

[REDACTED]
168 Mendip Way
Great Ashby
Stevenage
SG1 6G

02nd February 2025

North Herts District Council
(Attention: Planning Officer)
Council Offices
Gernon Road
Letchworth Garden City
SG6 3JF

To Whom it may Concern,

I am writing this letter to object to application 24/02889/FP (to be read in conjunction with my objection against application 16/01731/1) by Croudace Homes to develop 281 new homes on the land known as Roundwood. The reason for writing a letter instead of making an online application, is so that I can attached photographs for your consideration in determining this application.

I appreciate that there is a shortage of housing, but does not think we should compromise safety of current Great Ashby residents to allow this inappropriate access arrangements as per the application. This is ludicrous to even think that the proposed 2 access routes - Bray Drive, Mendip Way and Haybluff Drive (residential streets) AND Calder Way (single traffic road) will cope with this small change to the existing roads to allow for more vehicles, including construction vehicles!

I have read the supporting Transport Assessment undertaken by TPA and issued by Croudace to support and justify this application, and would like to point out the following observations for you to consider:

1. **Section 1.15:** 'Vehicular access arrangements should not induce additional 'rat running' via Back Lane through Graveley and Weston.' With this application, it will just move the 'rat-running' to an area where it will create even a greater 'rat-running' issue through existing residential streets.
2. **Section 2.14:** 'The need for a public transport service within 400m of the Site has been reinforced by officers of both NHDC and SCC.' The bus stop is not needed in Mendip Way and Bray Drive, there are adequate bus stops in the existing area of Burleigh Park. If a bus service is needed, the bus should run into the new development via a link road and not through Mendip Way where there is already an under-provision of parking spaces. To add 2 bus stops in this area, will lead to the loss of 5-6 additional parking spaces.
3. **Section 2.18:** 'To provide public transport services with 400m of the residents of the site, it is **necessary** to route buses along Bray Drive and Mendip Way, with the service initially turning back at the Haybluff Drive roundabout, with the longer term aspiration to provide bus services along the whole length of Mendip Way, once the GA2 development is also constructed.' Not necessary, preferred to a proper link road by the developer. This just show the regard that both the developer and the Council have for the existing rate payers of Great

Ashby. By extending the bus route along the whole of Mendip Way, will just increase the 'rat-running' through GA and even more parking spaces will be lost along Mendip Way.

4. **Section 2.21:** 'On-street car parking on the roads within the Great Ashby area has been a longstanding local issue. This is primarily the result of the residential properties within this area being constructed when restrictions on the levels of residential car parking were part of national planning policy.' With this proposal, the allocation of on-street parking will be even lower than the restrictions laid down by national planning policy and WAY below the current regulations. How is this fair on existing tax payers?
5. **Section 2.19:** 'Further discussions have been undertaken with the local bus operator regarding the suitability of Bray Drive and Mendip Way to accommodate the proposed bus route, and they have indicated that due to the current amount of on-street car parking on sections of Mendip Way, they would not be prepared to operate a bus service along the road, despite the road being initially designed to accommodate bus services.' By changing these roads, you will create even more parking chaos on a wider part of GA. Displaced cars will just be pushed into side streets and it will make this area very unsafe for existing residents. The cars won't magically disappear, they are still there!
6. **Section 2.22:** 'Whilst there are no bus services operating on Mendip Way at present, the road was designed to a standard that could accommodate public transport services, but the existing level of car parking on sections of Bray Drive and Mendip Way would prevent the necessary public transport services operating along the road.' If this indeed was the case, there would now be no need to have to reverse engineer a bus route into the existing physical environment. A simple site inspection and an examination of aerial photographic records, shows clearly that Great Ashby Way was designed as a bus route, owing to not one property between the Weston Road roundabout and the Round Diamond School, having direct vehicular access onto Great Ashby Way. Even between the Round Diamond School and the Martins Way/Great Ashby Way roundabout, those properties that do have access onto Great Ashby Way, have a highway reserve width that was designed sympathetically to accommodate the bus route with wide verges for the safe use by pedestrians and wheelchair users.
7. **Section 2.24:** 'It has been the long term aspiration of the applicant to maintain as many car parking spaces as possible for local residents. The 2016 planning application proposed 'in verge' parking bays on both sides of Mendip Way to accommodate parking for residents along the bus route.' This just shows that since 2016, the developer failed to come up with any solutions in an already under-provided area where it comes to car parking spaces. This is the same developer who developed Burleigh Park. If they aspired to maintain as many parking spaces as possible for existing residents, they would have found an alternative access route (link road?) and not just keep hammering on similar proposals with no solutions. There is not enough parking available for existing rate payers and this application will just add to the issue of under-provision of car parking spaces since the construction of Burleigh Park. No workable solution, even after all these years!
8. **Section 2.26:** However, the introduction of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan 4 (HLTP4), adopted by the county council in 2018, has resulted in a change in local transport planning policy since 2016, so that the loss of the verges necessary to accommodate the 'in verge' bays is not considered, by HCC or NHDC, to be policy compliant. HCC have also indicated that as Mendip Way was originally designed as a bus route, this should not be compromised by the

