

# Comments for Planning Application 19/05000/HYB

## Application Summary

Application Number: 19/05000/HYB

Address: DSTL Fort Halstead Crow Drive Halstead Sevenoaks KENT TN14 7BU

Proposal: Hybrid application comprising, in outline: development of business space (use classes B1a/b/c) of up to 27,659 sq m GEA; works within the X enclave relating to energetic testing operations, including fencing, access, car parking; development of up to 750 residential dwellings; development of a mixed use village centre (use classes A1/A3/A4/A5/B1a/D1/D2); primary school; change of use of Fort Area and bunkers to Historic Interpretation Centre (use class D1) with workshop space and; associated landscaping, works and infrastructure. In detail: demolition of existing buildings; change of use and works including extension and associated alterations to buildings Q13 and Q14 including landscaping and public realm, and primary and secondary accesses to the site.

Case Officer: Claire Shearing

## Customer Details

Name: Mrs Pauline Eldridge

Address: The Mayflower, Pound Lane, Knockholt, KENT TN14 7NE

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment:

Whilst accepting that some development may eventually occur at Fort Halstead, I strongly object to the current planning application.

The increase of the number of dwellings from 450 to 750 is completely unacceptable. This is a rural area and this number of dwellings would completely swamp the two existing local villages. In the last 2011 census Knockholt had a population of 1222 people, and Halstead 1607 people. Given that each dwelling in Fort Halstead would have a minimum of two people this development alone would be as large or larger than both existing local villages. This is undoubtedly planned urban sprawl.

We have major objections to the increase in traffic in the area. Both villages have small rural roads and will not cope with the increased traffic generated by this development. We have serious concerns about the exit of any traffic on to Star Hill Road. This is already a very dangerous road, particularly in bad weather. It has a very steep gradient and features as one of the best cycling climbs in Kent. Not the best exit from a new development! Accepting the dangers, several years ago plans indicated that this exit would be for emergency vehicles only, but with no improvements

this plan was later retracted by SDC. There will be cars from the residential development, plus vehicles generated by the planned business development. Why do we need a business development - we already have a business park at Polhill? Our narrow roads and small villages cannot cope with this increased traffic with all the associated noise and pollution.

Beside cars what transport considerations are there? Bus services in the area are inadequate and already one of the local bus routes in Knockholt has been withdrawn. The local railway station at Knockholt cannot cope with increased traffic, and anyway is planned to be used by the Broke Hill development. We fear it will just be more and more cars on rural and poorly maintained roads.

A primary school is planned, as it is at Broke Hill, but what about secondary education? There is no spare local capacity to take secondary pupils from either of these two developments. Additionally all the primary pupils will eventually need a secondary school!

The entire infrastructure is under great pressure. Our local doctors surgeries cannot take any more patients. Local dentists only accept private patients. Our police, fire and ambulance already come from Sevenoaks, and the hospitals are the PRUH in Bromley or Pembury in Tunbridge Wells. They cannot cope with such increase in population. We already live with an overstretched infrastructure at present without increasing the local population by a minimum of 1500 people, plus the planned Broke Hill development.

We chose to live in a village, having moved from the urban sprawl of London. We choose to live in an area of outstanding natural beauty and to enjoy, in our retirement, the pleasure that this brings. We thought that the Government National Planning Policy Framework regarding the Green Belt would protect the area that we chose to live in since it states it should:

- Check against unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas
- Prevent neighbouring areas merging into one another
- Safeguard the countryside from encroachment

This proposed development fails on all three counts! It will create havoc on our appalling badly-maintained and narrow roads, congestion in our villages, environmental pollution, will harm the countryside and wildlife, and restrict freedom of peoples' movement in the surrounding countryside.

We need the overdevelopment of this area to be completely reconsidered. Whilst Broke Hill and Fort Halstead will be separately considered in planning, the impact of two considerable developments in this rural area of green belt needs to be addressed.