

From: Caroline Hubble [REDACTED]
Sent: 12 April 2021 19:39
To: Planning Comments
Cc: laura.trottmp@parliament.uk; Gary Williamson
Subject: Re: 19/05000/HYB - Amended Consultation - Proposed Development of 635 houses at Fort Halstead

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Ms Claire Shearing
Case Officer
Sevenoaks District Council
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Dear Ms Shearing,

Thank you for your letter of 22nd March outlining the new amendments to the Fort Halstead development proposal.

In response to this recent amendment, I wanted to express my grave concern that this only outlines the proposed development. I feel sure that once the bulk form is approved, the developer will then say that this proposal is no longer viable and will substitute the employment zones and built form for yet more residential housing. I am sure you are aware that there are already empty commercial buildings which show no sign of being let in the immediate vicinity of the Fort. It was my understanding that permission was originally granted because the development would be 'employment led'. It seems to me that the 'employment led' initiative is in fact a Trojan Horse for what will undoubtedly become extended residential development on Green Belt land. It simply cannot be allowed that employment opportunities like the building of the hotel have been shelved and the number of houses have been increased from 450 to 635 (over a 40% increase) and yet the development still be referred to as 'employment led'. The previous appeals Inspector's decision stated quite clearly that this site should be employment led and could only sustain 450 residential properties. I understand that you have already granted permission for 13 new properties on the Officers' Mess site at the Fort. If permission to this amendment is granted then a dangerous precedent will be set.

I feel it necessary at this juncture to voice my strong objection to the development as a whole being placed on this site. The infrastructure, roads and street lighting is simply not sufficient to sustain said development. Particularly given that the scale of development proposed along the ribbon of road already takes up 47% of the whole of the new development proposed for the Sevenoaks District.

Further to this, any proposal to make Star Hill an entrance into and out of the development is frankly quite ludicrous. There have already been fatalities on this stretch of road. I was personally involved in an accident with a lorry misjudging one of the bends which resulted in him shunting us off of the carriageway. Had we not been in a large 4X4 it is very likely we would have been knocked right over the edge of a huge drop. After all, let's not forget that SDC said the original planning permission would only be granted with

the requirement that the Star Hill entrance be used for emergency vehicles, buses, cyclists, horses and pedestrians only. This is an extremely dangerous stretch of road and increasing traffic volume would be a very bad idea for a number of reasons which include:

- The lack of lighting and pavement on Star Hill makes it extremely dangerous for pedestrians.
- The access point would be on the brow of a steep hill and this along with the dangerous blind bends and adverse camber would make it particularly hazardous for traffic exiting the Fort. It is a serious accident waiting to happen.
- The inevitable significant increase in vehicular traffic through the village of Knockholt which is simply not able to sustain such an increase in traffic flow with its narrow roads which are in a poor state of repair as it is. This would have a detrimental effect on the local environment and neighbourhood. Given the current poor condition of Polhill it is feasible that at some point traffic flow may well be restricted there and Polhill may even have to close. Can we really expect that Knockholt will have to sustain this huge volume of traffic driving through the village?
- Star Hill is a popular cycle route and there is a high volume of bicycle traffic particularly at weekends. Higher volumes of car traffic could have serious consequences.

Another matter of concern which has recently been brought to my attention is the pink water contamination on the site. What is of particular concern is if this supply were disturbed, with the topography of the land, this could drain into the village of Knockholt and will pollute one of the main aquifers in the south. This would undoubtedly cause much alarm to local residents.

Given the seriousness of the points raised above I would ask that SDC revert to its original decision that any large scale housing development on this Green Belt and AONB site should not be granted planning permission.

Kind regards.

Yours sincerely,

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