I object to application 2026/91484 insofar as it would reduce and reconfigure the approved Public Open Space (POS), remove the pedestrian pathway through that space, and introduce additional built form into an area previously relied upon as part of the approved landscape, public-realm and ecological strategy for the development.

My objection is not simply that the proposed layout contains less green land. The concern is that the original 2020/93954 permission was justified on the basis of a specific design approach in which the POS, pathway network, retained trees, stream/dry-stone feature and landscape planting formed part of the planning balance that made development of this steep and constrained site acceptable.

The applicant's own original Design and Access Statement recognised that the proposed density had been restricted because of the steepness of the site and the need to provide meaningful green space. The same statement described the public realm proposals, pedestrian routes, recreational spaces, retained stream, tree planting, and POS/walkway areas as part of the overall design, amenity and ecological response to the site.

The approved POS was therefore not surplus land. It was a core part of the approved scheme.

The officer report for 2020/93954 also relied upon the POS as part of the design justification. It described the public open spaces as attractive features which would help break up the mass of development by introducing open landscaped areas during the transition from the built environment to the east and the open countryside to the west. It also referred to the footpaths through the public open space being tree-lined and contributing to a verdant character.

That is important. The proposed 2026 layout appears to reduce the very open landscaped areas that were previously relied upon to soften, break up and assimilate the development into its surroundings.

The pedestrian pathway through the POS was also a material feature of the approved scheme. It was not an optional decorative path. It formed part of the public-realm, movement and permeability strategy. When concerns were previously raised that the footpaths crossing the site "go nowhere", the Council's response was that the footpaths were effective connectors within the site, connected externally to Lingards Road and public rights of way, and would promote walking.

It is therefore inconsistent to now treat the removal of the pathway through the POS as a minor or neutral change. The pathway was previously defended as an effective connector. If the Council is now asked to approve its removal, there should be a clear planning justification explaining why that previously accepted public benefit is no longer required.

The current proposal appears to do the opposite of the original design rationale. Rather than preserving meaningful open space and pedestrian permeability as mitigation for a difficult hillside development, it appears to sacrifice part of that mitigation in order to accommodate further built development.

In my view, the proposal would cause harm in several related ways:

1. **Loss of meaningful POS**

   The approved scheme provided a connected area of public open space with a pathway, retained natural features, tree planting and a clear public-realm function. The revised proposal appears to reduce that space and make it more fragmented and residual.

It is not sufficient simply to show that some green-coloured land remains. The relevant planning question is whether the remaining POS provides equivalent public benefit, usability, openness, landscape value and connectivity. On the submitted comparison, it does not appear to do so.

2. **Loss of pedestrian permeability**

   The removal of the pathway would reduce pedestrian choice and weaken the internal walking network previously relied upon as part of the approved scheme. It would remove a route through the POS which formed part of the development's sustainable movement, healthy placemaking and public-realm strategy.

3. **Loss of landscape mitigation**

   The original POS helped break up the mass of development and soften the transition between built form and the more open/rural edge of the site. Reducing that space and inserting additional built form would increase the sense of density and enclosure, while weakening the landscape-led character of this part of the approved layout.

4. **Harm to the retained tree/dry-stone/stream setting**

   The original scheme presented the retained natural and historic features as a focus for the open-space arrangement. The revised layout appears to compress that setting and reduce the extent to which those features sit within a meaningful public landscape space.

5. **Further intensification of an already constrained site**

   The original 42-dwelling scheme was approved on a site known to be steep, sensitive and constrained. The current proposal seeks additional development while reducing the open-space and pathway features that helped justify the original layout. That risks tipping the balance further towards overdevelopment.

6. **More engineered and less landscape-led character**

   The revised layout appears to introduce a more engineered arrangement, including additional retaining walls, rockery features and harder level-management structures, in place of the softer, more open and landscape-led POS arrangement originally approved. This should not be assessed simply as a numerical reduction in green space. It is a qualitative change in the character and function of the space.

7. **Cumulative erosion of the approved design strategy**

   The issue is not whether one additional dwelling can physically fit. The issue is whether the cumulative changes undermine the approved scheme's open-space, landscape, movement and amenity strategy. The loss of POS area, removal of the pathway, increased built form, altered retaining structures, changed rear relationships and compressed tree setting should be assessed together.

8. **Inadequate updated ecological and landscape assessment**

   The ecological documents submitted in support of the current application appear to rely heavily on material prepared for the earlier 2020/93954 scheme. Those documents do not appear to have been properly updated to assess the actual consequences of the 2026 proposal, including

the additional dwelling, reduced/reconfigured POS, removed pedestrian route, altered garden/open-space balance, changed retaining structures, and changed relationship around retained trees and landscape features.

The submitted Ecological Design Strategy also refers to ecological enhancement measures such as swift boxes, bat boxes and hedgehog access holes. From what is visible on site, I have not seen evidence that these measures have been incorporated into the dwellings or fencing already constructed. I appreciate that some elements may be difficult to see externally, but this further illustrates why the Council should satisfy itself that the ecological mitigation relied upon remains accurate, deliverable and compliant with the approved strategy.

The applicant should therefore be required to submit a proper updated assessment before the application is determined. That assessment should include:

- the approved POS area and the proposed POS area;
- the amount of POS lost in square metres and as a percentage;
- the approved and proposed community open-space provision;
- the approved and proposed domestic garden areas;
- the approved and proposed built land/hardstanding areas;
- whether the remaining POS is genuinely usable, accessible and meaningful;
- the loss of the pathway and its impact on pedestrian permeability;
- the effect on healthy movement and public access through the site;
- the impact on the retained trees, stream/dry-stone feature and landscape setting;
- the changes to retaining walls, rockery and other engineered structures;
- the effect on ecological mitigation and biodiversity assumptions;
- whether previously approved swift boxes, bat boxes and hedgehog access measures have been or will be delivered;
- and whether the revised layout continues to comply with the design, open-space and public-realm principles relied upon when the original permission was granted.

In the absence of this information, the Council cannot safely conclude that the revised proposal would provide equivalent public open-space, landscape, ecological, pedestrian and amenity benefits.

The original permission was not granted on the basis of built development alone. It was granted on the basis of a balanced scheme in which meaningful POS, tree-lined footpaths, retained natural features and public permeability helped mitigate the impact of development on a difficult site. The current proposal appears to remove or weaken those mitigating features while adding further built form.

For these reasons, I object to the application and ask that it be refused unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that the approved POS and pathway functions are fully retained or equivalently replaced.