

**3 MEADOW WAY
HITCHIN
SG5 2BN**

NHDC PLANNING DEPT
Council Offices
Gernon Road
Letchworth
SG6 3JF

15th June 2025

Dear Sirs

Planning Application 25/01258/TD - Proposed 20m phonemast at Hawthorn Close SG5 2BP

I enclose a petition signed by 95 local residents who object to the installation of the proposed 20m phone mast as detailed in the above planning application, and who have stated that they have not been able to submit their objection online for one reason or another. The details for the objection are given at the head of the first page of the petition.

The decision to obtain last-minute petition signatures was two-fold. Firstly, because it became clear from discussions during my recent leaflet drop to local residents that very few properties had received notification of this planning proposal and there was very little time remaining to consider and make comments. Secondly, a large number of residents have reported difficulties in submitting their online objections.

The fact of the matter is that this proposal affects a very large number of properties on the Willows estate and beyond (at least 180-200 properties - ie those in Hawthorn Close, Meadow Way, Cranborne Avenue, The Ridgeway, Russell's Slip, Moormeade Close, the top end of Offley Road as well as the top end of The Limes), simply by the enormous height of the proposed structure. It would dominate the skyline and be visible by the majority of properties within at least 250 metres - and probably further.

Many residents have expressed their shock and anger to me at not having been notified by the council of this proposal and, quite rightly, pointing out that this is not your typical 'small side extension' that only affects actual *immediate* neighbours!

So I have to ask the Council, why did they deem this proposal only relevant to a small handful of properties that were actually notified? By my reckoning, having spoken to a large number of angry local residents over the last 10 days, I estimate that only between 12-20 properties were notified. (Vicki Wood's response to my enquiries of 3/6/25 states that "...it is impossible to notify everyone who may be affected however we do try to notify immediate neighbours". This comment alone would imply that the Council was aware that a considerably larger number of residents will be affected by the proposal!

(As an adjunct to the point that so few people received this notification; I received my letter from the planning Department 12 days after it was written. When I queried why it took so long, Ms Wood stated that "...letters were sent out on the 16th May, what happened after that is beyond our control unfortunately..."

I know that Royal Mail may not be quite the service it once was, but it still doesn't (usually) take 12 days to deliver second class mail!). However, Ms Wood went on to point out that "...a site notice was displayed near to the site of the proposed mast, this is intended to cover anyone who it has not been possible to notify."

I attach a photo of where I presume the notice was once affixed(?) and, as you can see, it was likely positioned on a lamppost outside 53 Hawthorn Close. As the Council is aware, this particular location is a small one-way access road onto Willow Lane; there are just two properties here and the road is only used by vehicles travelling from the estate towards Luton. There is no ingress to the estate at this point - and neither is there pedestrian access onto Willow Lane since the footpath on both sides ends at the junction! This basically means **only cars** exiting towards Luton will travel down this side road. Therefore I would suggest that the Council's siting of this important notice was totally inappropriate and neglectful since barely any pedestrian would have passed by in order to view it.

Since there is absolutely no doubt that the proposed 20m high structure would affect a very large number of properties, it has to be the responsibility of the NHDC Planning Dept to adequately advise as many affected residents as possible and a (presumably A4) typed notice (once) attached to a lamppost on a little-used road (even less-used by pedestrians) is a totally inadequate and negligent form of notification.

To summarise, had I not taken on the task to prepare/print several sheets of detailed information and location plans and hand deliver these to around 200 local properties, then only a small handful of residents (ie the few whom NHDC actually notified) would have known anything about this proposed installation. Therefore, in addition to the objections given, I wish to opine that the notification actions taken by the Planning Department in this regard were grossly lacking and specifically reprehensible.

As for the application itself, I noted that the proposed site plan is titled 'VENDOR SWAP'. This is a clear misrepresentation/calculated downplay of the actual proposal by EE; ie a so-called 'swapping' of an existing 9m lamppost/mast with a 20m monstrosity - one that is actually 28 feet higher than the existing tallest tree and will totally blight the whole neighbourhood. I would therefore suggest that EE have knowingly employed inaccurate and misleading wording in a clear attempt to try and minimise the actual massive impact such an installation will have on the surrounding area, its residents and their properties.

Another reason for anger expressed by residents has been the difficulty/inability that a fair number of people have encountered when endeavouring to register or login on the Planning website. When I spoke to Alex (Howard?) at Planning on 12th June regarding this petition, I mentioned these difficulties and he admitted that he had heard (generally) of such issues. So, if the Council is aware of these problems, why have they not fixed them to enable local North Herts residents to submit their views in a simple and straightforward manner?

On behalf of the 95 attached signatories, I respectfully urge the Council to carefully consider the overall negative impact this proposal will have on a great many local residents and thus refuse the application.

Yours sincerely

Sandra Biggerstaff (Mrs)
3 Meadow Way SG5 2BN

Attachments:

1. 7-page Petition signed by 95 local residents objecting to Application by EE ref 25/01258/TD
2. Area map indicating the number of properties within 250m range of proposed mast
3. Photo showing (presumed) location of site notice
4. Colour-filled copy of Site Elevation Plan submitted by EE (with additional scaled adults for comparison) - given to all properties (approximately 200) shown in yellow on No.2 attachment