presence of residential on-carriageway parking. As paragraph 6 above, Mendip Way was not designed as a bus route, otherwise Croudace would have consider a wider road when they initially constructed Burleigh Park. It is a residential street, as the moment no more than single file traffic. HCC should go back to the original design, instead of trying to reverse engineer at the cost of existing rate payers.

9. **Section 2.27:** 'The local transport policy dictates that the loss of highway verge to provide car parking bays should only be considered as a last resort.' This will have the same effect on the under-provision of parking spaces, with the addition of the impact on the landscape of existing residential roads.
10. **Section 2.29:** 'To reduce the number of spaces that are lost, it has been agreed in pre-application discussions. that a 'manage and monitor' approach to the implementation of the necessary car parking restrictions This would result in the following:...TEMPORARY parking restrictions...' This temporary restrictions will be required for at least the duration of the project, to allow access for construction vehicles. This could be 4 years that you expect existing rate payers to cope with the under-provision of parking spaces. That is ludicrous, and just show the regard that both the developer and the Council have for the impact this could have on the mental health and wellbeing of existing residents.
11. **Section 2.30:** 'The applicant will provide funding to the highway authority, to implement the Traffic Regulation Orders that would be necessary to implement the parking restrictions and would provide additional funding to monitor the impact of the parking restrictions on the level of parking on the surrounding streets and within the parking courts.' As per the previous application for this site: many residents, including those living in the flats, made it very clear that these courts are privately owned and cannot be offered to current residents, without an agreement from the owner of this parking space. Where are they and their visitors going to park?
12. **Section 3.6b:** 'address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport'. This application does not consider the needs of people with disabilities in the existing Burleigh Park. Wider roads lead to reduced mobility access.
13. **Section 3c.** 'create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards'. There is already conflict in the existing part of GA where the under-provision of car parking spaces, lead to several arguments and shouting. This application will increase frustration between residents and will create even more unnecessary street clutter, as displaced cars will just be moved onto already congested side streets and will create more unnecessary street clutter on all existing roads in the Burleigh Park and Mendip Way area of GA.
14. **Section 3d.** 'allow for the efficient delivery of goods and access by service and emergency vehicles'. This may be the case for the new development, however, no retailer will provide a delivery service for any residents on Bray Drive, Mendip Way, or Haybluff Drive as there will be no parking spaces available close to the delivery address. To create a number of parking spaces for delivery vehicles, will not fix this problem, as the delivery people will have to park too far from most dwellings to safeguard their drivers or the goods.
15. **Section 3.7:** 'Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network following mitigation would be severe, taking into account all reasonable

scenarios". Based on this statement alone, this application should be refused. There is an unacceptable impact on highway safety by creating a 'rat-running' route via both Haybluff Drive AND Calder way and the severity of impact the access routes have on existing residents. Street clutter due to under-provision of parking spaces will have a detrimental impact on safeguarding current residents. We recently had an accident on the A1M, Back Lane became the rescue route and the whole of Great Ashby was gridlocked for hours. It happened on another time during the same month, when a pedestrian was run over. Luckily on this occasion the pedestrian survived, but it could have been a different outcome.

