

**From:** Nick Hancock [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 19 October 2025 10:41  
**To:** Consultations  
**Subject:** Objection to Merton Park Development

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**--Email From External Account--**

Dear Planning Policy Team,

I am a local resident and a professional Tourist Guide to Kent and the SE .

I am writing to register my most strenuous objection to the proposed allocation of land at Merton Park (Policy N1) in the Draft Local Plan. This allocation is fundamentally unsound because it is not **justified** when weighed against the substantial and irreversible harm it will cause to the setting of the Canterbury World Heritage Site (WHS), a heritage asset of international importance.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) places a great weight on the conservation of designated heritage assets. Paragraph 206 states that "Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets... to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably". Policy N1 does the precise opposite. It does not enhance or better reveal the significance of the WHS; it actively erodes the historic and rural landscape that forms its setting, thereby diminishing its significance.

The council's own documentation, specifically the Focused Regulation 18 Topic Paper, acknowledges that Historic England has previously raised "Significant concerns" regarding development in this location. The inclusion of a policy requirement within N1 to "Preserve long distance views to the City and World Heritage Site" is a clear admission of the severe risk of harm. However, it is simply not credible to assert that a development of approximately 1,930 new dwellings, along with the associated infrastructure, lighting, and activity, can be constructed in this sensitive location without causing substantial harm to these critical views. The scale of the proposed development is so vast that it will inevitably urbanise the southern approach to the city, fundamentally and permanently damaging the historic visual relationship between the Cathedral and the surrounding countryside. This landscape is not merely "countryside"; it is the historic foreground to one of the world's most important ecclesiastical monuments.

The policy is therefore not **justified**. The public benefits of providing housing in this specific location do not, and cannot, outweigh the profound harm to an asset of Outstanding Universal Value. The NPPF requires that any such harm should be exceptional. There is nothing exceptional about this housing allocation that would justify this level of cultural and historical damage.

Furthermore, the plan is not **positively prepared** as it fails to put forward a sustainable development strategy that respects the unique historic environment of the district. A positively prepared plan would identify sites for growth that do not threaten its most precious and irreplaceable assets. By allocating this site, the council is signalling a willingness to sacrifice the very essence of what makes Canterbury special.

The policy as written is an exercise in wishful thinking, paying lip service to heritage protection while allocating a development that will guarantee its degradation. The allocation is unsound, contrary to national policy, and represents a profound threat to our shared heritage. It must be deleted from the plan.

Yours faithfully,

Kind regards,

**Nick Hancock**

London Blue Badge Tour Guide

[REDACTED]  
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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

For my profile and an idea of my availability see [here](#)

All bookings are subject to my terms and conditions which follow the guidelines set by the British Guild of Tourist Guides, please familiarize yourself with this and my cancellation policy [here](#)

Long-standing member of the [APTG](#), [ITG](#) and [British Guild of Tourist Guides](#).

[REDACTED]

Sent from iPhone