

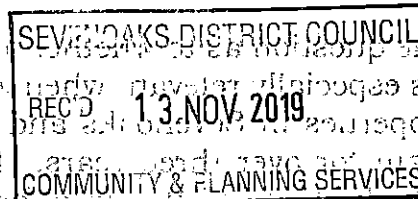
Widmore Cottages  
Church Road  
Halstead  
Sevenoaks  
Kent TN14 7HQ  
Planning Department  
Sevenoaks District Council  
Council Offices

Argyle Road

Sevenoaks

Kent TN13 1HG

12 November 2019



Dear Sir/Madam

**Fort Halstead Ref: 19/05000/HYB**

I am writing to earnestly request you to refuse this latest proposal for the Fort Halstead site which would see the number of houses increase by 66% from the previous figure of 450 to a totally unsustainable 750.

The housing density under this new proposal would range from 45 to 60 per hectare compared to the previous 40 per hectare. When you consider that the village average for the local area is only 13-18 per hectare it brings it home how out of keeping this proposal is and how it completely ignores the surrounding area. It also serves to emphasise how totally incapable the surrounding infrastructure is to cope with a development of this size.

One only has to visit the lanes adjoining this proposed development to see what traffic chaos would be created by the additional vehicles a development of this size would bring; not to mention the danger to horses and their riders, cyclists and walkers.

Much is made of the proximity of the M25 and Knockholt Station by those who would shrug off the transport issue. Already, the M25 and the A21 are subject to severe congestion during commuting hours. Local lanes are wholly inadequate and the road up Polhill has been subject to subsidence. As to the railway a recent consultation with Sevenoaks Rail Travellers Association (SRTA) showed that services were already at breaking point and that there was no significant improvement planned to increase rail passenger capacity until 2044. There are no bus services adjacent to the site and it is too far to walk to anywhere that can provide goods and services. So how exactly is it proposed to overcome the transport issues and traffic congestion that this development would bring?

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Other infrastructure issues to be considered are topics such as schools, medical facilities, shops, and public utilities. It is noted that a local shop and primary school are proposed but what about secondary schooling? As to utilities, there is currently no gas supply to Fort Halstead and the water supply is a local one that is at best sporadic for the small number of houses currently there. Major infrastructure improvement, with all the time, cost and traffic chaos that would bring, would be needed to service a development of the size being proposed.

There is also the question as to whether a development of this size is actually needed. This is especially relevant when viewed against there currently being 420 vacant properties in Sevenoaks and 5 properties at Fort Halstead that have been vacant for over three years. Halstead completed its own recent rural survey which identified the need for 14 additional homes to meet local need. SDC put this figure higher at 100 but even at that level a development of 750 new dwellings is neither justified nor required.

It is noted that under this new proposal, there is not as much commercial development as in the previous plan and that the hotel has been scrapped. This begs the question as to why there is now less weight being put on employment and more on housing which is not justified by local demand.

Air quality is a further concern should a development of this size come into being with the associated daily vehicle movements that would result. We are in one of 14 established air quality management areas which has to be maintained due to the close proximity of the M25. A development of the size proposed, quite apart from domestic pollution, would add a minimum of 4,000 vehicle movements per day which would have dire consequences on air quality.

This is also a site that is surrounded by both the Green Belt and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty both of which should be respected, not ignored. Our village is already under threat of being swamped by other development proposals, this proposal is just a step too far and it should be summarily rejected.

Yours faithfully

[Redacted signature]

C Blundell

[Redacted address and contact information]