bring their cars. It is a poorly thought out scheme.

[REDACTED] miles from the site which has open access gardens and woodland. I was walking there with my [REDACTED] a few months ago shortly after a group of youths on e-bikes wearing black balaclavas had completely wrecked the front lawns leaving deep tyre tracks. The house was closed but we talked to a lady walking her dog who had tried to call the police. She had felt very threatened. This is nothing new. Already this year at that site there have been benches vandalised, wild camping and people attempting to light barbecues on the lawn. This is the sort of thing the new residents will have to deal with.

Other issues of concern

There is great concern in the village about the volume of traffic that flows along Whalley Road, the main route from all the new housing in the Ribble Valley to the M65/M66 and Manchester. The traffic modelling contained in the Transport Statement needs checking and the entrance design makes no sense as there is not room to add an extra lane without removing parts of the wall and hedgerow which they say they are not going to do.

Another grave concern is the lack of medical services in the village. With waiting times to get a doctor's appointment rising all the time, the pressure on Whalley Surgery is significant. It is not surprising that the NHS has required a maximum contribution prior to any building commencing. Local people just see longer waits!

Residents on George Lane and Whalley Road are also acutely aware of the flood risk associated with any development of Hammond Ground. The land absorbs a huge amount of water during heavy rainfall but water still pours down George Lane and pools on Whalley Road. This is even worse if there is then a freeze as the junction at the bottom of George Lane becomes even more dangerous. The owner of the farm on the other side of Whalley Road reports that United Utilities have to visit regularly to deal with overflowing drains and sewers.

Conclusion

In 2021 when an application was made by the Trustees of Hammond Ground to build a house between 34 and 40 George Lane (3/2021/0011) the Delegated Report by the Planning Officer Adam Birkett commented that the plot in question was not part of Hammond Ground. In recommending approval for that development he said that it would '*complete the ribbon of development along George Lane enabling a continuous definitive boundary between the dwellings on George Lane and Hammond Ground **ensuring protection of this landscape for future generations***'.

This current application will tear that beautiful parkland landscape apart adding 77 houses and an artificial park with footpaths/cycleways and park benches totally out of keeping in a rural area and totally unmanageable for future residents. I object to this application in the strongest possible terms.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPad

[REDACTED]

From: Contact Centre (CRM) <contact@ribblevalley.gov.uk>
Sent: 29 June 2026 12:49
To: Planning
Subject: Planning Application Comments - 38441 FS-Case-852024541

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Lancashire

[REDACTED]

Planning Application Reference No.: 38441

Address of Development: Hammond ground

Comments: I object to any further development on or around Hammond Ground Read.
The road through the village is at present a very busy road and new houses with multiple vehicles will only make this road almost impossible to cross with the current pedestrian crossing. Take walk round the proposed site and you will see a pleasant and peaceful parkland environment. This is well worth saving for future generations.

Your [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 29 June 2026 13:29
To: Planning
Subject: Re: Objection to the Proposed Development of 77 Dwellings at Hammond Ground, Read

⚠ External Email

This email originated from outside Ribble Valley Borough Council. Do **NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and are sure the content within this email is safe.

To the Planning Officer,

Re: Objection to the Proposed Development of 77 Dwellings at Hammond Ground, Read

I write to register my strongest possible objection to the proposed development of 77 houses on agricultural land at Hammond Ground, Read.

This proposal represents an unacceptable and unnecessary expansion into open countryside that would permanently alter the character of the village and the gateway to the Ribble Valley.

It is particularly concerning that a previous proposal for 50 houses on this site was rejected following appeal by the Secretary of State's Planning Inspector. If a development of 50 dwellings was considered unacceptable, it is difficult to understand how an even larger scheme for 77 dwellings can now be considered appropriate.

Hammond Ground is productive agricultural land currently used for grazing sheep and cattle. It is not derelict or redundant land but an important part of the rural landscape that defines the setting of Read. This open countryside provides one of the first impressions of the Ribble Valley and contributes significantly to the area's distinctive rural character. Once lost to development, this landscape cannot be restored.

While the application presents areas of open space and parkland, I am concerned that these features could simply represent the first phase of a much larger development. Land ownership and survey information suggest the potential for future expansion across the remaining fields. I therefore question whether the proposed open space genuinely represents a permanent landscape buffer or whether it could become the basis for future planning applications. The Local Planning Authority should carefully consider the cumulative and long-term implications of permitting development on this site.

The transport implications alone should warrant refusal. Whalley Road is the principal single-carriageway route into and out of the Ribble Valley and serves as the main access to Junction 8 of the M65. It already experiences severe congestion throughout the day from commuter traffic, heavy goods vehicles and local journeys. Additional traffic generated by 77 new homes would inevitably worsen an already overstretched road network.

