



The countryside charity  
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**Standing up for Hertfordshire's countryside**

James Langsmead  
Development Control  
East Hertfordshire District Council  
Wallfields  
Pegs Lane  
Hertford  
SG13 8EQ

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

7<sup>th</sup> May 2020 (by email)

Dear Mr. Langsmead,

**Application No 3/20/0716/FUL**  
**Erection of 1 new detached dwelling with a basement**  
**and 4 off-street car parking spaces.**  
**On Land at Dormers, Crouchfields, Chapmore End,**  
**Ware, Hertfordshire SG12 0NZ**

CPRE Hertfordshire object to this proposal for inappropriate residential development in the Green Belt contrary to the Green Belt policies in the National Planning Policy Framework and the East Herts District Plan.

In the Design and Access Statement the applicant claims that the proposal is limited infill within a village and hence complies with NPPF 145(e). Consequently no very special circumstances are presented which outweigh the resulting harm to the Green Belt through inappropriateness and reduction of openness.

This site is not in a village. The nearest village, Chapmore End, is a kilometre away. Crouchfield is a residential enclave which was developed on a former school site and industrial estate in the countryside. Even within that context, it is on the edge of the Crouchfield development, outside the original boundary of the estate.

Since the first publication of the NPPF there have been a number of Appeal and Court decisions which clarify the position on infill sites. It is now generally held that infill development in this context *"is the completion of an otherwise substantially built up frontage of several dwellings that are visible within the street scene, by the filling of a narrow gap capable of taking one or two dwellings only."* In the case of Woods vs. Secretary of State (2015 EWCA Civ 195.), the court determined the need to assess what the impression of the site is on the ground.

CPRE is working nationally and locally for a beautiful and living countryside

CPRE Hertfordshire is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation

President: Sir Simon Bowes Lyon, KCVO  
Chairman: Richard Bullen

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This site is a large parcel of open land, surrounded by a tree belt, immediately adjoining farm land to the north, with large rear gardens of properties in Crouchfield backing on to it on the south and east and the garden of 'Dormers' to the west. It does not appear to be part of the curtilage of 'Dormers'. It is neither visible within the street scene nor part of a substantially built up frontage nor is it currently accessed from the Crouchfield estate. It is not possible to consider it as an infill site.

The Design and Access Statement states that it forms part of the 'Dormers' garden, but we note that numerous representations from residents on the Crouchfield estate claim that it is a paddock which until recently has been maintained in that use and has in the past been grazed by sheep. This is a material point which the Council will have to satisfy itself on before determining the planning balance.

The location is not sustainable, given that there are no services or amenities that are available to Crouchfields residents; the proposed development would therefore be wholly car dependent. This harm reinforces the other in principle and detailed planning objections to the proposal.

As the site cannot be classed as an infill site, development on it would result in harm to the openness of the Green Belt. The fact that the site is surrounded by a tree belt does not alter that fact. *Timmins v. Gedling Borough Council (EWHC 654)* held that “ *any construction harms openness quite irrespective of its impact in terms of its obtrusiveness or its aesthetic attractions or qualities*”. It would extend the Crouchfield estate development into the countryside, resulting in sprawl and encroachment into the Green Belt.

We note that in 2007 a similar application (3/07/0489/OP) for a detached house on this site was refused by the Council and dismissed on appeal. The reason for that dismissal was that the proposal would result in harm to the Green Belt and no very special circumstances sufficient to outweigh that harm could be demonstrated. Notwithstanding the introduction of the NPPF 2012, as revised in 2019, development of the site would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The same situation applies as in 2007 and consequently the Council should reject this application.

Yours sincerely,

David Irving