

Mrs R. Pieterse
168 Mendip Way
Great Ashby
Steve

5 July 2025

Naomi Reynard
Planning Department
North Herts Council
Gernon Road
Letchworth Garden City
SG6 3JF

Dear Naomi,

24/02889/FP | Full Planning Permission: Residential development of 281 dwellings and associated roads, parking, realignment of Back Lane, drainage, landscaping, open space, servicing facilities and associated works (as amended). Land At Roundwood, Back Lane, Graveley, Hertfordshire

I strongly object against this planning application and the Technical Note – Monitor and Manage. My objection should be read together with my previous objection, dated 02nd February 2025, as the developer failed to address any of the objections raised previously.

Despite some minor changes to the proposed access routes to this site from the previous applications, the applicant failed to provide any solutions for the under-provision of parking spaces in the existing Burleigh Park. There has been no meaningful improvement. In short, the Technical Note fails to resolve the severe parking and safety concerns raised by residents! No solutions were offered. In fact, the proposals will only exacerbate the situation by increased congestion from displaced parking which will result in a very dangerous environment for all residents.

DATA – MONITOR AND MANAGE

Further to this, it is ludicrous to ask the developer to 'Monitor and Manage'. Throughout this process, this developer manipulated data by using out of date data to make it look more favourable for them, ultimately to push this application through. For example:

- The Applicant is quoting data from Transport Planning report 2105-037/TA/02 from **2022**. This is over 3 years out of date as is the TRICS generated report.
- The surveys used data for **car ownership from areas other than GA** (this is unethical!) When you want to include this data, it should be relevant data reflecting the car ownership in Great Ashby.
- The **Census data used in the Planning Application is from 2011**, instead of the Census of 2021. The demographic has changed considerably in 15 years! Why was the latest Census data ignored? Because it is not favourable to the developer! Again, this manipulation of data is unacceptable and unethical.
- The **Crashmap data** used to provide records on PIA accidents in Great Ashby is 2 years old. A serious accident took place at the junction of Great Ashby Way/Orwell Avenue as recently as 16th January 2025. A near miss reported only last week involving a young

cyclist on Calder Way. Near misses on Calder Way (almost daily!) when residents try to access the road, are not included in this data? Both Calder Way and Back Lane have experienced accidents and near accidents in recent months, some with vulnerable road users. I use these roads daily and I witness near misses on these roads more often than not.

Great Ashby residents already provided clear demonstration of the impact of development lacking in effective parking space and access provision. What is the point of 'Monitor and Manage' after construction starts?

In the light of the way this developer manipulated data in the past, I recommend that the 'Monitor and Manage' should be done by an independent contractor on behalf of Great Ashby Community Council (as elected by residents to represent us) and not by a developer who clearly has no regard for the safety of current GA residents.

This 'Monitor and Manage' should happen **BEFORE** any construction starts. The Monitor & Manage document clearly states that this will only begin **after** the build of the new houses? Basically, all existing GA residents would be expected to accept the increased traffic, the parking issues and displaced parking until a decision has been made once the new homes are in situ. By this time, it would be irreversible! This is totally inconsiderate and unacceptable to existing GA residents who will have to accept a constant flow of traffic, large Removal vans and Construction trucks up and down a less than 4ft wide lane, with a limited turning circle at either end. This will clearly exacerbate the air pollution and inhibit the use of our open space and wellbeing as confirmed in document HCC Public Health Service dated 29th Jan 2025.

There is no information on what scenarios the 'Monitor and Manage' intends to monitor. What are the intended triggers and how would these triggers be managed and mitigated. All these should be addressed and communicated to residents, so that residents are aware what is happening. The developer needs to be transparent with all. The proposed sum of £400,000 (S106) would not be sufficient to adequately cover mitigating work needed for Great Ashby, Weston and Graveley.

CALDER WAY AND BACK LANE

It is uncertain how the re-routed Back Lane will cater for the rural traffic between Graveley and Weston and vice versa, for example tractors, horse boxes and construction vehicles. Surely you do not expect these heavy vehicles to go via Haybluff Drive, Mendip Way & Bray Drive to get to their destinations?

3.22 of the Technical Note there is suggestion that the Highway Authority may wish to restrict larger vehicles from using Calder Way, but this mitigation would push rural and traffic for the proposed development through Haybluff Drive, Mendip Way & Bray Drive? This is not feasible. These roads are not designed for construction vehicles, tractors, etc. How would this developer get a long and wide vehicle like a crane to the site?

