

MY OBJECTION — PLANNING APPLICATION 26/0427/OUTEI

Outline application for up to 550 homes: Former Potters Bar Golf Course, Darkes Lane, EN6 1DE

I am a resident of [YOUR TOWN/AREA] and I formally object to the proposed housing development of the former Potters Bar Golf Course. I am not opposed to housing in principle. I am opposed to this specific proposal because the evidence shows it has not been demonstrated to be justified, safe or deliverable.

[Please add your own reason here — for example: I walk past this site regularly; I am concerned about flooding in the Potters Bar Brook valley; I value this open Green Belt land and its wildlife. A personal paragraph carries more weight than a copied statement.]

THE KEY NUMBERS THAT HAVE NOT BEEN EXPLAINED:

42–59 homes — what a developer-side consultant assessed this site as being able to hold, using Hertsmere’s own planning data (RPS Sequential Test, August 2024)

400 homes — what Hertsmere is proposing to allocate in the Local Plan

550 homes — what the developer is applying for

This tenfold discrepancy has not been explained. I want a clear, public answer and a commitment to transparency. This application should not be approved.

MY SPECIFIC CONCERNS:

- DARKES LANE IS THE ONLY VEHICULAR ACCESS TO THIS SITE. The railway tunnel at the western boundary runs under the London–Edinburgh main line, is pedestrian-only, flood-prone, and subject to Network Rail restrictions — it cannot serve 550 homes. The Hertfordshire Way footpath exits to a private road, crosses privately owned land, and floods regularly via run-off.
- THE APPLICANT’S OWN DOCUMENTS CONFIRM THERE IS A COMPROMISED SECONDARY EMERGENCY ACCESS. The Design and Access Statement (DAS, Section 1.2) describes the “emergency access” as a pedestrian and cycle path alongside Darkes Lane, controlled by a rising bollard. Section 5.7 (page 72) describes it as serving emergency vehicles only “if necessary” — conditional language that does not constitute a reliable emergency route. The cross-section drawing shows this path is 5.0m wide and built to bound aggregate standard — a surface not structurally rated for fire engines weighing 14–18 tonnes when loaded. No specification confirming compliance with Building Regulations Approved Document B for fire appliance access has been provided. More critically, the applicant’s own flood modelling (DAS Section 2.9) identifies existing shallow flooding on Darkes Lane north of the site from manhole surcharging in storm events. Both the primary vehicular access and this compromised emergency access connect to the same stretch of Darkes Lane. In flood conditions both fail simultaneously. This directly fails NPPF paragraph 181(e) — safe access and egress for the lifetime of the development has not been demonstrated.

- **THE PROPOSED BUILDING HEIGHTS ARE MISLEADING.** The applicant's Building Heights Parameter Plan (Parameter Plan 03, DAS page 58) sets a maximum ridge height of 11.0m for nominally "2-storey" residential zones. Standard 2-storey houses in Potters Bar have ridge heights of 7.5–8.5m. Heights are measured from proposed ground floor levels which may themselves be set 1m above existing ground. On this sloping site, buildings in "2-storey" zones will present the visual mass of 2.5 to 3-storey structures when viewed from lower elevations. The parameter covers entire character zones, preventing proper visual impact assessment. This fails SADM26, NPPF paragraphs 130–133, and is contrary to the site's adjacency to the Darkes Lane (West) Conservation Area.
- **THE FLOOD ACCESS HAS NOT BEEN RESOLVED.** The only vehicular access depends on works to a flood-prone watercourse crossing on Darkes Lane. The Environment Agency requires open-span bridges at all crossings — those bridge designs have never been produced, modelled or reviewed. The EA's satisfaction letters are pre-application advice only and cannot be treated as clearance. A Hertsmere planning officer's email of 5 March 2024 (EIR2026/12448) shows the site was previously included in consultation while this question remained unresolved. Any works must also be shown not to worsen flooding for existing residential neighbours near the entrance who already lie in the same flood zone.
- **THE COUNCIL REFUSED A NEARBY LARGE GREEN BELT SCHEME PARTLY ON FLOOD GROUNDS.** In December 2025, Hertsmere refused application 24/1101/OUTEI because the Flood Risk Sequential Test had not been satisfied. The golf course has a worse flood profile. Hertsmere will need to explain any inconsistency in decision making satisfactorily before granting consent or face possible legal challenge.
- **PRIMARY EVIDENCE CONFIRMS A FOUL WATER OVERFLOW INTO POTTERS BAR BROOK WITHIN SOURCE PROTECTION ZONE I.** Thames Water EIR evidence (EIR-23-24-626, 4 March 2024) confirms a 630m³ storage tank with consented storm overflow permit TEMP.2548 discharging to Potters Bar Brook. Photographic evidence also shows what may be upstream agricultural runoff entering the watercourse near the railway tunnel. The developer's own documents state that Thames Water foul drainage capacity remains unconfirmed.
- **THE SITE IS NOT ALLOCATED FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE CURRENT ADOPTED LOCAL PLAN.** This site was not included for development in the Local Plan 2012-2027. That plan is still current.
- **THE SITE HAS BEEN REWILDING SINCE 2018 — THIS SUPPORTS THE CASE AGAINST DEVELOPMENT.** Almost all evidence of the former golf course has been reclaimed by vegetation. The site has rewilded naturally. This is ecological recovery, not dereliction. CEG may argue rewilding supports a 'grey belt' characterisation. It does not: it increases the site's ecological value and reinforces the case against development.
- **THE AFFORDABLE HOMES PROMISE MAY BE AT RISK.** Unresolved infrastructure costs — bridge engineering, foul drainage upgrades within SPZ I, mitigation for approximately 1,601 TPO trees, and transport mitigation — threaten the deliverability of the 275 affordable homes promised. Without a published viability assessment, there is no reliable evidence they will be built.

- **THE ROAD JUNCTION RAISES SERIOUS CONCERNS.** The developer's own traffic evidence shows the Baker Street / Darkes Lane junction would operate above practical capacity in the evening peak with no mitigation proposed.
- **THE SITE SUPPORTS PROTECTED WILDLIFE.** This includes newts, bats and badgers.
- **THERE IS A BETTER USE FOR THIS LAND.** The rewilded former golf course could become a country park, sports pitches, community space and ecological reserve — uses that fit the site's constraints and serve Potters Bar residents far better than a large housing estate on flood-prone Green Belt land with a highly problematic flood-affected access.

WHAT I AM ASKING FOR:

I request that the Local Planning Authority refuses application 26/0427/OUTEI. The applicant has not demonstrated the sequential test is satisfied; that access is deliverable and adequate for 550 homes including a genuinely independent emergency vehicle route not compromised by the same Darkes Lane flooding as the primary access; that the proposed building heights are acceptable against SADM26, NPPF paragraphs 130–133 and the adjacent Conservation Area; that foul drainage capacity exists; or that the proposal avoids harm to protected water resources. Hertsmere will need to explain the inconsistency with the PB3 refusal satisfactorily before granting consent or face possible legal challenge.

Name: _____

Address / Postcode: _____ Date: _____

Submit your objection to: the Hertsmere planning portal — search application reference 26/0427/OUTEI | Full evidence and technical objection: www.pottersbar.vision