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Sent: 20 October 2025 21:14
To: Consultations; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Subject: Canterbury District Local Plan - Rattington Street Feedback

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Dear Canterbury City Council,

I am writing to register my firm objection to the proposed construction of 170 new homes on Site N32, Rattington Street, Chartham. I strongly oppose any building on the greenfield land at Rattington Street (N32).

Having lived in Chartham for many years, I have watched my children grow up in this wonderful, close-knit village. One of the main reasons I chose to move here was because of its peaceful, traditional character and the sense of safety and community that comes with living in a small, quaint rural area. It is deeply concerning to think that large-scale housing developments and the inevitable increase in traffic could destroy what makes this village so special. We have enough estates now.

This is not the first time such a proposal has been put forward; a smaller application for the same area was refused within the past two years. The original reasons for that refusal remain entirely justified—indeed, local infrastructure and environmental pressures have only worsened since then.

1. Highways and Transport

Rattington Street is a narrow, rural road linking Cockerling Road to Station Road. It is entirely unfit for the volume of traffic that such a development would create. There are no dedicated pavements or cycle lanes, and the route includes tight bends, single-lane bridges, and even a single-track section in places. Station Road, too, lacks continuous pavements, posing dangers for both pedestrians and cyclists.

The alternative route via Shalmsford Street is already under strain as the main road through the village. It is particularly hazardous during school drop-off and pick-up times as it passes directly by the primary school. Local Speed Watch data recorded 136 speeding vehicles across just 20 sessions—some travelling as fast as 50/60mph—clearly demonstrating that the area already functions as a rat run.

From a parents perspective, the school has had to send out countless reminders asking parents to park responsibly and drive carefully at drop-off and pick-up times, yet there are

still regular close calls with children. The yellow zig-zag lines outside the school — which are meant to be kept clear for safety — are often ignored. Parking along Shalmsford Street stretches right up to the top by the field, making it almost impossible to see properly when pulling out. The parking is already completely inadequate, and the road becomes so congested that cars, vans, and even tractors end up mounting the pavements to get through. It's only a matter of time before something serious happens. Adding even more traffic from another large development would make an already dangerous situation completely unmanageable.

Kent County Council has previously deemed Chartham unsafe for a “Walking Bus” scheme due to the high risks to pedestrians. Cars frequently mount pavements just to pass one another, endangering residents and children alike. The addition of potentially hundreds more vehicles—up to 470 when combined with the N31 site—would seriously heighten these risks.

Public transport does not offer a viable solution. The train station lacks proper parking, forcing commuters to use the village hall car park, and the local bus service is unreliable and infrequent.

Furthermore, there is still no clear or practical vehicle access route for the proposed site. Plans currently show only pedestrian and cycle access points, including one through The Crescent, which is jointly owned by residents who have already stated they will not grant permission for its use.

It is unacceptable that the only traffic and highway data being referenced is from a survey conducted seven years ago. A new, comprehensive transport assessment must be carried out before this proposal is considered any further.

2. Public Health and Community Wellbeing

If both N31 and N32 developments proceed, the combined increase in vehicle movements will worsen air and noise pollution throughout the village. Canterbury City Council's air quality monitoring currently focuses on the city centre, leaving rural areas like Chartham overlooked. Increased emissions from congested roads—especially outside the primary school—pose a daily risk to the health of children and residents.

Our village GP surgery is already under considerable strain, and the local primary school is full. Adding hundreds of new households will place unsustainable pressure on public services and reduce the quality of life for existing residents.

3. Heritage and Landscape

The N32 site lies adjacent to listed buildings and conservation areas, forming part of the natural slopes of the River Stour Valley. Building here would irreversibly harm the landscape and destroy the rural views that define Chartham's character. The site is visible from several public viewpoints, including Bakers Lane, The Crescent, Summer Peace Grove, and Beech Avenue, and even from the nearby Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The development would also erode the green space separating Chartham from St Augustine's, effectively merging the two and undermining the Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment's goal of preserving distinct village identities and open countryside.

The Chartham Neighbourhood Plan clearly states that development must protect the village's rural setting and greenfield boundaries. This proposal is fundamentally inconsistent with that policy.

4. Flooding, Drainage, and Environmental Concerns

Part of the site borders the Chartham Conservation Area, where the open countryside plays a vital role in the historic landscape. Development here would fail to uphold the legal obligation under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to preserve or enhance the character of conservation areas.

Given its proximity to the Nailbourne and River Stour—both prone to flooding—the replacement of natural ground with hard surfaces would increase surface runoff and flood risk. There appears to be no up-to-date study addressing groundwater, drainage, or flood resilience.

The proposal also poses potential harm to the Stodmarsh International Nature Reserve, already under strain from nutrient pollution. National planning guidance requires proof of "nutrient neutrality," which this application fails to demonstrate, making it inconsistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

5. Loss of Productive Farmland

This greenfield site is productive agricultural land, classed as Grade 1–3a—the most fertile and valuable for crop growth. The NPPF specifically directs councils to protect such land from unnecessary development.

With UK cereal production down 22% (UK Food Security Report 2024) and international supplies increasingly unstable, the destruction of good farmland is short-sighted and environmentally harmful. It also contradicts Natural England's 25-Year Environment Plan, which commits to protecting soil quality and safeguarding the best agricultural land.

6. Ecology and Wildlife

The N32 site includes an area of ancient woodland supporting bats (a protected species), tawny owls, badgers, foxes, and a wide range of bird species. Even if the trees remain untouched, surrounding construction would fragment habitats, disturb wildlife, and reduce biodiversity.

The Woodland Trust and Kent Wildlife Trust have both raised serious concerns about this development's potential to damage not only the woodland but the wider ecological network across the valley.

In Summary

This development would cause lasting harm to Chartham's landscape, wildlife, infrastructure, and community. It goes against both local and national planning principles and disregards the wishes of those who have built their lives here.

Having lived here for many years and chosen Chartham precisely because of its charm, safety, and small-village character, I find it deeply distressing to think that large-scale construction could erase what makes this place so special. The increase in traffic, noise, pollution, and flooding risk would affect every resident, damaging not only our environment but our way of life.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge Canterbury City Council to please refuse planning permission for Site N32, Rattington Street.

Yours faithfully,

Miss Nicole O'Brien
Resident of Chartham.