

Patmore Heath Conservation Area

Draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan Comment Form

Your comments are sought on the Draft Patmore Heath Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. These should be made in writing and either sent or emailed to the address below by 3 December 2019. Alternatively you can leave this form tonight. Any comments submitted will be publically available but will exclude personal details. To comply with data protection legislation the Local Planning Authority will delete all personally identifiable information we gather as part of this consultation process within six months of the adoption of the appraisal. If you wish to discuss the document further please contact the Conservation Team on the number below,

Name
Address:
Telephone No:
Email:
Comments: After attending the meeting on 22 October 2019 my first comment is that that the whole procedure is very subjective! The fields to the east should not be taken out of the conservation area due to their protective value and proximity to the Heath. I find it extraordinary that Heath House on Patmore Heath has been singled out to be the only house to be removed from the conservation area. Why is this?

PTO

After your officer accepting that the properties on Patmore Heath are all very individual, I fail to understand why your officer puts forward that the frontage of all property boundaries should be changed to the same hedging.

Good luck with the idea of removing the telegraph poles and having the wires put underground.

The suggestion of expanding the conservation area to include Gravesend is surprising as it is a separate area and the properties of interest there are already listed.

Our Contact Details:

Website: www.eastherts.gov.uk
Email: john.bosworth@eastherts.gov.uk
Phone: 01279 655 261 and ask for
the Conservation Officer

East Herts District
Council
Wallfields, Pegs Lane
Hertford, SG13 8EQ

Patmore Heath Conservation Area

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Your comments are sought on the Draft Patmore Heath Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. These should be made in writing and either sent or emailed to the address below by 3 December 2019. Alternatively you can leave this form tonight. Any comments submitted will be publically available but will exclude personal details. To comply with data protection legislation the Local Planning Authority will delete all personally identifiable information we gather as part of this consultation process within six months of the adoption of the appraisal. If you wish to discuss the document further please contact the Conservation Team on the number below,

Name :
Address:
Telephone No
Email:
Comments: After careful consideration and after attending the public meeting on 22 October 2019, I have the following comments to make: Firstly: I find it extraordinary that Heath House with its garden and fields have been singled out to be removed from the conservation area. As the name suggest Heath House is very much a part of Patmore Heath and can be seen from the heath and yet is the only dwelling in the entire conservation area to be singled out to be removed, while others have been added. I find this to be without any logical reasoning and view with some suspicion.

PTO

Secondly: The fields to the east of the heath were included within the conversation area for the valid reason of providing an outer zone to protect the SSSI/NR status of Patmore Heath Nature Reserve with all its rare natural features. This situation has not changed and therefore these boundaries of conservation area should not be changed either.

Thirdly: I can see no necessity to include some of the houses in Gravesend along the Albury road. It is well known that this narrow lane is used as a busy thoroughfare for heavy lorries going to and from the recycling plant in Furneux Pelham which constantly damage the banks on either side of the road. The houses in this proposed conservation area extension have no historic value and very little architectural interest and bear no association with Patmore Heath Nature Reserve.

My final point is to remind those involved that a conservation area evolves over many years and although it has to be reviewed from time to time it does not necessarily have to be altered merely for the sake of change.

Our Contact Details:

Website: www.eastherts.gov.uk
Email: john.bosworth@eastherts.gov.uk
Phone: 01279 655 261 and ask for
the Conservation Officer

East Herts District
Council
Wallfields, Pegs Lane
Hertford, SG13 8EQ

John Bosworth

From:
Sent: 19 November 2019 18:29
To: John Bosworth
Subject: [External] Fwd: Conservation - PATMORE HEATH

THE PATMORE HEATH CONSERVATION APPRAISAL

Dear Mr. Bosworth,

Thank you for the opportunity to have sight of, and comment upon the draft East Herts Management Plan for Patmore Heath, which we have read with great interest. Whilst it is fair to say that we are in general agreement with much of the document, we do have certain areas of concern.

People have lived on Patmore Heath for centuries and the hamlet existed for the vast proportion of that time as an agrarian based community, with most residents seeking employment locally. Whilst agriculture still dominates land usage, modern farming practices and mechanisation have reduced to near zero the farmers' local human resource requirements. In parallel better communications and transport systems have opened the Parish of Albury (of which Patmore Heath is part) to commuter access.