16. **The Transport Strategy (2019) has four key themes throughout the strategic objectives:**

- Connectivity – improving connections between the residential network to jobs, services and business – how is this met if current residents have nowhere to park their cars after a long day of work (most spaces will be occupied by residents working from home). The new bus service will not change the way current residents get to work. The bus services network and service are unreliable, and people stopped using it as it takes about 4 times longer to get to work or back than using your car. It currently takes be about 17 minutes to get to work. If I had to make use of the public transport, it would take me at least 1h 23 minutes on the train to get to work. On top of that, I will need a bus from Mendip Way to the station, which will add another 38 minutes to my journey. And that is on a good day, if the bus turns up and if traffic is not too bad. There are just too many ifs to provide food on the table for my family. This adds up to 2 hours per day, one way only. 4 hours on the road a day versus 40 minutes a day! **With public transport, I will spend 20 hours per week just to get to work and back. Currently I spend less than 3hours per week getting to work and back.** How is that an improvement on connectivity for current residents who may have to give up their cars due to under-provision of parking.

- Liveable Streets – restoring neighbourhood streets to places the community is proud of – how can current residents be proud of a community where there is not even parking for themselves or their visitors?

- Active and Healthy Travel – Achieve a greater modal split for active travel through reducing the need for private vehicle trips; AS ABOVE, people need their cars to get to work. Some people need their cars as they are not based in just one location of work and may need to make more than one journey a day. All people have the right to work and the right to choose how they travel to work. The reduction in parking spaces in existing streets will impact on this.

- Green Travel – reducing the carbon footprint of Stevenage's travel movements to improve air quality. AS ABOVE (Connectivity) – how is increasing travel hours from 3hours per week to 20hours per week reducing carbon footprint? This is only taking into consideration ONE current resident. The difference is a staggering 17 hours!

Taking above into consideration, the developer and this application failed on all 4 strategic objectives and this planning application should be refused.

17. **Section 4.6: 'The guidance also indicates that our quality of life depends on transport for easy access to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities, and services.** It also indicates that an integrated planning and transport system is important to reduce carbon emissions'. This application fails to show that this will be the case for current residents. This application will leave people felt isolated. Studies on the effect of isolation due to lockdowns during the Covid period, proved the detrimental effect isolation has on the mental health and wellbeing of

people affected by isolation and loneliness. Studies confirmed that loneliness led to depression, anxiety, and sleep disturbance, especially when one is under isolation. Other symptoms of isolation/ loneliness include anger, irritability, and compulsive behaviours. Furthermore, the experiences of social isolation may bring back post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms for those previously exposed to other related trauma. If visitors stop visiting existing residents, due to the lack of parking, it will not only negatively impact on current residents' mental health and wellbeing, it will also increase the pressure on the NHS to deal with the result of this.

18. **Section 5.29 & 5.31** Summary of the modal share characteristics. I challenge this information, as it is based on the 2011 Census. We are now in 2024! Why is the developer putting forward information that is so out of date? We know that several families moved to GA when their children were not of the age to drive a car. These children are now grown-ups and most of them own cars to be able to get to work and back. This is a misrepresentation of the current situation.
19. **Section 5.44. Parking surveys were conducted in January 2023.** I challenge the correctness of the surveys completed by the developers. Residents of GA have been conducting surveys over several years, concluded more cars, especially in the evenings when people return from work. This is reflected in par 5.49 of the TAP.
20. **Section 5.50.** Windrush Close is suggested as alternative parking. This is not practical, as residents in Haybluff cannot part that far away from their homes. We have elderly, disabled, young families and single women in the area. How is it fair that someone from Haybluff should park in Windrush? How will they get their shopping home? How will you safeguard women walking alone at night to get to there homes up to 0.5 miles away from their homes in a time where attacks on women are on the increase? Does any of the Councillors have to park that far away from their homes? I think not.
21. **Section 5.51 Parking Courts.** The fact that this is even suggested as a solution, is beyond belief. These parking courts are private property. Some of the people living here are shift workers. How would you feel if you came home after a nightshift to find someone parked in a bay that you pay for? That is an insult to think that anybody will accept that you can just park on another person's property.
22. **Section 5.55.** 'However, it would also be possible that some residents of the flats find it more convenient to park on-street rather than in the parking courts, which may include some of the vehicles observed to park on Mendip Way.' It may also just be possible that none of these residents' park on-street. What is this assumption based on? A possibility?
23. **Section 7: On-street car parking.** It is ridiculous to think that only 29 cars will be replaced. I have lived here for more than 20 years, and I invite you to come and experience it for yourself. The calculation of this TAP is inaccurate and misleading. Residents' car parking surveys should be considered, as it is a true reflection of the situation on the ground.
24. **Section 7.7.** 'The vehicles that would be displaced from the January 2023 surveys are indicated in red on the plan, with 29 vehicles displaced, with the vehicles that could still park, represented in green.' This is an unfair and unworkable recommendation, based on incorrect information. I have never in the 20 plus years that I lived in GA, seen only 3 cars parked in Windrush Close. That is a laughable and misleading statement from the developer. Anybody who lives in Windrush Close will verify that this information is incorrect. The same goes for Bray Drive, Mendip Way and Haybluff.