Residents are also aware of a number of road traffic accidents that have occurred along this stretch of Whalley Road in recent times, highlighting existing concerns about road safety. Increasing the volume of traffic on an already congested and heavily used route can only increase the risk of further incidents and place additional pressure on the emergency services and highway network.

Even using conservative assumptions, this development is likely to introduce at least two additional vehicles per household, meaning well over 150 extra cars associated with the site. This would increase congestion,

journey times, vehicle emissions and road safety concerns on a highway that already struggles to cope with existing traffic volumes.

The proposal also fails to address the lack of supporting infrastructure. The two local schools are already operating at capacity, leaving little or no room for additional pupils. There are no GP or dental practices within Read itself, and neighbouring medical and dental services are already under significant pressure. Approving substantial housing growth without corresponding investment in education and healthcare infrastructure would place an unacceptable burden on existing residents and public services.

Beyond these practical concerns, Hammond Ground has important historical significance. The land has long-standing associations with Read Hall and forms part of the historic landscape connected with the Lancashire Witch Trials. These historic links contribute to the cultural identity of the village and should be afforded significant weight when assessing the proposal. Development would erode not only the physical landscape but also the historical setting that makes Read unique.

The proposal would result in the irreversible loss of valuable agricultural land, harm the rural setting of the village, increase traffic congestion on an already overloaded highway, place additional pressure on schools and healthcare services, and undermine the historic and landscape character of Read.

For all of these reasons, I respectfully urge the Council to refuse planning permission. The planning system exists to protect communities from inappropriate development and to ensure that growth occurs only where it is sustainable and supported by adequate infrastructure. This proposal fails those tests.

I ask that the Local Planning Authority gives full weight to the Planning Inspector's previous conclusions regarding this site, recognises the cumulative harm that this larger proposal would cause, and refuses this application in order to protect the character, heritage and future of Read and the wider Ribble Valley.

Yours faithfully,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]

[REDACTED]

From: Contact Centre (CRM) <contact@ribblevalley.gov.uk>
Sent: 29 June 2026 13:38
To: Planning
Subject: Planning Application Comments - 3/2026/0356 FS-Case-852043398

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Lancashire

[REDACTED]

Planning Application Reference No.: 3/2026/0356

Address of Development: Hammond Ground

Comments: Given an application for far fewer properties was rejected by the inspectorate, I can't see how RVBC can seriously consider the current application. And given new evidence that has come to light to suggest this is only the first phase, then an approval would open the flood gates for future development and 77 is already 77 too many in my view.

The local areas facilities are already over stretched by indiscriminent developments in nearby villages and towns, so we are already in a situation of lack of schools places, doctors, etc and certainly don't need to add to the burden.

We are not sure whether Hammond Ground is a burial site relating to the battle of old read bridge, but for as long as I've ever lived in read, Hammond Ground has always been considered to be of historic value and is part of the identity of the village and should not be built on, ever.

The main road through Read is already a carpark in a morning and night and does not need to be further restricted by another junction to serve this site, as it will only add to delays for people travelling to school, work, etc.

The inspectorate previously concluded, that any development would cause harm th the character and appearance of the countryside, so surely a larger development is even worse and as I said, we do know they plan to ultimately develop the whole of Hammond Ground and if allowed, where will it stop !!

So I strongly object to this application.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 29 June 2026 13:51
To: Planning
Subject: REF: 3/2026/0356 Objection to Planning for Hammond Ground

 External Email

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REF: 3/2026/0356
Objection to Planning for Hammond Ground
From [REDACTED]

Dear Ribble Valley Council Planning Department,

I am writing to formally register a strong objection to the anticipated planning application for approximately 77 houses at Hammond Ground in Read.

This site is not simply another parcel of undeveloped land. Hammond Ground forms a key part of the landscape setting and identity of Read village, contributing significantly to the open, rural character of the area and to valued views across the surrounding countryside. It also forms part of the historic parkland landscape associated with Read Hall and is linked to local heritage, including the war grave connected to the Battle of Read Bridge in 1642. The cultural and historic significance of this setting should not be underestimated when considering any proposed development.

It is important to note that development on this site has previously been refused and subsequently dismissed on appeal. The fundamental planning concerns cited in that decision remain unchanged. There has been no material alteration to the site that would justify a different conclusion now. Approving development in this location would therefore undermine the credibility and consistency of earlier planning decisions that recognised the sensitivity of this landscape.

While the developer's consultation materials emphasise the inclusion of "public open space", this raises serious questions rather than reassurance. Land described as open space during early proposals is not necessarily protected in perpetuity. Without clear and binding legal safeguards, such areas can later be subject to revised proposals or further development applications. Residents therefore have legitimate concerns that this could represent the first phase of a larger, incremental development, gradually eroding the remaining open landscape.

