

Objection: Excessive Massing of Plot 23 – Adjacent to Green Belt, with Foundations Prematurely Constructed

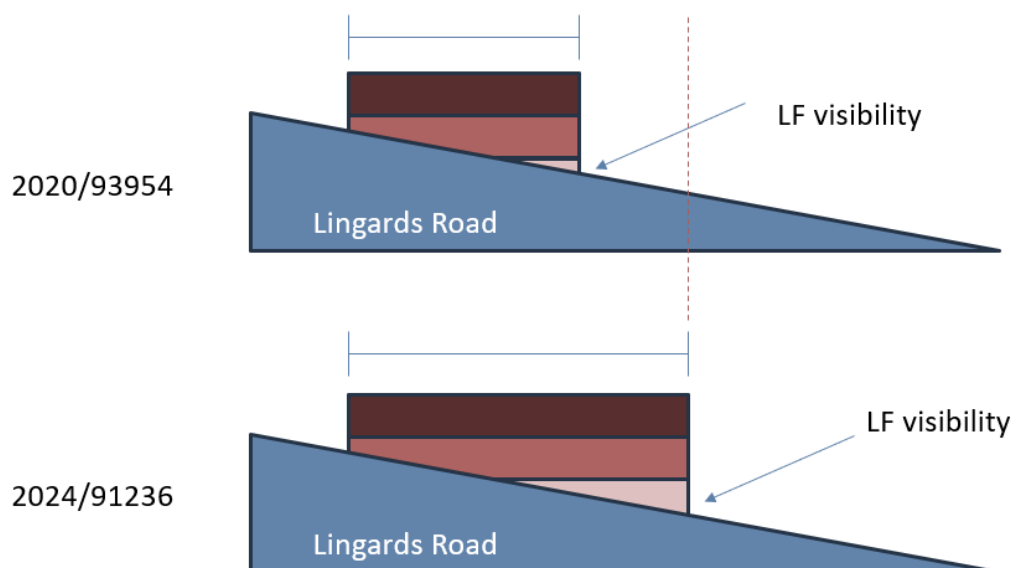
Planning application **2024/91236** proposes a dwelling at **Plot 23**, located at the **highest and most visually exposed point** of the site, and **immediately adjacent to open Green Belt land**. The design raises serious concerns about **scale, siting, and landscape impact**, and is already undermined by the fact that **foundations have been constructed in advance of any planning decision**.

This is not simply premature—it could be construed as a **deliberate circumvention of due process**, intended to pressure the Council into retrospective approval and erode the integrity of the planning system.

Plot 23: Overbearing Massing on Elevated Terrain and Green Belt Edge

Plot 23 is the **largest and widest dwelling** in the scheme, positioned at the **top of the site's gradient**, where its visual impact is most pronounced. It lies **directly adjacent to Green Belt land**, which heightens the need for **edge sensitivity, landscape integration, and scale restraint**.

Instead, the design comprises **three storeys**, with the **middle floor at road level** and the **lower floor exposed** due to the slope. Unlike narrower dwellings approved under **2020/93954**, Plot 23 spans a **much broader footprint**, which magnifies the exposure of the lower floor across a wider horizontal plane.



This creates a **false elevation effect**, where the building appears taller and bulkier than its nominal height, especially when viewed from uphill, across the valley, or from surrounding public vantage points—including the adjacent Green Belt.

Its elevated siting, expansive width, and proximity to protected land result in a **dominant and intrusive presence**, out of keeping with the surrounding built form and harmful to the character of the area.

Premature Construction – Foundations Already Built

Most concerning is the fact that **foundations for Plot 23 have already been constructed**, despite the application being **months away from determination**. This could be seen as an attempt to:

- **Pre-empt the planning process**
- **Pressure officers and members into retrospective approval**
- **Undermine public consultation and scrutiny**

Such actions could be construed as showing **disregard for planning control**, and risk setting a precedent where developers build first and seek permission later.

The Council must not reward procedural defiance with retrospective consent. Doing so would erode public trust and weaken the authority's ability to enforce compliance—especially in sensitive locations bordering the Green Belt.

Policy Conflicts

The proposal conflicts with key planning policies:

- **LP24(a)** – Requires development to respect and enhance the character of the landscape and townscape.
- **LP31** – Strategic Green Infrastructure: Demands sensitive treatment of edges and protection of landscape connectivity.
- **Housebuilders Design Guide SPD (2021)** – Emphasises working with topography, avoiding excessive massing on elevated sites, and respecting boundaries with open countryside and Green Belt land.

Conclusion

Plot 23 represents a **design failure** at the most sensitive point of the site. Its excessive massing, elevated siting, proximity to Green Belt land, and premature construction combine to produce **visual harm, policy conflict, and procedural abuse**.

The application should be **refused or substantially revised**, with:

- **Massing and width reduced**
- **Topographic integration improved**
- **Edge sensitivity strengthened**
- **Enforcement action considered** to prevent further unauthorised development