25. **Section 7.15.** Another absurd assumption. I own a car AND my wife owns a car. We do not work in the same area and cannot share cars to get to our workplace. My wife is also not based in only one location but must visit different sites during her workday. How can we get rid of one car just because Croudace think current residents should do it! We both have a right to work and to own a car. We bought a house from Croudace, where we questioned the size of the garage, but were told that there is plenty of on-street parking. Which was true for 20 years. Nobody has the right to tell another person that they must get rid of a car. We have the right to earn a living and need our cars for that. What a ridiculous statement! I will rely on the Council to provide for my family if I can no longer access my workplace. And so will many other families.
26. I question the applicant's modelling of the traffic impacts on Haybluff Drive, Mendip Way and Bray Drive. This application will create a 'rat-run' through existing roads, and I believe that the impact is not highlighted to the full extent. Calder Way is narrow, and most traffic will be diverted via the Haybluff Drive access route. GA was gridlocked a few weeks ago, due to an accident on the A1M. This will occur more frequently if this application is not refused.
27. Back Lane is a single file road in most places and creating this 'rat-run' will put more strain on a road that already is not suitable for the capacity of vehicles using it daily. Larger vehicles cannot pass each other on this road and with increased traffic, this will lead to gridlocked roads on a more regular basis. I suggest the applicant go back to the drawing board, as their calculations are just not a true reflection of the massive parking problem in GA, especially this part of GA. Even with their incorrect calculations, where will these 43+ cars go? This is a massive shortfall in an area where there is already under-provision of parking spaces.
28. It is astonishing that in TA2, the assessment mentions (par. 4.2.2) that bad parking habits are now well-established because of lack of enforcement to date. That is not true, it is due to the under-provision of parking spaces and the sizes of the garages in the Burleigh Park area. The garages are just too small to accommodate a car, there is no way to get out of my car when I park it in the garage. There is also no provision for bicycles in this very small garages. The developer was Croudace!
29. There is not sufficient capacity off-street or on side streets to accommodate displaced parking. Based on this alone, this application should be refused. Parking courts cannot be utilised for displaced cars as they are private property, it does not matter what your survey says. You cannot rob Peter to pay Paul!
30. The attempt to rationalise parking arrangements along the assumed bus route, is unacceptable and unworkable. Where should the cars go? Displaced cars will be forced in already congested side streets and this will create an unsafe access route due to street clutter.
31. Grass verges should not be removed in existing streets to accommodate a bus route that is not needed by existing residents. If a bus route is required for the new development, the bus stops should be in the new development and not have a negative impact on parking spaces of existing rate payers.
32. **A new development should not impact on** "safe and easy access for all sections of the community, including people with disabilities, the infirm and parents of young children". By removing grass verges – adverse environmental impact on the current ecosystem.

