

**From:** Laura Mould [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 21 October 2025 08:16  
**To:** Consultations  
**Subject:** Fwd:

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Dear Sirs,

I am writing to formally object to the proposed development of 170 houses on Site N32, Rattington Street, Chartham. While I fully support the principle of developing appropriate brownfield sites such as the former Chartham Paper Mill (N31), I strongly oppose any development on the greenfield site at Rattington Street (N32).

A similar, smaller proposal for this location was rejected within the last two years. The reasons for that refusal remain entirely valid—and indeed, the case for rejection has only strengthened given the further deterioration of local infrastructure, drainage, and traffic conditions.

### 1. Highways and Transport

Rattington Street is a narrow rural lane connecting Cocking Road to Station Road. It is entirely unsuitable for additional traffic. The lane lacks pedestrian or cycle pathways, has sharp bends, three narrow river bridges, and even a single-track section. Station Road also lacks continuous pavements, making it dangerous for both pedestrians and cyclists.

The alternative route via Shalmsford Street, already the village's busiest road, is equally problematic. The village primary school is located here, and congestion during school hours creates significant hazards. According to local Speed Watch data, 136 speeding vehicles were recorded in just 20 sessions, with speeds ranging from 35–58 mph—demonstrating that the road already functions as a rat run during peak commuting hours.

Kent County Council has even assessed Chartham as unsafe for a Walking Bus scheme. Cars frequently mount pavements to pass each other, endangering residents and children. The addition of up to 470 vehicles (from both the N32 and N31 developments combined) would greatly exacerbate these risks.

Public transport offers no mitigation. The train station lacks a car park, forcing commuters to use the village hall car park, and the current bus service is infrequent and unreliable.

Furthermore, access to the proposed site remains unclear. Maps show only pedestrian and cycle access routes. One such path—off The Crescent—is jointly owned by residents,

who have made clear they will not permit its use for site access.

It is also unacceptable that the most recent traffic and road survey was conducted seven years ago. A full, up-to-date transport assessment must be undertaken before any application is considered.

## 2. Public Health and Wellbeing

The cumulative effect of both proposed developments (N31 and N32) would significantly increase noise and air pollution. Canterbury City Council's air quality strategy focuses on the city centre, yet increased traffic through Chartham—especially past the village school—would pose a daily health risk to children and residents.

Additional pressures on already stretched GP services and the oversubscribed primary school would further harm the wellbeing of the local community.

## 3. Heritage and Landscape Impact

The proposed site lies adjacent to listed buildings and conservation areas, forming part of the rising slopes of the River Stour Valley. Development here would irreversibly alter the rural character and scenic quality of the valley landscape. The field is visible from multiple public vantage points—including Bakers Lane, The Crescent, Summer Peace Grove, and Beech Avenue—and even from the nearby Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

This proposal would also erode the distinct separation between Chartham and St Augustine's, leading to coalescence that contradicts the Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment, which seeks to preserve village identity and open green spaces.

The Chartham Neighbourhood Plan is clear: development must protect the village's rural character and its surrounding greenfield land.

## 4. Flooding, Drainage, and Environmental Risk

The north-east boundary of the site lies adjacent to Chartham Conservation Area, where open countryside forms an essential part of the area's historic setting. Development here would undermine that relationship and fail to meet the statutory duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to preserve or enhance the character of conservation areas.

The site is close to both the Nailbourne and River Stour, which are prone to seasonal flooding. Replacing natural ground

with impermeable surfaces would exacerbate surface runoff and increase flood risk. There appears to be no comprehensive assessment of the groundwater or drainage impact.

Moreover, the development risks worsening pollution levels affecting the Stodmarsh International Nature Reserve, already under pressure from nutrient loading (nitrates and phosphates). National planning guidance still requires developers to demonstrate nutrient neutrality—this proposal does not.

This is inconsistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on sustainable development and environmental protection.

## 5. Loss of Agricultural Land

The site consists of productive, high-quality agricultural land (Grades 1–3a), which has been cultivated for over 30 years. The NPPF explicitly requires local authorities to protect the “best and most versatile” farmland from development.

At a time when UK cereal production has fallen by 22% (UK Food Security Report 2024), and international supply chains are unstable due to geopolitical conflicts, the loss of fertile land is both economically and environmentally irresponsible.

This proposal contradicts Natural England’s 25-Year Environment Plan, which commits to:

Protecting the best agricultural land

Valuing soils as part of our natural capital

Managing soils sustainably by 2030

## 6. Ecological Impact

The N32 field contains an area of ancient woodland—home to bats (a protected species), tawny owls, badgers, foxes, and numerous bird species. Even if the woodland itself were retained, surrounding development would fragment habitats, disrupt breeding and migration, and diminish biodiversity.

Both the Woodland Trust and Kent Wildlife Trust have expressed concern about the ecological impact of this proposal, which threatens not only the woodland but the wider landscape network that sustains local wildlife.

## 7. National Policy and “Brownfield First”

As Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer recently stated:

“Brownfield first. Where there are brownfield sites, those come first. Nobody wants to build all over the countryside—that has to be preserved, of course.”

— BBC Radio Derby interview

This proposal directly contradicts that principle. With brownfield alternatives such as Chartham Paper Mill already available, there is no justification for destroying valuable greenfield land.

Conclusion

The proposed development on Rattington Street (N32) is unsustainable, unsafe, and inconsistent with both national and local planning policy. It would permanently damage Chartham's landscape, biodiversity, infrastructure, and community wellbeing.

I therefore urge Canterbury City Council to reject this proposal in full.

Yours

Laura Mould