Today some 90% of families occupying the 42 dwellings in the Hamlet of

Patmore Heath have at least one member who travels away from the Parish for work. The change has accelerated since the end of WW2. Also, on the Heath most dwellings have, overtime, been demolished and rebuilt or considerably extended, while mains water, sewage and power have been provided.

The Heath inhabitants have changed to professionally led families who have been drawn to the attractiveness of the area. We see cars in every household, while the use of the Heath as grazing land and vegetable gardens has changed to one of recreation. Rural communities must change to adapt to these external pressures. If they are not permitted so to do, they risk falling into disrepair.

We are of the opinion that Conservation policies must incorporate these diverse drivers, otherwise they will become little more than Preservation dictats.

Of particular note regarding the draft plan:

1. We would like to see a control or buffer zone extending for a distance (say 500 meters) beyond the existing SSSI boundary to defend the natural habitat of the Heath from excessive noise and light pollution
2. We view with some surprise and concern the removal of Heath House from the Conservation Area.
3. The street scene is what it is - telegraph poles are now part of today's scene - as is car parking. We are more concerned with light pollution on nocturnal wildlife than with telegraph poles.

4. Boundary fencing and walls have been in use on the Heath for many years, mainly as a means of restraining grazing animals and wild animals from encroaching upon gardens. They are part of the “street scene” of the Heath

5. The conservation work on the Heath led by The Herts and Middlesex Trust requires a more robust approach in order to maintain the nature of the Heath; particularly regarding the increasing encroachment of tree saplings .

Kind Regards,

Sent from my iPad

John Bosworth

From:
Sent: 02 December 2019 12:55
To: John Bosworth
Cc:
Subject: [External] Comments on Patmore Heath Draft CA MP

Hi John,

Please see our comments below on the Draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Patmore Heath.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Best regards,

HMWT comments on the Patmore Heath Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

Paragraph 1.8 states *"This Conservation Appraisal will identify the special character of the conservation area"*. In relation to this paragraph, section 3.8 identifies that a 19th century map, as included in the plan, shows the heath with no trees.

The open nature of the heath is a fundamental part of the historic character of the conservation area, and this should be fully reflected in the management plan. Patmore Heath is also a SSSI notified for the rare grass heathland habitat that it contains, the condition of which is currently assessed to be "unfavourable recovering" due to the large amount of tree cover that is currently present. In order to retain its SSSI status the number of these trees must be reduced.

The Patmore Heath Conservation Area Management Plan should illustrate the vital importance of the open acid grass heath to wildlife and landscape heritage. HMWT recognise and are very supportive of the general public's love of trees. However, in this instance the critically rare open habitats that the heath supports are a greater priority than the trees, which threaten the special character of the Heath. To avoid misunderstandings, we think that it is very important that people understand this management requirement. This should be clearly set out in his plan.

Comments/suggestions:

- On the front cover of the consultation document, the photograph of trees should be replaced with one of the open heath.

- Paragraph 4.6:

"Important trees and hedgerows are identified by this appraisal."

The term "important" must be defined here. None of the trees identified in the management plan and character analysis maps contribute to the true historic character of Patmore Heath as an open grass heathland habitat, nor do the basic criteria listed for identifying these trees.

The presence of so many trees is very detrimental to the open grass heathland habitat due to the shading and nutrification caused by their canopies and leaf drop. Identifying such a large number of trees (over 100) as "important" contradicts with management objectives for Patmore Heath and actively threatens its SSSI status. In order to restore and preserve the true historic character of Patmore Heath, as well as the rare and threatened habitat it contains, many of these trees must be removed.

- Paragraph 4.11:

PTO

"Important views are identified."

Again the term *"important"* must be defined. On the heath itself, views that are deemed worthy of protection under the Conservation Area designation should be those that reflect the open nature of the heath.

- Paragraph 5.3: *"Positive attributes."*

Trees should not be actively listed as a positive attribute due to the above reasons.

Suggestion for replacement:

5.3. Positive attributes. The Heath itself is extensive and contains a number of ponds. As set out previously it is an extremely significant dry grass heathland habitat. There are two concentrations of listed buildings, one on the northern edge of the Heath and one to the south east of it. There is also a scatter of historic properties at Gravesend which is now proposed for inclusion within the conservation area. About 50% of the listed properties have thatched roofs.

5.4. Negative attributes. The grass heathland habitat and historic character is threatened by the excessive growth of trees. Whilst trees are welcome in most situations, they are considered a negative attribute to the conservation of this habitat. The conservation area's historic character is also compromised by 20th century developments principally on the western and north eastern boundaries. Types of front boundary treatments vary and include some various fencing detailing which could be improved.