As you can see from the photographs below, houses on Mendip Way are built very close to the road, and if the verges were to be removed, it leaves only 2.6m between the front door and the road:



- If a child or pet runs out of the house, there won't be enough time to stop them from running into traffic. With cars parking on both sides of the road, it will be impossible for a driver to see a small child running on the road, before it is too late. The Council cannot compromise the safety of residents on this road!
- My neighbour is disabled and is making use of a mobility scooter to get along. If the grass verges are being removed, she will have to go on the street (especially on bin days – as there would be no space for her scooter to get past the bins) to avoid people walking, pushing strollers on the pavement. Keeping in mind that most kids from this area walk/ cycle to school! There are a few mums who have double buggies, and if they approach, you will have to go on the street to get around them. The pavement is only 1.6m wide.
- There is absolutely no way that a child walking to school can pass a parent with a double buggy safely without stepping in the road, if there are no grass verges. Keeping in mind that this is the main access to the current Great Ashby residents; and is also proposed to be the main access for the Roundwood development – this is totally unsafe and should not be allowed as an access route to this development.
- Parked cars will be so closed to the boundaries of houses. If you walk with your children (I have seen parents walking with 4 children) and someone opens the door of a parked car, a child

(who might be on a scooter, or bicycle, or just walking) or adult can get seriously injured. My car's door takes up 1.06m when opened – that leaves less than 60cm for someone to get past my door – not enough space for anyone; and definitely not someone on a mobility scooter. A bin takes at least 0.8m off the space... so you can clearly see that when bins are out on bin days, and cars are parked, there is no safe way for pedestrians and disable people to use the pavement safely. This application does not allow for safe access and should be refused.

33. **The level of traffic on Mendip Way** is heavy compared to roads of similar width. Several parking surveys were done by residents of Great Ashby – they were done on different times, on different days and there are serious mistakes by the applicant regarding current on-street parking conditions and numbers of parked cars. See information on residents' surveys and photos to back this up. At least 30 vehicles are not calculated for in the Croudace report. **This brings the number of displaced cars to at least 73.**

Regarding the proposed changes to the road network within Great Ashby to provide access to the site these will impact on road safety and reduced availability of parking in the access roads concerned, increasing parking issues in surrounding roads. During the construction period, construction traffic will also result in an increase in congestion and deterioration in road safety and air quality.

34. **This application will lead to excessive waiting times or dangerous maneuvering.** Many residents (me included) have observed both. This will only increase with increased traffic.
35. Haybluff Drive experiences parking on both sides of the carriageway simultaneously. Should this development be approved, the vehicles from Mendip Way will be forced to park in Haybluff Drive. The other roads in this area are already to full capacity and cannot take additional displacement of cars caused by the changes to the existing roads. This will hinder free movement of traffic on all roads in this area.
36. The majority of traffic will be redistributing along Haybluff Drive and not Calder way. This will put even more stress on roads that are already at full capacity and will cause roads to be very unsafe for current residents.
- Church Lane (Graveley) and Back Lane (Weston) suffer presently from being 'Rat Runs'. Proposed changes to the road layout to improve access to Church Lane and Back Lane will result in a significant further increase in traffic volumes. Existing Great Ashby residents seek to avoid the current heavy congestion by travelling towards Stevenage Town Centre.
 - Church Lane is not suitable for large volumes of traffic or aggressive driving speeds.
 - Back Lane/Church lane is a narrow road, reducing to a single lane in places and described as narrow, winding and difficult. It is also subject to regular flooding and has no footpath and is popular with horse riders and walkers using Hertfordshire Way.
 - As you can see from the photo below, there is farm traffic on Back Lane and it is impossible for two-way traffic to run freely on this part of the road. There are more parts of the road between Haybluff Drive and Weston where it is impossible for two larger vehicles to pass each other. There is only enough space for one vehicle to get off the road to let the other pass. If there is an increase in traffic, this will cause a serious traffic jam

as vehicles won't be able to move. Keeping in mind that we're not only talking about personal cars; but also, delivery vehicles, waste collection vehicles, farm vehicles, emergency vehicles, etc.



