

About the application

Application number: 2025/93572	
What is the application for?:	Outline application with all matters reserved, bar vehicle access into the site,
Address of the site or building:	Land South of, Barnsley Road, Upper Cumberworth, Huddersfield, HD8 8NN
Postcode:	

User comments

Type of comment: An objection	
Do you wish your comments to be published on the website anonymously?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
DESIGN OBJECTION	
<p>The proposed layout for application 2025/93572 represents a fundamentally poor and inappropriate form of urban design that fails to respond sensitively to the site's Green Belt location, adjacent ancient woodland, existing landscape structure, and natural topography. Rather than a landscape-led scheme informed by environmental constraints, the proposal appears to impose a dense suburban housing estate onto a highly sensitive rural site with little genuine regard for its context.</p>	
<p>One of the most serious failings of the proposal is its treatment of the adjacent ancient woodland, Stephens Wood. Ancient woodland is an irreplaceable habitat and should be afforded the highest level of protection. National planning guidance and Natural England standing advice make clear that substantial undeveloped buffers are required to protect ancient woodland from indirect impacts associated with development. In this case, the proposed buffer appears extremely narrow and wholly inadequate for a development of this scale and density.</p>	
<p>A minimum 50 metre buffer should be provided between built development and ancient woodland in order to reduce impacts from noise, lighting, domestic activity, drainage changes, invasive species, and recreational pressure. Instead, the submitted layout pushes roads, rear garden boundaries, and housing parcels directly toward the woodland edge, creating an abrupt and harmful urban interface. The tokenised "semi-natural buffer" shown on the plan is fragmented, inconsistent in width, and clearly designed as leftover space rather than meaningful ecological protection.</p>	
<p>The proposed arrangement would expose Stephens Wood to long-term degradation through increased human activity, fly tipping, garden encroachment, pet predation, and artificial lighting. Rear gardens facing ancient woodland are particularly poor urban design practice because they create unmanaged edges and encourage future pressure for tree removal, fencing alterations, and informal access points into sensitive habitats. The development effectively turns ancient woodland into the back fence of a suburban estate, which is entirely inappropriate.</p>	

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The layout also demonstrates very limited respect for the existing mature trees and landscape structure across the site. The development pattern appears engineered primarily to maximise housing numbers rather than retain and integrate landscape features. Large areas of hardstanding, road infrastructure, and tightly packed housing blocks dominate the site plan, leaving tree planting and green space as secondary afterthoughts. The proposed tree planting cannot compensate for the loss of openness or for the pressure placed upon established vegetation and woodland edges.

Equally concerning is the apparent disregard for the site's natural topography. The land slopes significantly toward the woodland edge, yet the proposed estate adopts a standardised suburban road hierarchy with little evidence that the design has evolved in response to landform.

This creates an overly engineered appearance that would likely require substantial cut-and-fill operations, retaining structures, and ground regrading in order to deliver developable housing platforms. Such interventions would permanently urbanise the landscape and erode the site's rural character.

Good urban design should work with natural contours and reinforce local landscape character. Instead, the proposed layout introduces rigid estate geometry and repetitive housing parcels that could be placed almost anywhere. There is little sense of place or relationship to Upper Cumberworth's historic settlement pattern.

The scheme lacks any meaningful transition between countryside and development, resulting in a harsh suburban edge that would appear visually intrusive when viewed from surrounding public areas and nearby countryside.

The density and arrangement of housing also create concerns regarding overdevelopment. The concentration of built form across the site leaves insufficient space for meaningful green infrastructure, ecological corridors, or visual relief. Open spaces appear fragmented and residual rather than functional landscape assets. This reinforces the impression that environmental considerations have been subordinated to maximising yield.

Overall, the proposal represents a poor quality, generic suburban estate that fails to respect the ecological sensitivity, topography, landscape character, and Green Belt function of the site. The inadequate woodland buffer alone should be grounds for refusal, but taken together with the scheme's wider urban design failings, the proposal clearly conflicts with the principles of sustainable and landscape-led development.