- Paragraph 5.35: *"Site of Special Scientific Interest"*

This paragraph should define why the site was designated as a SSSI.

Suggestion for replacement:

Patmore Heath (including associated areas to the north) is described in its SSSI citation as "the finest example in Hertfordshire of dry grass heathland on the strongly acidic Reading Beds sand". To conserve this special habitat there are some 24 restrictions to works and operations which require Natural England's consent. Some operations such as tree works may also require other permission or notification (e.g. Forestry Commission and EHDC respectively).

- Paragraph 5.36 *"Nature Reserve."*

Suggestion for replacement:

Patmore Heath is a nature reserve and is owned by Albury Parish Council and managed by HMWT under a tenancy agreement. It is an outstanding example of grass heathland, now a scarce habitat in the South East of England. An array of specialist plants and wildflowers indicative of open heathland can be found, including southern marsh orchid and the locally rare heath rush. Seasonal highlights include various insects, amphibians reptiles and birds.

- Paragraph 5.37

Suggestion for replacement:

Patmore Heath is Common Land with sporadic grazing rights which declined after WW2. This led to the encroachment of trees and the consequent decline in the quality of the heath. Grazing has been reintroduced by HMWT and a local commoner to recreate the management that the heath requires to survive.

- Paragraph 5.38

Suggestion for replacement:

The site/s contains a number of ponds and many trees. Up until the mid 20th century, when Patmore Heath was more actively grazed, the site was open and without tree cover.

HMWT are currently drafting a new management plan which involves the retention of some of the most mature trees and the removal of others, in order to preserve the historic character of Patmore Heath, the rare and threatened habitat it contains, and to restore the SSSI to favourable condition.

Restoration of open grass heathland is to be prioritised to the East and Western areas of the heath, with some trees retained as a wood pasture strip running from North to South down the centre of the heath, so as to retain some areas of tree cover to which local residents have become accustomed.

- Paragraph 5.40: *"Particularly important trees and hedgerows."*

As per the comment on paragraph 4.6, the trees shown diagrammatically are in fact detrimental to the rare habitat and historic character of the heath, and therefore should not be described as *"important"*. Although this paragraph acknowledges proposed tree removal by stating that *"As selected management continues and further trees on the*

heath are removed the information shown on the plans will progressively become outdated”, this is contradictory to their identification as “important”.

Suggestion for replacement:

The trees on the heath are shown diagrammatically on the accompanying plans, interpreted in part from satellite information. As previously advised, HMWT’s management plan for the heath will involve the removal of selected trees in the interest of proper management of the rare grass heathland. As selected management continues and further trees on the heath are removed the information shown on the plans will progressively become outdated.

Further suggestion for inclusion:

In order to preserve the true historic character of Patmore Heath, as well as the rare and threatened habitat it contains, Natural England and HMWT ask that residents refrain from parking their cars on the heath, other than in the designated parking area to the North as defined by HMWT.

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John Bosworth

From:
Sent: 03 December 2019 18:29
To: John Bosworth
Cc:
Subject: [External] DRAFT PATMORE HEATH CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL & MANAGEMENT PLAN - comments

Dear Mr Bosworth,

Thank you for arranging the meeting on 22nd October in Albury Village Hall regarding the Patmore Heath Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. Please find my comments below. I have also cc'd Joshua Wells from the HMWT and Councillor Geoffrey Robinson

The Settlement of Patmore Heath surrounds and fronts onto the Heath. The existing houses are laid out in a ring on the elevated crest of a south facing promontory that slopes down to the River Ash to the west and towards a tributary valley and stream to the south-east. The setting of the settlement therefore includes the Heath itself, the houses forming a ring around the crest of the promontory and the valley sides of the promontory as well (with some long views towards the settlement from public footpaths on the opposite valley sides).

There are a number of public footpaths and permissive footpaths around the edge of the settlement which are much used and enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. In particular, the long distance Hertfordshire Way Public Footpath approached the settlement from the south-east and then crosses the Heath before exiting from the western end of the settlement where it crosses the river Ash.

