

Cottered & Throcking Parish Council

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Planning
East Hertfordshire District Council

By email only: planning@eastherts.gov.uk

18 June 2024

Dear Planning

Re: PLANNING APPLICATION: 3/24/0966/OUT: Land North Of A507, West Of A10
Buntingford

The area falls within the Buntingford Community Area Neighbourhood Plan (BCANP) which forms part of the East Herts District Plan (EHDP).

Cottered and Throcking Parish Council objects on the following grounds:

The road infrastructure is inadequate and unsafe, construction traffic and the resultant permanent increase in traffic volume from new residents and visitors attracted to the site, are at odds with the planned weight restriction for the A507, which recognises its unsuitability for use by large, heavy vehicles approaching Cottered, a small, ancient village already blighted by an excess of traffic with a narrow, sharp bend at the Baldock side, where two large vehicles cannot pass each other easily and where traffic passes only feet away from the living spaces of homes. Neither would the route through Throcking, a tiny village with a narrow rural lane, unlit, with no pavements and popular with pedestrians, dog walkers, hikers and cyclists, be appropriate for new access or increased traffic. Incidents of damage caused by large weighted vehicles and excess traffic passing through Throcking already include: burst water main, crushed sewage pipe conduit, verge erosion, damage to gardens, collapsed banks on both sides of the road and road surface damage because the road, characteristic of the rural nature of the area it serves, is inadequate for high volume vehicle usage and in many places too narrow for cars to pass each other. This and the number of fatalities and accidents on the A10 and A507 are in conflict with Policy TRA2 of the East Herts District Plan (EHDP) and paragraph 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in terms of highway safety.

The proposed development does not accord with the sustainability principles set out in the NPPF as the location has limited services and amenities, the site is not connected to mains sewage with concerns, in a water-stressed area, regarding drinking water and wastewater requirements (INFRA4 and INFRA5 of the BCANP refer).

Residents and visitors would need to travel by car to larger settlements to meet their daily needs. Access to public transport is limited and the pedestrian route to the nearest services in Buntingford would involve crossing the busy A507 and A10. The proposal would be contrary to TRA1 of the EHDP.

Site development would be in direct conflict with paragraph 196 (c) of the NPPF and would neither enhance the defining local characteristics of the area or improve its distinctiveness. The site is close to the village of Throcking and in an area recognised in both East Herts District Landscape Character Assessments 140 and 141 as 'quiet and remote', 'distinctive' and 'significant' to the community. Development resulting in the unjustified loss of greenfield space would not contribute to or protect the valued landscape which is a requirement of chapter 15 of the NPPF. Photographs in Appendix 1 (BCANP) clearly demonstrate the open quality of the land around Throcking, which is an important characteristic of East Hertfordshire's rural settlement pattern of villages and hamlets as recognised in chapter 10 of the EHDP and VILL2.

Policy HA1 of the EHDP recognises the importance of protecting the historic environment which includes buildings and landscapes and the small village of Throcking, which in Domesday times was still small, with its medieval Grade II listed church which Historic England describes as having an 'unusual W tower' is no exception. Throcking lies around 40 metres above the valley of the Rib underlain by chalk and drained by Thistley Vale Brook, any development in this area would be highly visible and detrimental to the preserved ancient character of the surroundings and contrary to DES2 of the EHDP.

In accordance with EHDP policies GBR2 and DES3 and BCANP's HD2, the dense, urban appearance of the proposed development would be incompatible with the character and appearance of this rural area and would not improve upon or respect the existing agricultural nature of the site or retain the countryside resource as a habitat, the potential harm to species or loss of biodiversity would be of material concern and conflict with EHDP policy NE3 and ES1 of the BCANP and guidance in the NPPF.

Yours faithfully



John Wiblin Chairman Cottered & Throcking Parish Council

pp Clerk Cottered & Throcking Parish Council