

**Standing up for Hertfordshire's countryside**

Lee Stannard  
Planning and Building Control  
St Albans City and District Council  
St Peters Street  
St Albans  
Herts AL1 3JE

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

20<sup>th</sup> November 2019 (by email)

Dear Mr. Stannard,

**Application No. 5/2019/2617**  
**Use of the site as a builders yard (retrospective)**  
**Land Adjacent To 12 Mount Pleasant Lane, Bricket Wood,**  
**Hertfordshire AL2 3XA**

CPRE Hertfordshire object to this proposal to regularise sui generis uses on this Green Belt site following a series of ineffectual enforcement notices requiring those uses to stop.

While we recognise that the proposal does not involve additional development, and hence no further harm to the openness or other harm to the Green Belt, there are a number of concerns regarding the current uses on the site, particularly the ability of heavy goods vehicles to access it safely.

The applicant argues that the site is ideal for sui generis use because it is on the edge of a settlement and has good transport links (para. 7.1.1.). Mount Pleasant Lane is a typical residential road on which it would not be normal to experience heavy goods or articulated vehicles such as those used to service the uses on this site.

On the question of access, the applicant simply states in the Planning Statement that the existing access will be retained (para.5.5.1) and that there is sufficient space to manoeuvre within the site and exit the site in a forward gear (para. 6.3.1). There is no reference to the ability of HGV, or articulated vehicles to enter the site.

This site is next to house No. 12 and the entrance to the site is a normal domestic drive, with a sign on the wall simply saying 12a. This access drive is immediately adjacent to the junction with the slip road to the M1. There is no ability for HGV vehicles to turn into the site without either doing so by reversing on the slip road or utilising the private drives of the residential properties opposite the site, both of which are inappropriate (if not illegal) actions. There is no reference to this fact in the application documents, nor any demonstration of how the applicant intends to resolve the access difficulties. The Council

should require this information before determining whether access to the site by the types of vehicles servicing a builders yard can be safely achieved.

We are advised, anecdotally, that floodlighting has been installed on the site. This is inappropriate in both the Green Belt and a residential area and, should the Council be minded to approve, conditions restricting this lighting should be applied.

The applicant's stated intent is to "*draw an end to the longstanding enforcement notices attached to the site.*" (para. 7.1.1). An earlier application for retrospective approval (5/2014/1607) was refused by the Council. In doing so the Council concluded that "*the evidence submitted does not conclude that, on the balance of probabilities, the land has been used for the storage of building materials and equipment for a continuous period of 10 years.*" As only five years have passed since that decision, the same situation must exist now.

Consequently the application must be considered under the Green Belt policies in the National Planning Policy Framework and the policies in the current and emerging St. Albans Local Plans. In our view it does not comply with these.

We urge the Council to refuse this application and to take the necessary action to ensure compliance with the enforcement notices which have been issued.

Yours sincerely,

David Irving