

From: Mili Estrada [REDACTED]
Sent: 20 October 2025 22:20
To: Consultations; [REDACTED]
Subject: Concerns Regarding Proposed Developments N31 (Chartham Mill – 165 dwellings) and N32 (Rattington Street – 170 dwellings)

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Email: [REDACTED]

Date: 20-October-2025

Subject: Concerns Regarding Proposed Developments N31 (Chartham Mill – 165 dwellings) and N32 (Rattington Street – 170 dwellings)

To whom it may concern,

As a resident of Chartham, I am writing to express my views on the proposed developments **N31 (Chartham Mill – 165 dwellings)** and **N32 (Rattington Street – 170 dwellings)**. Together, these schemes represent a substantial expansion of over 330 new homes within our village. I ask that the following points be given careful consideration before any decisions are made.

It is accepted that the rising population brings a clear need for additional housing. However, this must be achieved responsibly, with due regard for the *type* of housing, the *location* of development, and the *capacity* of existing infrastructure and the environment to support it.

Greenfield land plays a vital role — providing agricultural, ecological, and recreational value. Much of Chartham's character lies in its rural charm, ancient woodland, and the green corridors that separate Chartham, Chartham Hatch, and St Augustine's. The implementation of **N32** would erase these natural divisions, creating an unbroken spread of housing that would blur the boundaries of the village and diminish its sense of place.

In contrast, the **N31 Paper Mill site** offers a far more appropriate and sustainable opportunity for growth. As a Brownfield site, it allows for the reuse of previously developed

land, safeguarding the surrounding countryside. Its location near the railway station, bus routes, and the river path makes it ideal for sustainable development, encouraging walking, cycling, and public transport use over car dependency.

The Mill site also provides a unique opportunity to celebrate and preserve Chartham's industrial heritage. Restoring the old stables, the fire engine garage, The Grange, and related buildings would not only safeguard local history but also create community value and visual interest.

Development here could also address practical challenges such as flood management and drainage through the use of modern technology. Redevelopment would stimulate local employment, attract investment, and transform an underused and vandalised site into a vibrant, productive space. With thoughtful planning, the Paper Mill could become the heart of Chartham — aligning with the Parish Council's ambition to create a stronger and more cohesive village centre.

If designed with care, the Mill redevelopment could provide a balanced mix of homes and local amenities — such as a café, bakery, takeaway, or small independent shops — meeting residents' daily needs while reducing car journeys to Canterbury. This would strengthen the local economy and foster a sense of self-sufficiency.

There is also potential for new community facilities, such as a purpose-built Men's Shed, heritage centre, or a landscaped village green, offering safe pedestrian zones, outdoor seating, and attractive planting. Improved walking and cycling routes between the school, river, and station would greatly enhance safety and connectivity.

To ensure success, any design must reflect Chartham's architectural character, prioritise energy-efficient building methods, and incorporate renewable technologies. Sustainable drainage systems, biodiversity planting, and environmentally conscious landscaping would help the development coexist with nature rather than compete against it.

However, I must firmly oppose the **N32 Rattington Street** proposal, which would be both *unsustainable and damaging* to Chartham's environment, infrastructure, and rural integrity.

This site is Greenfield land located outside the current settlement boundary, and its development would directly contradict the principle of "brownfield first" prioritised in national planning policy. Extending into open countryside would irreversibly alter Chartham's rural setting — and Chartham is, and should remain, a village rather than a suburban extension of Canterbury.

Transport and access issues alone make N32 unsuitable. Rattington Street and the surrounding lanes are narrow, unlit, and incapable of safely handling additional traffic. An estimated 470 or more vehicles from 170 dwellings would add significant pressure to already congested roads such as Bolts Hill, Shalmsford Street, and the A28, creating new "rat runs" through smaller villages and increasing risks to cyclists and pedestrians.

Public transport options are limited and unreliable, with no Sunday service and weekday buses ending early in the evening. There are no local shops, healthcare facilities, or community spaces within walking distance — meaning residents would be entirely dependent on cars. The village train station lacks a car park, already causing commuter parking issues in residential areas.

Infrastructure pressures are equally concerning.

- *Education:* Chartham Primary School is already operating near capacity, and Kent County Council has deemed walking routes unsafe. Secondary schooling requires travel to Canterbury, further increasing road use.
- *Healthcare:* The two GP practices serving the area are at full capacity, with no plans for expansion.
- *Utilities:* Existing drainage, sewage, and broadband systems are fragile, and no mitigation measures or developer contributions (S106/CIL) have been proposed.

Flooding and environmental risks are significant. The site lies close to the Nailbourne and River Stour, both prone to seasonal flooding. Increased hard surfacing will only exacerbate surface water runoff and local flooding, particularly given the existing problems along the A28 and Shalmsford Street.

Ecological and heritage impacts must not be ignored. The loss of hedgerows, trees, and open countryside would reduce biodiversity, threaten habitats, and increase light and noise pollution. The site's proximity to conservation areas and listed buildings raises legitimate concerns about heritage impact, and the development would be visible from nearby Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty — harming valued landscapes.

Architecturally, there is a risk of a high-density, “anywhere estate” design that bears no relation to Chartham's distinctive character. The lack of sufficient parking, limited amenities, and unsafe walking routes would lead to isolation, car dependency, and a diminished quality of life.

Such development runs contrary to both the Canterbury Local Plan's aims for sustainable and accessible growth and the Chartham Neighbourhood Plan's objectives to maintain village character and protect open space. It also fails to meet the National Planning Policy Framework's requirements concerning sustainable development, flood management, and environmental protection.

In conclusion, while there is a clear need for new housing, it must be provided responsibly — in the right place, with the right design, and in harmony with the local environment. The **N31 (Chartham Mill)** proposal represents an opportunity to regenerate land sustainably and strengthen the heart of the village. The **N32 (Rattington Street)** proposal, on the other hand, would lead to harmful overexpansion and irreversible loss of rural land.

In closing, I hope that future development in Chartham will reflect a shared vision of progress — one that respects the village’s heritage, supports local people, and protects the surrounding countryside. The Paper Mill site provides a chance to achieve precisely that balance. However, Rattington Street would represent overdevelopment and loss. I trust that careful thought will be given to safeguarding what makes Chartham special, for the benefit of both current and future generations.

Yours faithfully,
Milagros Estrada de Janus
Resident of Chartham