

5 August 2026

The Planning Inspectorate

Submitted online

Appeal reference: 6012201 **Application:** 24/01208/OUT

Site: Land off Sockburn Lane, Neasham **Proposal:** Five self-build dwellings

Dear Inspector,

OBJECTION TO APPEAL 6012201

Neasham Parish Council arranged an Extraordinary Meeting on 4 August 2026, Neasham Parish Council were unanimous in maintaining its objection against the planning application and asks that the appeal be dismissed. This letter builds on the Council's previous reasons for objection. The numbered points below are matters for the Inspector to consider alongside all earlier objections and supporting information.

1. Village development boundary - adopted 2022

The site is outside Neasham's development boundary adopted in 2022. It is not allocated or committed for housing and no accepted exception has been demonstrated. Describing the scheme as self-build does not exempt it from the boundary or make this location suitable. The proposal would extend the village into open countryside.

2. Housing need and nearby planning decision

Darlington Borough Council stated that it had a five-year housing land supply, while Neasham has already accommodated ten homes at New Lane. This proposal offers no affordable housing, local occupancy requirement or community-led benefit. Parishioners report that some village homes have remained for sale for extended periods, although this is not a formal market study. No objective evidence shows a local need for five more large, four-bedroom open-market homes. Nearby application 24/00132/FUL was also refused and dismissed on appeal, showing that describing a proposal as self-build does not, by itself, justify development outside an established settlement.

3. Landscape and ridge-and-furrow evidence

The paddock forms a clear rural transition between Neasham and the countryside. Development on rising land would replace that openness with houses, roads, parking, gardens and lighting. Parishioners report that tree planting on the adjoining field was not accepted because it could damage ridge-and-furrow earthworks. The Council asks the Inspector to review the site in person and seek archaeological advice. Houses should not be considered when trees are refused.

4. Sockburn Lane and accessibility

The applicant records Sockburn Lane at approximately 3.75 metres wide. The scheme needs a new access, a 1.5-metre pedestrian link, crossings, visibility works and additional lighting, while a refuse vehicle would wait on the lane. Although the highway authority did not maintain a formal objection, these arrangements show a constrained location and would urbanise the rural entrance to Neasham. There is no regular bus service through the village.

Conclusion

Taken together with the Council's previous objection and parishioners' earlier representations, these additional points reinforce why the appeal should be dismissed. The limited housing and self-build benefits do not outweigh the site's position outside Neasham's development boundary, the absence of demonstrated local need, the loss of open countryside, the constrained access and the need to assess ridge-and-furrow earthworks. Neasham Parish Council respectfully requests that appeal 6012201 be dismissed.

Yours faithfully,



Joe Turner

Clerk to Neasham Parish Council