The potential impact on local roads and daily life must also be considered carefully. A development of this scale will inevitably increase traffic volumes on roads that are already constrained. Construction traffic alone would create disruption for several years, while long-term vehicle movements would place additional pressure on local junctions, access routes and overall road safety. The road is already busy and dangerous with a number of fatalities and accidents over the years. Creating a filter lane for turning traffic will leave vehicles and their passengers like sitting ducks on a busy and dangerous roads with limited traffic calming measures.

Equally concerning is the strain on local infrastructure and services. Schools, healthcare provision and other community facilities are already operating under pressure. There is currently no convincing evidence that the infrastructure required to support such a development will be delivered at a pace or scale sufficient to meet increased demand. [REDACTED] travels on the bus route to and from [REDACTED]. As it stands the bus regularly drives past the village because it has reached maximum capacity and [REDACTED] cannot get to [REDACTED] on time. This will continue to be an issue. The environmental impact on increasing cars travelling through the village will be huge, as many will need cars and means of transport, where demand on public transport is already extremely high.

To be clear, opposition to this proposal should not be interpreted as opposition to new housing in principle. There is an acknowledged need for housing, particularly affordable homes. However, this site represents the wrong development in the wrong place. Hammond Ground is a sensitive edge-of-village landscape of historic and environmental importance, and it has already been judged unsuitable for development through previous planning processes. More appropriate, plan-led locations exist elsewhere within the borough that could accommodate housing growth without causing such irreversible harm to a valued landscape.

Once development begins on land such as this, the character of the village and its surrounding countryside is permanently altered. Decisions taken now will shape the future of Read for generations. For these reasons, I strongly urge the Council to give careful consideration to the wider planning, heritage and community implications and to refuse any application that seeks to develop Hammond Ground.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Contact Centre (CRM) <contact@ribblevalley.gov.uk>
Sent: 29 June 2026 13:57
To: Planning
Subject: Planning Application Comments - 3/2026/0356 FS-Case-852052764

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Lancashire

[REDACTED]

Planning Application Reference No.: 3/2026/0356

Address of Development: Land at Hammond Ground Whalley Rd Read BB12 7RP

Comments: In 2018 the secretary of state Inspector stated that "residential development would adversely affect the Parkland Character and the setting of the village in the countryside". There has been no other change than the owners of the land spending 10 years growing the hedges and not treating the land with respect and allowing it to look overgrown. This would be rectified in a matter of days if the land was allowed to be treated with respect as it should. The infrastructure of the roads and village could not cope with a large residential site being built, because let's face it this is the tip of the iceberg moving on to a much bigger estate. Because of the large scale building within Clitheroe and Whalley area the roads have huge tailbacks at peak times, no consideration is being given to the people who live in Read and Simonstone. If this was to go ahead the Ribble Valley Council should be embarrassed and hang their heads in shame, because they would have just allowed greed to cloud their judgment.

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 29 June 2026 14:01
To: Planning
Subject: Planning application reference 3/2026/0356

⚠ External Email

This email originated from outside Ribble Valley Borough Council. Do **NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and are sure the content within this email is safe.

To whom it may concern,

I wish to formally object to planning application number 3/2026/0356 for the proposed residential development of 77 dwelling at Hammond Ground, Read.

My objection is based on the following:

1. Harm to the character & appearance of the countryside.

Hammond Ground forms an important area of open countryside and historic parkland which contributes significantly to the rural setting and character of Read. Development of houses here would result in the loss of this beautiful open landscape & turn it into substantial urban area, which would damage the character of this village.

2. Previous Planning decisions

Previous attempts to build here have been rejected. The Planning inspector acknowledged in 2018 that a development would significantly harm the area.

The current proposal is even bigger than the one rejected and would therefore cause even more harm to this historic landscape.

We feel the previous Planning Inspector comments should stand.

3. Impact on Heritage Assets & Historic Landscape

Hammond Ground forms part of historic landscape setting associated with Read Hall & contributes to the heritage of the area.

This impact should be carefully considered against any supposedly public benefits.

4. Pressure on Local Infrastructure

This proposed development would impact on:

- The local roads network and highway safety- the main road through Read is already extremely busy making it difficult to cross the road (only 1 crossing in both Read & Simonstone). It takes several minutes in a morning to gain access to the main road from our home on Fountains Avenue.
- Primary and secondary school capacities.
- GP & healthcare services
- Drainage and surface water systems - already regular problem in the area

5. Impact on Biodiversity & Green Space

This site provides habitat and ecological value within an important green corridor around the village. Further development would impact on losing this rural space.

I kindly ask that you consider all the comments above and the impact it would have on the immediate and surrounding areas.

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 29 June 2026 14:06
To: Planning
Subject: Ref 3/2026/0356

⚠ External Email

This email originated from outside Ribble Valley Borough Council. Do **NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and are sure the content within this email is safe.

