



Proposed development in Chartham N31and N32

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Dear Canterbury City Council,

As a Chartham resident I am writing to you with regard to the proposals for N31(Chartham Mill 165 dwellings) and N32 (Rattington Street 170 dwellings) to build an excess of 330 dwellings on Greenfield and Brownfield sites in Chartham. I urge you to consider the below before committing to the proposals.

With the burgeoning population it is clear that there is a demand, requirement and necessity for additional housing. However, this needs to be completed with consideration given to the type of dwelling the location of dwelling and the impact on the already struggling infrastructure.

Greenfield sites are there for a reason – to provide land for agricultural, ecological and recreational purposes.

Some of Chartham's charm comes from its rural nature with green corridors including ancient woodland and its associated wildlife, between the areas separating Chartham Hatch, St Augustine's from Chartham – which would be lost with the implementation of N32 and result in a conglomeration of houses to the detriment of the village communities.

By contrast, N31 the Mill site, being a brownfield site, is the appropriate space for responsible expansion. This not only because makes use of previously developed land, protecting surrounding countryside, but due to its proximity to the railway station the bus routes, and river path. It is a prime location for a sustainable new housing, proving linkage with the existing parts of the village as opposed to unnecessary and unwelcome outward expansion.

This would also afford an opportunity to embrace and celebrate aspects of Chartham's industrial past should the old stables Fire engine garage, along with its associated buildings, and The Grange be repaired and restored to their former glory for the benefit of the community.

There is an chance to augment existing infrastructure on the mill's site without creating traffic 'pinch point' issues elsewhere on the village. The mill's location on the river will create the chance to embrace modern flood and drainage technology to mitigate the flood risk posed by the river.

N31 also provides positive economic potential as the redevelopment will create local employment opportunities and encourage growth of trade investment to the location. From an aesthetic perspective, presently the main mill site is semi-derelict and had been subject to a considerable amount of vandalism and is an eyesore.

As such, new development yields the potential to transform it into an attractive asset. Being the physical focal point of the village, this embraces the Parish Council's long-term goal for a stronger local centre. Much of the village want the Paper Mill redevelopment to become the new heart of Chartham; with a blend of a balanced mix of homes, amenities, creating a hub of community life.

With the installation of local retail and services: small shops: café, bakery, takeaway, hairdresser/barber, there will be a focus on independent or locally owned businesses satisfying local daily needs, thus negating driving to Canterbury and providing a greener solution to the alternative.

Redevelopment will also yield the opportunity to provide Community buildings including a purpose-built Men's Shed, Village archives and heritage display, offering the chance to both preserve and showcase our proud local history. There will be a chance to create a new public area and layout such as a village square or green, which can be landscaped offering outdoor seating, planters, lighting, and safe pedestrian zones. Walking and cycling connections to the school, river, and station - which are currently hazardous given the volume of vehicular traffic and minimal footpaths around the village.

The much-needed new developments should embrace a clear design code ensuring architectural character matches Chartham's style. To harness both sustainability and respect

for the environment, these should be energy-efficient buildings with renewable energy use with good waste and recycling provision with consideration given to flood-resistant designs that coexists with the river rather than adds pressure to it.

Additionally, there is a need for managed planting to encourage biodiversity and pollinators. The net result of all these considerations being taken into account would be the creation of a walkable, sociable, self-contained centre. Somewhere people naturally want to visit and spend time, not just live.

The benefits for the village are clear - If developed properly, the Paper Mill site could become one of the best things to happen to Chartham in decades. This will create a sense of Community and wellbeing providing safe, welcoming, spaces that reduce isolation and will be a central meeting place for all generations providing the opportunity for shared activities, events, and opportunities for work and volunteering.

The economic benefits include keeping spending local, and in doing so supports small businesses which as a result will create jobs both during and after construction. Following completion, this has the potential to attract visitors using the river path and cycling route 18. From a green perspective, the environmental benefits include, clearing and opening up an underused industrial area which is currently an eyesore and a blot on the village's copybook. New landscaping opportunities allow the introduction of new flora with fauna providing biodiversity gains. A more attractive area will encourage more pedestrian traffic and cyclists, reducing pollution.

From an infrastructure perspective, development on the Paper Mill site means that new houses will be close to the railway station and bus routes, thus reducing car reliance. This is particularly pertinent when you consider that although Chartham has a station it does not have station car park which adds pressure to the Village Hall car park. Development on the mill site will provide a logical link to existing utilities and roads. It will also allow upgrades and integration of modern drainage and sustainable energy.

Development of the Paper Mill Site will add Social and cultural value by augmenting Chartham's identity with a defined heart as the focal point, both physically and metaphorically. Moreover, in doing so it will become a visible symbol of renewed and local pride. N31 helps to satisfy the demand for local housing without encroaching onto greenfield sites.