Users of these local public and permissive footpaths (which combine to create some circular routes around and through the settlement) experience the settlement and its surrounding landscape through these walks. **These public and permissive footpaths therefore are an integral part of the experiential setting of the settlement, the heritage assets within it, the heath and the conservation area and yet they are not shown on the current Conservation Area Appraisal and public views from them do not seem to have been considered at all.**

I understand that the Landscape Institute's Guidance on Landscape & Visual Appraisals suggest that users of public footpaths (and especially long distance public footpaths) are highly susceptible to changes in views. Some of the fields on the promontory's valley sides shown to be removed from the Management Plan are adjacent to public footpaths (and the long distance Hertfordshire Way public footpath) or would be partially visible during the winter months from the permissive footpath that follows the stream at the bottom of the valley to the south-east.

The four fields to the west of the settlement on the valley side are also important in terms of the landscape setting for the houses on the eastern edge of the settlement (seen from the road and from a number of public footpaths on the opposite valley side (as well as providing the historic setting to the Catherine Wheel Public House).

I appreciate the good work the Council is doing in revisiting the Management Plan for Patmore Heath, but would ask that the 'significance' of the existing views from public footpaths and roads towards the settlement and towards the surrounding fields on the promontory valley sides is properly assessed by a qualified landscape consultant to determine the role that they play in the wider experiential setting of the

conservation area before any further decisions are made. Without this critical component of background survey information, I don't believe the current DRAFT PATMORE HEATH CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL & MANAGEMENT PLAN can be considered to be either complete or sound.

Yours Sincerely,

John Bosworth

From:
Sent: 25 November 2019 09:39
To: John Bosworth
Cc:
Subject: [External] Patmore Heath Conservation area appraisal and management plan - draft

Dear Mr Bosworth,

Further to the launch event of the Patmore Heath Conservation area appraisal and management plan - draft, Albury Parish Council (APC) have prepared summary comments for consideration by EHDC.

Albury Parish Council included the draft conservation plan as an agenda item in the November 5th meeting. We were joined by several local residents and a constructive and objective discussion took place. These residents each intend to submit their own specific feedback to EHDC.

The summary points that APC would like to submit are as follows:

As a general comment, the logic for the proposed changes as presented at the public meeting Oct 22nd 2019, does not appear particularly compelling, especially from the perspective of Albury residents.

Changes which are of concern include:

The extension to include Gravesend. There is considerable concern about the adverse impact of HGV traffic through the narrow road at Gravesend. The volume, speed and size of HGV's is in clear conflict with the aim of preserving a fragile historic environment. Residents report regular damage to buildings including walls and residential drive ways and the road surface.

Inclusion of properties that do not appear to have historic or architectural merit. The logic for including some relatively modern properties is not sufficiently clear.

Exclusion of pasture land to rear of The Hunting Box extending north to rear of Gamekeepers Cottage and pasture land to the south of Heath House.

It has been suggested by some residents that these fields were initially included in the Conservation area as some form of 'buffer' to protect or enhance the SSI status of Patmore Heath. Whilst it is understood that advice from Historic England advises against the inclusion of agricultural land forming part of the wider landscape in Conservation areas, is this sufficient reason to remove them from the Patmore Conservation area?

Utility poles. The draft report suggests the Parish Council might wish to consider possible improvements relating to selective utility poles. This would appear to be a significant task and APC will need time to evaluate this.

As a Parish Council we fully support the need to protect and where possible further enhance our historic built environment. We look forward to further discussions with EHDC before any final decision on the proposed boundary changes to the Patmore Conservation area. We will continue to encourage Albury residents to submit their own specific feedback on the proposed changes.

We appreciate the work being done by EHDC to consult with local residents.

Yours Sincerely,

Chair - Albury Parish Council

John Bosworth

From:
Sent: 02 December 2019 10:28
To: John Bosworth
Subject: [External] Patmore Heath Conservation Area

Dear Mr Bosworth

Re: PATMORE HEATH CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN DRAFT CONSULTATION 2019 (22 October - 3 December 2019)

Following the public meeting in Albury Village Hall on Tuesday 22nd October, I am writing with my comments in relation to the proposed removal of Heath House and the surrounding paddocks from the Conservation Area. I confirm that this property is owned by me and my wife. My family moved to the house in the early 70's.

