

Queenborough, London Road, St. Ippolyts, Hertfordshire, SG4 7NL

5 January 2026

North Herts District Council
PO Box 10613
Nottingham
NG6 6DS

By email to: anne.mcdonald@north-herts.gov.uk

For the attention of Anne McDonald

Dear Mr Hunter

Objection to Planning Application 25/02885/OP – Land at Mill Lane / London Road, St Ippolyts

I strongly object to planning application **25/02885/OP**, which seeks outline permission for up to 41 dwellings on land at Mill Lane / London Road, St Ippolyts. The proposal conflicts with the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031, fails to meet key material planning considerations, and would cause **significant and irreversible harm** to the village, its Green Belt setting, and the wider ecological network.

Summary of Key Objections

- Conflict with Local Plan policies (SP1, SP2, SP5, NE1, NE3, NE7, T1, HS2)
- Highway safety and traffic impact
- Inadequate infrastructure and services
- Environmental and ecological harm
- Flood risk and drainage concerns
- Impact on heritage, landscape and rural character
- **Severe cumulative impact of three concurrent developments (Mill Lane, Pound Farm, Waterdell Lane) on Green Belt habitat and village sustainability**
- Reference: Relevant appeal decisions

1. Cumulative Impact of Three Current Developments on Green Belt Habitat

This application **cannot** be assessed in isolation. It forms part of a **cluster of three major developments**—Mill Lane, Pound Farm and Waterdell Lane—proposed within a small geographic area of St Ippolyts. Individually, each scheme is harmful; **together, they represent a profound and unacceptable erosion of Green Belt land, biodiversity, and rural character.**

Across these three sites, large areas of open countryside and semi-natural habitat would be lost simultaneously. The combined effect includes:

- **Fragmentation of continuous Green Belt habitat**, severing wildlife corridors that currently link hedgerows, woodland edges and foraging grounds.
- **Compounded ecological loss**, as each development removes different habitat types that collectively support a wider range of species.
- **Accelerated decline in local biodiversity**, at a time when national indicators already show the UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world.
- **Cumulative urbanisation of the village edge**, fundamentally altering the landscape setting and undermining the purposes of the Green Belt.

The Local Plan requires decision-makers to consider cumulative effects. When viewed together, these three developments would **overwhelm local infrastructure, intensify traffic, and create an unsustainable pattern of dispersed, car-dependent growth** that is wholly contrary to plan-led development.

2. Conflict with Local Plan Policies

SP1 – Sustainable Development: The proposal is car-dependent, remote from services, and fails to minimise environmental harm.

SP2 – Settlement Hierarchy: St Ippolyts is a Category A village with limited capacity for growth. Forty-one dwellings represent disproportionate expansion.

SP5 – Countryside and Green Belt: The site contributes to the openness and rural character of the Green Belt. Development would erode this essential function.

NE1 – Landscape and Green Infrastructure: The proposal would cause irreversible harm to the rural landscape and disrupt established green corridors.

NE3 – Biodiversity: There is no robust ecological assessment or credible mitigation strategy. Habitat loss for protected and priority species is inevitable.

NE7 – Water Environment: No comprehensive drainage strategy has been provided, increasing flood risk.

T1 – Sustainable Transport: There are no viable public transport options; the development would increase reliance on private cars.

HS2 – Affordable Housing: There is no clear commitment to delivering genuinely affordable homes that meet local need.

3. Highway Safety and Traffic Impact

Mill Lane and surrounding rural lanes are narrow, constrained and already under pressure. Traffic from 41 additional dwellings—**on top of the traffic generated by Pound Farm and Waterdell Lane**—will worsen congestion, increase pollution and heighten risks for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.

4. Inadequate Infrastructure and Services

Local schools, healthcare facilities and utilities are already at capacity. No credible mitigation is proposed. The combined impact of three developments will significantly overburden existing services and increase car journeys to access essential facilities.

5. Environmental and Ecological Harm

The site forms part of a wider **green corridor** that supports local biodiversity. Development would fragment habitats, reduce ecological connectivity and harm species already under pressure.

National context underscores the seriousness of this loss:

- The UK retains only **53% of its original biodiversity**, far below the global average of 75% and well below the 90% “safe limit”.
- The UK ranks in the **bottom 10% of 240 nations** for biodiversity intactness and last among G7 countries.
- The **State of Nature Report (2023)** confirms that **one in six UK species is threatened with extinction**, and 95 species have already disappeared.

In this context, the cumulative destruction of Green Belt habitat across three adjacent sites is indefensible.

6. Flood Risk and Drainage Concerns

The area already suffers from surface water issues. Additional impermeable surfaces without a robust drainage strategy will increase flood risk for existing properties.

7. Heritage, Landscape and Rural Character

St Ippolyts is a historic village with a distinctive rural identity. The scale and density of this proposal would erode the village’s character and introduce visual intrusion into open countryside. When combined with the other two developments, the cumulative landscape impact becomes severe. It would also surround the existing Sloe Hill nursing home, and would cause severe psychological distress to the residents, whilst being built and when complete.

8. Relevant Appeal Decisions

- APP/P1805/W/24/3352558 – Sunny Bank Farm, Worcestershire (April 2025)
- APP/J0405/W/24/3351388 – Land North of A413, Padbury, Buckinghamshire (March 2025)
- APP/D3830/W/23/3319542 – Land south of Henfield Road, Albourne (October 2023)

Conclusion

This proposal is unsustainable, contrary to multiple Local Plan policies and fails to address key material planning considerations. When assessed cumulatively with the Pound Farm and Waterdell Lane developments, it would cause **major and irreversible loss of Green Belt habitat**, harm biodiversity, overload infrastructure and permanently alter the character of St Ippolyts.

For these reasons, I urge NHDC to **refuse** this application. Yours sincerely,

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JASON ELSE

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