My opposition to the proposed Rattington Street development (N32) is because the site is unsustainable and harmful to the local environment and infrastructure, for the following reasons:

It is an unsustainable location. First and foremost, the site is greenfield, not previously developed land. This is contrary to national policy prioritising brownfield first. It conflicts with sustainable development principles in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The proposed development lies outside the existing settlement boundary, effectively extending the village into the open countryside. Chartham is a village not a town.

From a Traffic and Transport perspective, Rattington Street and nearby lanes are narrow, unlit, and unsuitable for increased traffic volumes. An estimated 470+ extra vehicles from 170 houses would worsen congestion on Bolts Hill, Shalmsford Street, and the A28. This would create 'Rat runs' through Chartham Hatch and rural lanes and in doing so further endanger cyclists and pedestrians. There is no public transport hub nearby, meaning residents will rely almost entirely on cars. Thereby adding to already stressed narrow roads. There are no pavements or safe cycle routes to the primary school, shops, or station... making walking unsafe - further encouraging the use of cars. The train station has no car park, and local roads already suffer commuter parking overflow. The local bus service is infrequent and unreliable, offering no real alternative to driving – on a Sunday there is no bus service at all – despite Canterbury being open, and the buses stop shortly after 18:00 during the week. This is not conducive to developing the local economy. The proposed area has no local services within walking distance; no shops, no community spaces, no healthcare – thereby encouraging more unwelcome motor vehicle traffic.

The opposition to N32 from an Impact on the local infrastructure is based upon the following facts.

In terms of education: Chartham Primary School is already at or near capacity. KCC has previously deemed walking routes unsafe. All local secondary education is based in Canterbury; further development would increase traffic from school runs.

From a health care perspective, the two GP surgeries are already at capacity with no plans for expansion or additional healthcare provision.

With a view on technology utilities and broadband capacity may not meet demand without expensive upgrades. No proposed contributions (S106/CIL) have been identified to mitigate these factors.

With an eye on flooding, drainage, and environmental risk the proposed site is located near the Nailbourne and River Stour systems, both of which are prone to seasonal flooding. The increased volume of hard surfaces will worsen surface water runoff and localised flooding. The sewage and drainage systems in Chartham are known to be fragile, with existing leakage issues with incidents occurring on the A28 with to the excessive concreting from Mansfield farm being a huge contributory factor to the 'lakes' which appears at the foot of the hill flooding the A28 and also flooding incidents on Shalmsford Street have been reported too. I do not believe that the groundwater and drainage capacity has been neither properly assessed nor mitigated in the draft plan. There is an increased risk of soil contamination or

subsidence due to nearby watercourses.

From a wildlife perspective the development threatens wetland and hedgerow habitats for a potential loss of biodiversity. The development will cause increased light pollution and noise in a currently rural, dark-sky area. Further development raises air quality concerns from traffic and construction dust, affecting respiratory health.

Implementation of N32 will have a detrimental heritage and landscape impact too. This is because the site lies near listed buildings and conservation areas, posing a risk of harming historic settings. The development will be visible from surrounding AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) viewpoints. Kent is the garden of England - not its housing estate. The development would erode the rural approach to Chartham, blurring the village boundary; it would mean the loss of hedgerows, mature trees, and open fields that define the rural landscape. This contradicts the Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment, which seeks to preserve village separation.

The proposed development raises design and layout concerns too. Any high-density housing is out of keeping with the existing rural character. There is a risk of "anywhere estate" design with no architectural relationship to Chartham.

Thus far there has been no submission of evidence of flood mitigation, sustainable drainage, or energy-efficient building standards.

The insufficient parking provision will push overflow into surrounding road creating more hazards and risk to drivers, pedestrians and cyclists. There is no safe, direct pedestrian access to village amenities or schools. The proposed urbanisation will permanently alter the setting of the surrounding countryside. The loss of green space and tranquillity will have a detrimental impact on mental wellbeing of the residents. The additional light pollution will have an adverse impact on the quality of life on both wildlife and residents

The proposal also contradicts the Canterbury Local Plan's strategic goal to focus on sustainable and accessible growth, and at the same time has ignored the Neighbourhood Plan objectives (i.e. "...to maintain village character and protect green space") – Chartham is a village not a town. Additionally, it is at odds with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sections on sustainable development, protecting the natural environment, managing flood risk, and promoting sustainable transport.

It is for all these considerations that I ask Canterbury City Council to embrace N31, but to oppose N32. Yes, there is a demand for housing, so develop the brownfield site in accordance with the guidelines and legislation for the benefit of the community – which does not mean just build more houses without consideration for the local amenities and infrastructure. But leave N32 out of the equation. With the global geopolitical situation being what it is, we may well need that land to grow food for England. You can't dig for victory in a concrete jungle.

Kind regards,

Thomas James Rye