Traffic on Calder Way at 08:54am:



Other points to consider when deciding on this application:

1. **HMO's** - The local authority and County Council have been neglectful and irresponsible in allowing the highest percentage of HMO's in the County in this area alone. In fact Great Ashby accounts for the majority of the HMO's under the local authority. This has stressed existing infrastructure, community relations, and public safety and does not lend itself to building a better community. The local authority has a responsibility to protect existing residents, their environment and wellbeing.
2. **Houses with Supported Living Service** - The local authority and County Council have been neglectful and irresponsible in allowing 2 houses next to each other in Mendip Way (on the part of Mendip Way proposed as the main access route for the Roundwood development). This supported living service, comprising of two houses, with accommodation available for eight individuals under a private tenancy agreement. There are also several carers employed by the owners of these houses – all adding to the already stretched parking problem in this area. Carers, eight residents, who have

families visiting them, taxis taking them to places, etc. All these additional cars are adding to the issues experienced by current residents regarding the capacity of the roads and parking spaces.

3. **Parking spaces per property** - This part of Great Ashby was built with the allocation of only 1.5 parking spaces per dwelling. Should we lose parking spaces due to the changes of the roads to allow access to the Roundwood Development, it will be against the planning regulations on which Great Ashby was built, as it will take the number of parking spaces below the then 1.5 spaces per dwelling AND the current 2.0 car spaces in the current regulations. Looks like new residents are being prioritised over existing residents.
4. **Size of garages** – Croudace only allowed for 2.5 x 5.0 m garages when building Burleigh Park – this is very small and too small to park a decent size car in it and get out of the car. I drive a medium car and there is no way that I can park my car in my garage and get out of it. If I drive in my garage, I am stuck in my car and cannot get out! For the new development, Croudace is allowing 3 x 7m – people in this development will be able to use their garages for cars. However, you cannot rob Peter to pay Paul! The current residents are short of parking spaces and if you should approve this application, there will be even less spaces to park your car after a long day at work.
5. **Future plans** - No consideration given to "future" plans for a further 800 houses in Great Ashby (Known as GA2) and this impact on roads (including Mendip Way) and local services . Surely the original planned 3rd exit "link road" out of Great Ashby is the only sensible route here?
6. I would also like to draw your attention to the North Herts District Council's "Vehicle Parking at New Development Supplementary Planning" Document dated September 2011:

1.14 – "Some residual parking on existing streets may be acceptable but where it is considered to add pressure to existing residents' and businesses' parking provision, new development will be required to provide for its own parking and possibly provide a financial contribution towards protecting existing residents' and businesses' parking." [This clearly is the case that this development will put pressure to existing resident's parking provision, and I am of the opinion that the developer should provide a financial contribution towards protecting existing resident's parking.](#)

1.15. "Where new roads are adopted and off-street parking is provided in new development, the Council will work with developers and Hertfordshire County Council to ensure that the detailed design of new development does not create unnecessary parking overspill onto existing streets, especially in areas where there is pressure for parking space. The Council will consider the availability of existing on and off-street parking space in determining planning applications." [This development will cause an overspill \(in the already full to capacity\) to the side streets off Bray Drive, Mendip Way and Haybluff Drive. By changing the roads, Mendip Way will lose 40+ parking spaces and the only place for these cars to go is in the side roads.](#)

2.13 “Great Ashby is an important case study when reviewing parking standards for new development in North Hertfordshire. The significant under-provision of parking on the estate as well as design and layout of garage provision (for example insufficient space in front of a garage leading to blocked pavements) had lead to significant problems in the area.” [This on itself should be the reason to refuse this application.](#)

2.19 “Previously a garage has counted towards parking provision even if it is unsuitable in size, adding increasing pressure on on-street parking. For this reason only garages above 7.0m x 3.0m (internal dimension intended for a single car plus some storage) will be considered as a parking space and whilst it cannot be insisted upon that residents use it for this purpose, its provision at this size means it is adequate should they chose to do so and will be counted within the provision for that dwelling.” [Croudace only allowed for 2.5 x 5.0 m garages and therefore most people in Great Ashby cannot use their garages to park a car in.](#)

In the light of all the above, I trust that you will find enough evidence to refuse this planning application.

Your sincerely,

Johannes Pieterse