I am happy with your proposals to remove Heath House and the surrounding paddocks from the Conservation Area. Having listened to your explanation that conservation areas are supposed to deal with buildings and not open spaces (which are covered by different policies), and having looked at the existing boundaries of the conservation area which seem to include some paddocks and exclude others, on an apparently random basis, I can see that you are making the boundaries more consistent by excluding all open fields/paddocks and I am happy with this approach. As for the house itself, you described it as tucked away from Patmore Heath and not visible from it and so concluded that it doesn't affect the Conservation Area in that sense. You also described it as having no architectural merit which is accurate as it was originally constructed as a bungalow in the 1920's/30's and has since been extended several times over the last 40 years or so. I agree with these comments and on this basis I am happy to support your proposals to remove the property from the Conservation Area.

Kind regards

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John Bosworth

From:
Sent: 02 December 2019 09:59
To: John Bosworth
Subject: [External] Patmore Heath Conservation Area

Dear Mr Bosworth

Re: PATMORE HEATH CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN DRAFT CONSULTATION 2019 (22 October - 3 December 2019)

Following the public meeting in Albury Village Hall on Tuesday 22nd October, I am writing with my comments in relation to the Mission Hall, which is owned by me and my wife, together with the fields around it.

I welcome the inclusion of the Mission Hall into the Patmore Heath Conservation Area and the recognition that it is a "non listed building that makes an important architectural or historic contribution". It's long term retention will require an alternative viable use for the building to be found and it is encouraging that officers have indicated their interest in discussing the future of this important local building. Hopefully an appropriate solution can be found.

I look forward to discussing this further in due course.

Kind regards

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John Bosworth

From:
Sent: 14 November 2019 09:57
To: John Bosworth
Cc:
Subject: [external] Patmore Heath Conservation Area Appraisal Draft

Dear Mr Bosworth,

We both refer to the Patmore Heath Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and the public meeting we attended on October 22nd where you and Mike Brown were available to answer questions. We were unhappy with some of the answers you were able to give and with all due respect would ask you to reconsider some aspects of the review.

Albury consists of 5 hamlets, with Gravesend and Patmore Heath being totally separate in location and identity. Within your report you are already referring to parts of Gravesend as being in the extended Conservation Area as though it is already a done deal. Gravesend, in our view, should not be part of the Patmore Heath Appraisal, we are separated by the lane to which you also refer.

Within your assessment of Gravesend you have piecemeal included some properties and excluded others. Within the area you are now suggesting should be added to the Conservation Area you include 'two modern properties on the edges of the new area [which] are well designed and attractive with their use of traditional materials'. We disagree! One of these properties is our home, 'The Chestnuts' and we would urge you to remove this out of the extended area you are proposing, it being a modern-look house of no architectural interest' and which does not fulfil the Conservation Area criteria, the objective of which is to 'protect, conserve and enhance'.

We would first point out that our frontage has 9 windows and a front door with two further side windows, fairly newly installed, all UPVC windows, a type which Mike Brown, during a conversation at the meeting, referred to as awful/horrible. Furthermore our curtilage is frequently damaged by the excessive traffic passing through Gravesend and just within the last year we have had to repair our entrance wall three times due to destruction from inappropriately large passing vehicles. Our hedging is also damaged on a regular basis requiring large branches to be retrieved from the road due to destruction from passing heavy lorries. In our opinion we do not feel that our modern looking house, situated in a busy thoroughway and not consistent with conservational heritage is of sufficient quality and aspect to be worthy of a designated status, particularly when including it within the separate hamlet of Patmore Heath which, contrastingly, is an area of natural beauty.

Second, we feel your review is not only inconsistent in its variable inclusion of some but not other houses within Gravesend, but also on Patmore Heath. It seems totally illogical to remove just a single house from around Patmore Heath out of the Conservation Area. Whilst 'Heath House' itself is not directly abutting the Heath, neither are Walnut Tree Cottage, Holly Cottage, Penrose Cottage, Oxen End, Patmore Lodge, Heath Farm or Penrose House, the latter all being separated by areas of woodland and/or long driveways like Heath House. Whilst a few of the above are undoubtedly pretty, some are really not! Yet they have remained (rightly) within the Conservation Area. However Heath House has been removed. It is an integral residence of Patmore Heath and, also noting its name, we find it most disturbing that one residence should be thus excluded.

