

The Planning Inspectorate

COMMENTS ON CASE (Online Version)

Please note that comments about this case need to be made within the timetable. This can be found in the notification letter sent by the local planning authority or the start date letter. Comments submitted after the deadline may be considered invalid and returned to sender.

Appeal Reference: APP/X1925/W/25/3358840

DETAILS OF THE CASE

Appeal Reference	APP/X1925/W/25/3358840
Appeal By	MR BRUCE PARKER
Site Address	Land to the East of Old Hale Way Hitchin Hertfordshire SG4 0SA Grid Ref Easting: 518530 Grid Ref Northing: 231117

SENDER DETAILS

Name	MR GILES GIBSON
Address	24 Bessemer Close HITCHIN SG5 1AG

ABOUT YOUR COMMENTS

In what capacity do you wish to make representations on this case?

- ☐ Appellant
- ☐ Agent
- ☒ Interested Party / Person
- ☐ Land Owner
- ☐ Rule 6 (6)

What kind of representation are you making?

- ☐ Final Comments
- ☐ Proof of Evidence
- ☐ Statement
- ☐ Statement of Common Ground
- ☒ Interested Party/Person Correspondence
- ☐ Other

YOUR COMMENTS ON THE CASE

The piece of land for which Mr Parker is making an application lies between the village of Ickleford and the marked town of Hitchin. I grew up in Ickleford, and now live in Hitchin, close to the piece of land and on the same main road.

I object to the application and request whole heartedly that the application be denied.

I object for the following reasons:

1) This has historically been a fallow field, allowing wildlife to travel to the river at the end of the field. Combined with the allotments on the opposite side of Old Hale Way, the school playing fields and the bushes & trees at its edge, it provides a path all the way to Oughton Head and the countryside beyond for wildlife. Even now as it has been established as allotments there are animals that use this as a thoroughfare. Continued development of this site will adversely affect animals, birds and plants.

2) The entrance to this piece of land is at a narrow point on Old Hale Way. It is also on a corner, so visibility is not great. Increased traffic here is likely to increase the chance of accidents. This not only relates to vehicles, but to the large number of pedestrians travelling to schools in Ickleford and Hitchin. Note also that the entrance is exactly adjacent to the vehicular access to the Old Hale Way allotments, so there will be instances of 2 vehicles attempting to get onto Old Hale way in a "shoulder to shoulder" position, again increasing the risk of accidents. Increased use of Mr Parker's land for parking or any activity where people will be driving will make this situation worse.

3) As Old Hale Way emerges from Ickleford the road is narrow. Just after it passes the land for which application has been made, it begins to broaden out as it enters Hitchin. However, residents park their cars on Old Hale Way at this point. The result is that cars leaving Ickleford have to pause behind the parked cars, and wait of the oncoming traffic to pass. This is a busy road generally, and very busy at commuting time. As a result there is frequent queuing. Even with the Current level of use of Mr Parker's land (and the adjacent Old Hale Way allotments) this causes an even worse local problem as follows. The cars leaving Ickleford and queuing to get past the parked cars of local residents form a barrier in front of both Mr Parker's land, and the Old Hale Way Allotments. This means that cars heading from Hitchin towards Ickleford and attempting to turn right onto Mr Parker's land (or the adjacent Old Hale Way Allotments) cannot do so. As a result, they stop and wait for the queuing cars to move. Unfortunately the queuing cars cannot move, as a second queue quickly forms behind the car trying to turn into Mr Parker's land. An instant local gridlock develops. This has happened on many occasions. It usually lasts 2 or 3 minutes until the driver attempting to turn into Mr Parker's land (or the adjacent Old Hale Way allotments) realises that they have no choice but to drive down into Ickleford and find somewhere to turn around and come back again. It causes delays and frustrations for many. Increased use of Mr Parker's land for parking or any activity where people will be driving will make this situation worse.

4) Mr Parker has said that he wishes to offer some of his land as parking for Ickleford for events. This is nonsense as anyone offered a parking space here will simply decline and drive further into Ickleford. There have been Fete's, Village Hall events, Christmas Bazars, Big church services, sporting festivals etc all held in the village for decades, and parking has always been well managed. Mr Parker is simply using this declared intention as another part of driving the wedge of increased use further into the crack he has created.

5) Mr Parker has suggested that he wishes to run car-boot sales on the land. Again this is nonsense. There are many car boot sales established locally. The smallest of these is on land many, many times the size of Mr Parker's land. By the time stall-holders had set up anything to sell, the car-park proposed by Mr Parker would be full. Anyone visiting to try and buy anything would end up parking on the roadway, again increasing the traffic problems and risk of accidents.

6) This land is part of the very thin, but very clear, separation between the village of Ickleford and the Market town of Hitchin. People in both the village and the town are proud of their homes and

identities. The loss of this narrow piece of green-belt would be a sore loss.

Mr Parker has a record of exceeding the permissions that he has been granted (for example using his "agricultural shed" for the storage of unrelated motor vehicles) and for every permission he is given, he raises a Next-Step type application in order that he can get more and more use out of the piece of land. He will not be happy until such time as he has found a way of commercialising the land that he has inherited. The thin end of the wedge has already been inserted, this application is simply trying to push the gap more widely open.

Please, do not blight the lives of the local people, the families that walk their children backwards and forwards to school every day, the bus and lorry drivers who cope with this narrow road, nor all of the car users who get held up at this point. Please have in mind the increasing stress on our wildlife.

Best Regards,

Giles.