3.21 of the Note suggests Calder Way mitigation could include traffic lights, which would result in queuing traffic onto Great Ashby Way, or alternatively, widening the ends of the road, which may actually make the situation worse. As we are all aware, accidents on the A1M (which happens regularly) force traffic through Back Lane and Calder Lane. Residents of GA are forced to abandon their cars as they cannot get home for hours, due to the gridlock the additional cars

cause. This mitigation will only exacerbate the situation by increased congestion and will make it unsafe for all road users.

It is not clear how the access point from Haybluff Drive across the existing Back Lane into the proposed site would be managed during the initial construction phase, before a re-routed Back Lane has been constructed and operational. There are obvious safety concerns for this point where heavy vehicles cross into the site due to visibility and the vulnerability of the users of Back Lane, including horse riders and cyclists.

BRAY DRIVE, HAYBLUFF DRIVE & MENDIP WAY

There is no solution put forward in the Technical note to mitigate the large number of displaced vehicles safely. No solution is offered for the inaccurate data or the lack of consideration for throughfare traffic crossing Back Lane from the new estates and surrounding areas. No provisions or Mobile Strategy have been made for disabled parking, mobility scooters or vulnerable and elderly residents who require close access to their vehicles along Bray Drive, Haybluff Drive & Mendip Way.

‘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 rate payers? These issues were inbuilt from design and the same developer now wants to reverse-engineer the roads and parking at the detriment of current GA residents. All these issues were well documented by both HCC and NHDC. If this Technical Note is accepted, both HCC and NHDC will be in breach of their own policies and procedures.

There has been no modelling provided to show the likely movement of vehicles and no modelling to show the impact of local roads of such a drastic cut in on-street parking provision. The developer failed to show us where all the displaced cars will go. Stating that the displaced cars will be pushed into side roads, is no solution. All these roads are already congested and there are no spaces available. I have lived here for more than 20 years and there is just no solution, and this was caused by the initial design of Burleigh Park. This developer (Croudace) did not make provision for enough parking spaces from the outset. Now they want to decrease it even more.

This just show 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 (maybe a 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!

Any suggestion of utilising flat forecourts to create parking spaces for displaced cars is totally unacceptable. These spaces are privately owned, and the developer has no right to offer it to someone else! Just shows the disregard this developer throughout this process has shown the

existing GA residents! You cannot offer something that is not yours, you do not own it! The flats in question also pay monthly Service charges for the upkeep of these spaces.

The Applicant states in 2.21, 'These discussions [with HCC Highways] have shown that a technically deliverable solution involving in-verge parking bays could be constructed on Mendip Crescent [stet] and Bray Drive to increase the number of vehicles that could be parked'. This is very vague and does not constitute a mitigation measure which has been modelled or fully investigated. It does not provide the number of parking spaces which could be delivered. It is unlikely that it would provide sufficient spaces to accommodate the significant loss of on-street parking. Again, where will the displaced cars go? How is it safe to expect in this day and age that a woman should park far away from her home and walk alone at night to get from her car to her home? We have seen the increase of violence against woman. The displacement of cars will have a detrimental impact on the lives and mental health of women and other vulnerable residents. Some have no choice to use their car at night time, due to working shifts. The displacement of cars will put lives at risk!

Traffic to/from Weston, Back Lane, Haybluff Drive & Mendip Way and any Emergency Service would be compromised by the flow of traffic, with insufficient space for two-way traffic to move aside for the emergency services access. There is also no turning circle available in Haybluff Drive. Back Lane is already notorious for reckless driving, creating daily hazards for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists alike. The addition of at least 600 vehicles, alongside an increase in HGV construction traffic and a future bus route, will make an already unsafe situation exponentially worse. The roads in Weston and Great Ashby are not built to handle this volume of traffic, and without significant infrastructure improvements, we are putting lives at risk.

Seeing as majority of the residents of these roads (Haybluff Drive, Mendip Way and Bray Drive) are 'expected to cycle or walk everywhere', provisions should be made as a necessity for secure and safe places for cycles to be kept. The Technical note fails to address this for current residents. How will this be addressed?

PLANNING APPLICATION - NEW DEVELOPMENT

Some homes have no parking plots allocated, visitor parking areas or allocated EV charging points. These omissions do not meet the NHC policy on Vehicle Parking at new developments.