Finally, we understand that there is currently little difference in the protection offered by agricultural land and Conservation Area land in relation to the fields behind Heath House and the Hunting Box. However, we would argue that this land, as well as the fields behind West View, Rose Cottage, Lilac Tree Cottage, Marsden, Heathcote, Rambleside, Jaspers Cottage, Fir Tree Cottage and Garden House, should remain/become included within the Conservation Area. One aspect of the Conservation Area is the fields over which the houses look, and these fields are integral, heritage views of this unique area. Whilst we understand the definitions do not offer differing protection to future development right now, our understanding is that should they be categorised as agricultural land, it may be easier for this designation to move to a less protected designation in the future when the county plan is revisited in years to come. Retaining or gaining conservation land protection would be an additional safety layer to dissuade future development.

We would be grateful if you would confirm receipt of this email.

Your sincerely,

John Bosworth

From:
Sent: 01 December 2019 19:37
To: John Bosworth
Cc:
Subject: [External] Patmore Heath Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan

December 1st 2019

Dear Mr Bosworth,

I refer to the forthcoming Patmore Heath Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan, along with the public meeting I attended on 22nd October 2019. As a resident on Patmore Heath, I felt compelled to write to you to highlight my concerns regarding the proposed changes that you outlined on the aforementioned evening.

Patmore Heath is a hamlet with its own community and unique identity. It has, quite rightly in my opinion, held conservation status for a long period of time, and as such, has been considered as an independently existing area of historic and scientific interest. Gravesend, on the other hand, is a tiny hamlet with a road running through it that over recent years has been increasingly used by high levels of traffic as well as it being frequently used inappropriately as a cut through for larger vehicles and lorries. The traffic is consistently heavy and repeatedly destroys the front hedgerows as well as dirtying the frontage of those houses abutting the road. I appreciate that traffic control is a different department to your own over which you have no influence. However I feel that the usage of this area in this way is detracting enough to mean it does not warrant the interest given to an area befitting conservation. Additionally, many of the houses, especially towards the north of Gravesend, are of modern character and I do not feel their appearance is in keeping with that of a conservation area, or on a par with that of the historic Patmore Heath to which you are suggesting they join. The isolated and few features of minimal interest in Gravesend, such as the old window of no 1 Gravesend Cottages, and the picturesque appearance of the thatched cottage 'Elm Cottage' are already listed in their own right and I fail to see how adding the majority of Gravesend onto Patmore Heath within the conservation area fits with what a Conservation area represents, or adds anything or any protection above that provided by their already listed status.

With regards to the amendment of the specific boundary of the conservation area around Patmore Heath, I still fail to understand the suggested removal of Heath House from the Conservation area. As a resident on the Heath, I am immensely proud of our conservation status and the focal community and independence of the area in it's own right, its historic importance sitting hand in hand with it being an area of special scientific interest. Whilst I hear your suggestion that Heath House is not directly abutting the Heath, and as such should be removed from the boundary, a number of other houses to the north of the Heath are also not abutting the heath and are actually situated further away. These would include Walnut Tree Cottage, Holly Cottage, Penrose Cottage, Oxen End, Patmore Lodge, Heath Farm and Penrose House. Indeed the latter two are separated from the Heath by large wooded areas and long driveways. They all share postcodes and address status of 'Patmore Heath'. The other suggestion that it is removed being 'not the prettiest of houses' sets a precedent for piecemeal removal and exclusion of dwellings within a historic area, and I feel removing this single dwelling using inconsistent criteria results in a disjointed representation of our

community - indeed, the house in question is the namesake of the Heath, and I am most confused and saddened you suggest it be excluded.

Lastly, I strongly feel that the area surrounding the Heath also warrants the protection afforded by Conservation status, and would ask that consideration be given to extending the current boundary to include all the fields around the Heath, rather than the current suggestion that this area is actually reduced in size. I understand that there is currently little difference in protection offered by agricultural land and Conservation, but I believe that a large part of a Conservation area (and associated planning consideration) involves the outward view from said area. As such, this directly involves the adjacent fields and I feel that the fields behind Heath House and the Hunting Box (under debate regarding removal), as well as the fields behind West View, Rose Cottage, Lilac Tree Cottage, Marsden, Heathcote, Rambleside, Jaspers Cottage, Fir Tree Cottage and Garden House, should remain/become included within our Conservation area. The fields and as such the aspect around our dwellings, are integral to our unique heritage, history and identity and, in my opinion, are integral to the special interest of our community. Whilst the local plan currently is clear on agricultural land protection, in current times of political and economic uncertainty, the additional safety layer of conservation may, in my opinion, dissuade future development, and if not, what harm is done by taking this additional precaution, particularly in light of the obvious public position in favour of protecting the Heath shown at the well attended community meeting mentioned above?