To: Ribble Valley Borough Council Planning Department

Re: Strong Objection to the Proposed Development of 77 Dwellings at Hammond Ground, Read (Ref 3/2026/0356)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to register my strongest objection to the proposed development of 77 dwellings at Hammond Ground, Read.

This application should be refused because it conflicts with the principles of sustainable development set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and fails to protect the landscape, heritage, infrastructure and character of Read as required by the Ribble Valley Local Plan.

Previous Planning Decisions

A key consideration is that a previous proposal for 50 dwellings on this site was dismissed on appeal by the Secretary of State's Planning Inspector. That decision concluded that development of this site would cause unacceptable planning harm.

It is therefore difficult to see how a significantly larger proposal for 77 dwellings could now be regarded as acceptable unless there has been a fundamental change in planning circumstances. To approve an application that is over 50% larger than the one previously dismissed would undermine confidence in the planning process and ignore the conclusions already reached following independent examination.

Loss of Agricultural Land and Harm to the Landscape

Hammond Ground is productive agricultural land used for grazing sheep and cattle. It forms part of the open countryside that creates the distinctive rural setting of Read and acts as one of the principal gateways into the Ribble Valley.

The NPPF recognises that planning decisions should protect and enhance valued landscapes and should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Likewise, the Ribble Valley Local Plan seeks to safeguard the borough's rural landscape from inappropriate development.

The permanent loss of this open farmland would fundamentally alter the entrance to the village and erode the character that makes Read and the Ribble Valley distinctive. This harm cannot be adequately mitigated by landscaping proposals.

Concerns Regarding Future Expansion

The application promotes areas of open space and parkland as a public benefit. However, I have serious concerns that these areas may simply represent undeveloped land reserved for future phases of housing.

Information relating to land ownership and surveys suggests the possibility of future expansion across adjoining fields. Whether or not this forms part of the current application, the Council should consider the cumulative implications of establishing residential development on this site, as approval would inevitably increase pressure for further encroachment into the surrounding countryside.

The proposed parkland should therefore be treated with caution rather than accepted at face value as a permanent landscape feature.

Unsustainable Highway Impacts

Whalley Road is the principal single-carriageway route into and out of the Ribble Valley and provides the main connection to Junction 8 of the M65.

It is already heavily congested throughout the day due to commuter traffic, commercial vehicles and local journeys. Residents experience regular delays and increasing traffic volumes.

A development of 77 dwellings is likely to generate well in excess of 150 additional vehicles, based on typical household car ownership. This would inevitably increase congestion, delay, noise and emissions while placing additional pressure on an already constrained highway network.

The NPPF requires that development should only be approved where the residual cumulative impacts on the road network are not severe. In my view, this proposal fails that test.

Inadequate Local Infrastructure

The proposal is unsupported by the infrastructure necessary to accommodate additional residents.

The two local schools are already operating at capacity.

There are no GP or dental surgeries within Read, and neighbouring practices serving the area are already under considerable pressure.

Approving substantial housing growth without corresponding investment in education and healthcare would place an unacceptable burden on existing public services and diminish the quality of life for both current and future residents.

This is inconsistent with the objective of achieving genuinely sustainable development.

Heritage Significance

The site forms part of the historic landscape associated with Read Hall and has recognised links with the Lancashire Witch Trials.

The setting of historic assets extends beyond individual buildings and includes the surrounding landscape that contributes to their significance.

The loss of this historic agricultural setting would diminish the heritage value of the area and erode an important part of Read's identity.

Character of Read

Read has developed as a rural village with a distinctive relationship between its historic buildings, open farmland and surrounding countryside.

This proposal would urbanise one of the village's most prominent approaches, replacing open fields with estate housing and permanently altering the landscape character that residents and visitors value.

Once this countryside is lost, it cannot be recreated.

Conclusion

This proposal would:

- Conflict with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework relating to sustainable development, protection of the countryside, heritage and landscape.
- Conflict with policies within the Ribble Valley Local Plan that seek to protect the borough's rural character and ensure development is supported by adequate infrastructure.
- Result in the irreversible loss of productive agricultural land.
- Harm the gateway into the Ribble Valley and the character of Read.
- Place unacceptable additional pressure on Whalley Road and the wider highway network.
- Exacerbate existing shortages in school places and healthcare provision.
- Harm the historic landscape associated with Read Hall and the Lancashire Witch Trials.
- Create a precedent for further expansion into adjoining agricultural land.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that Ribble Valley Borough Council refuses planning permission for this application.

The Planning Inspector has already concluded that a substantially smaller development on this site was unacceptable. There is no planning justification for approving a significantly larger proposal that would cause even greater harm.

I urge the Council to protect this important agricultural landscape for future generations and uphold both local and national planning policy by refusing this application.

Yours faithfully,

██████████