

Standing up for Hertfordshire's countryside

Mr W. Myers
Development Control
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Campus East
Welwyn Garden City
Herts. AL10 6AE

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

30th January 2019 (by email)

Dear Mr. Myers,

Applications Nos. 6/2018/3272/MAJ and 6/2018/3273/LB
Replacement windows to a Grade II listed building, the erection of 20 accommodation pods and associated access works, landscaping, tree planting and site infrastructure.
At Essendon Country Club, Bedwell Park, Essendon, Hatfield AL9 6HN

CPRE has concerns regarding these proposals for inappropriate development in the Green Belt, contrary to paragraph 143 of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan.

In our view the proposed accommodation pods constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt. We do not accept the statement at paragraph 46 of the Planning Statement that “the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt because they are small in size and are naturally screened by the existing vegetation.” By definition, any structure, however small, which is constructed in otherwise open land in the Green Belt will impact adversely on the openness of the Green Belt.

Notwithstanding their assertion in para. 45 that the ‘accommodation pods’ are ancillary to the outdoor sport that takes place at the site and therefore comply with criterion (b) of paragraph 145 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the applicant also offers very special circumstances which they consider are sufficient to outweigh harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

These very special circumstances are that in order to secure the economic viability of Essendon Country Club, it is necessary to provide on-site accommodation for users. However, apart from the applicant’s assertion that this is the case, no evidence is presented to prove that point.

Consequently, we expect the Council to request sufficient evidence to demonstrate the unequivocal need for these units before granting permission.

Yours sincerely,

David Irving