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider my opinions on the matter. I would be most grateful given the importance of the forthcoming review if you would confirm receipt of my above comments.

With kind regards,

East Herts Council,
Wallfields,
Pegs lane,
Hertford,
SG13 8EQ

11th November 2019

Re; Patmore Heath Conservation Area Appraisal

Dear Sir,

We would like to oppose the proposed changes to the Patmore Heath Conservation Area boundaries following the recent appraisal by East Herts Council.

Our main objection is the inclusion of Gravesend. By the proposer's own admission, there are one or two very attractive properties in Gravesend, but a broad bush seems to have been applied to include the whole area, in order to get this small number of properties encompassed within the conservation area. Our own property, Hillside Cottage, would change status to be included within the conservation area and we would prefer not to have the increased restrictions that this would bring. We spend a lot of time tending our garden, growing food and making it as wildlife friendly as possible. For example, we cut hedges and have been pollarding trees for many years, which prolongs their life, prevents them from getting to large and makes them of more use to wildlife. Having to get council permission, which the changes would bring, to carry out some of these tasks, seems onerous and to serve no useful purpose.

During the public meeting, the officers present were asked to highlight the implications (particularly the negatives) for houses that will subsequently be included in the conservation area. We do not feel that this was adequately answered and the main point that was emphasised was that these houses would increase by an average of thirteen percent according to a report that one of them referred to, although no specific details of this were given. I do not believe that my house will increase in value by going from being on the edge of a conservation area to being included within it. In fact, I think it more likely that the extra restrictions will have a negative impact. I asked if there was a compensation scheme, should this be the case and was told "no", but perhaps there should be and this might be something that could be given further consideration?

PTA

Traditionally, the conservation area included Patmore Heath and the properties around the heath that bordered on to it, with some additional pasture. Patmore Heath is a SSSI and the existing boundary appears to be far more appropriate than the new proposal. The inclusion of properties in Gravesend appears to be something of a lottery as there are plenty of other historic houses within the local area or other houses with greater aesthetic appeal that are not included. There was a strong representation at the public meeting that the council would win far more support if they could control or restrict traffic, especially heavy lorries which many residents felt were detrimental to the appeal and rural nature of the area, than changing the conservation area boundaries.

Many of the ideas within the 2019 Patmore Heath Conservation Area Appraisal seem to be subjective and "in the opinion of the author". For example, one of the main ideas is to "improve the character" of the area by suggesting that the front boundaries to properties around Patmore Heath, could all be made to have the same frontage. This was met with widespread dismay by the residents at the public meeting, who felt that the individuality of the properties, is part of the character and attraction of them. This would seem to indicate that the proponents are out of touch with the local community and not allowing for the impracticalities of the suggestions. Another example was that the author felt that we could eradicate telegraph poles in the area, by having the cables that they carry buried underground. Whilst this might not be undesirable, most of us do not notice the poles and the cost and practicalities of removing them would appear to be prohibitive.

The new appraisal also suggests removing a single house, Heath House from those currently included within the conservation area. There appears to be no logic to this other than it is slightly set back from other properties around Patmore Heath, which if this is the reason, would appear to be a contradiction to the inclusion of the properties at Gravesend, which are set much further away from Patmore Heath. The removal of this one property has aroused a lot of suspicion locally and we would like to oppose its exclusion. In addition, the proposed removal of various areas of pasture seems detrimental. Whilst this might be due to "current Historic England advice", we think the majority of people locally, would be more content and feel that the pastures are afforded greater protection, if these areas remain included within the conservation area and this was certainly the overriding view at the public meeting.

We would like to also highlight that there is no appeal process against any final decision which seems to be very unfair and we would ask that this is reviewed. We were told at the public meeting that this was because the decision is democratic, but planning decisions, for example, can go to appeal and we don't really see why a decision of this nature should be any different.

The high turnout of people, from Patmore Heath and the surrounding area, that attended the public meeting, shows how much we care for the area and the community. A lot of the ideas within the 2019 appraisal seem to be very subjective and at the whim of a small number of people and we hope the councillors will take

the comments and feedback seriously and support us by also opposing the proposed changes.

Clearly a lot of time has been spent, at significant cost, assessing the area and drafting the various documents involved. Many of us locally feel that there is no need for the appraisal and that the conservation area should have been left as it is. It seems a shame that the effort and resources involved, could not have been directed to more meaningful projects or purposes.

Yours faithfully,