Solar Panels - some properties do not have solar panels. It is now mandatory for every newly built home/flat to have Solar panels and Heat pumps as a necessity. Without these they cannot be considered a beneficial pair for reducing energy costs and carbon footprint, and therefore also cannot be 'affordable', energy efficient or assist with lowering energy costs. As the plans show '40% affordable' homes will be built there is no clear evidence that this is the case. Therefore, this new development does not conform with the Future Homes Standard issued Fri 6 June '25.

BUS ROUTE

Moving onto the bus route/main through route suggestion through Bray Drive/Mendip Way this is

a huge safety concern. The dynamics of a main road are completely different to a residential road and the safety impact of these plans have been grossly underestimated. So many children walk and cycle to and from school in this area and the huge change in the volume of traffic, including during the construction, will have detrimental impacts on the children's abilities to travel around safely.

How is Great Ashby expected to facilitate a bus route and the extensive traffic flow that will come with this plan resulting in it being the main through route with extra traffic coming into the area from the new development and to Weston. The whole area is heavily populated by young families and this plan will completely change the focus of the area, no longer will children be able to play outside, ride their bikes or walk to the local park without fear of buses, heavy goods vehicles and a higher density of traffic causing them danger. This is contrary to NPPF (para 117).

The plan is turning Mendip Way into a one-way system with the main exit route ending at the roundabout by Round Diamond will be an absolute nightmare and will put at risk the lives of pupils attending Round Diamond School and also those attending Busy Bees Pre-School. Due to the design of the road, there are many hidden corners along Mendip Way where it is difficult to see cars coming until they are upon you. I have lived here more than 20 years and I am giving you my lived experience and also that of my fellow Great Ashbians.

If you add in buses, heavy goods vehicles and a one way system, which will only serve to increase the speed cars travel (at present people have no choice but to go slowly given the curves in the road), this is going to create massive road safety risks to pedestrians and primarily the children of the Great Ashby area residing along Bray Drive, Mendip Way and Haybluff Drive.

With the increased traffic from the local community being forced to use a one way system, coupled with not only the local community from surrounding villages, the buses flowing freely, the traffic from the already approved development for new houses at Roundwood and now a further 281 in this new application the decision taken by the council is quite frankly irresponsible when you factor in where the one way along Mendip Way exits i.e. at Round Diamond School. I can only imagine the level of traffic, the tail backs, the delays around key times e.g. school drop off and pick up time and the detrimental impact on the residents of Great Ashby, the pupils and staff of Round Diamond School and those of Busy Bees Pre-School. The impact on children's health from the significant increase in traffic breathing in all these fumes as well as the increased likelihood of accidents is a significant factor that has already been overlooked but now when you are considering adding 281 new homes I would urge you to seriously return to this issue yet again and consider the impact of health and safety.

To decimate an existing residential area for the benefit of a brand new housing development is unacceptable and the council should have looked at ways to ensure suitable access roads and bus services were secured independently elsewhere and not right near to a local infant/primary school! Why can't the bus route continue along Great Ashby Way as it has always done! The fact that the direction of the bus has already been changed, resulting in residents waiting at bus stops with no shelter in awful conditions is another example of a lack of care and consideration for the residents of Great Ashby.

Surely Great Ashby Way and the back lanes are perfectly adequate for a bus route/through route to cope with the traffic flow requirements of the new developments, including this further

application for 281 new homes, and just need to be suitably adapted around the new Roundwood site to flow traffic through this site rather than cause significant damage to an existing, settled and family friendly environment that has been created around the Bray Drive/Mendip Way/Haybluff Drive area and surrounding roads.

We then need to consider the fact that the plans to widen the roads will shrink the pavements and green spaces along Mendip Way causing significant safety concerns for parents of young children in buggies, those who have mobility issues and/or use a wheelchair. This will leave people struggling to move around the area with ease and could result in vulnerable/elderly residents being unable to leave their property for fear of their safety, which will then lead to feeling isolated and experiencing mental wellbeing issues. This is contrary to NPPF (Para 117) requirements.

These 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 and rate payers.

SUMMARY

In summary, all of my objections raised as per my letter dated 2nd February 2025, still stands as the developer failed miserably to address any of these issues. The Technical note does not offer any solutions to a massively under-allocated parking area in the existing Burleigh Park area of Great Ashby. These proposed access routes and temporary changes to the existing roads are dangerous and will put lives at risk.

R. PIETERSE

Resident Great Ashby