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Standing up for Hertfordshire's countryside

Andrew Clarke
Planning and Building Control
Watford Borough Council
Town Hall
Hempstead Road
Watford
WD17 3EX

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

19th June 2020 (by email)

Dear Mr. Clarke,

Application No. 20/00514/FUL
Erection of a detached dwelling with detached double garage
at Lady Capels Wharf, Hempstead Road, Watford WD17 3NL

CPRE Hertfordshire object to the above proposal for inappropriate development in the Green Belt contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework and the saved policies in the current Watford Local Plan.

This application is a resubmission of application 19/01038/FUL which was refused by the Council in November 2019, with minor modifications to the design of the proposed dwelling. The fundamental point of inappropriateness in the Green Belt is not addressed.

The applicant is of the view that as the proposal is in the Green Belt it is therefore outside the built-up area of Watford and hence is not covered by the restraints on development of gardens in built-up areas in the NPPF and can be considered as previously developed land.

In our view, this is an erroneous position which arises from ambiguities in the drafting of the current Watford Proposals Map in 2000. The map contains no defined settlement boundary. Parts of the built-up area (including this site) are washed over by the Green Belt. It would appear that in establishing a fixed Green Belt boundary and securing the Grand Union Canal Corridor, the south side of the A411 Hempstead Road was chosen. That does not mean that the development along that side of the road is therefore no longer part of the built up area. Built up areas and Green Belt are not mutually exclusive. Though not occurring frequently in urban areas, it is not unusual for settlements to be washed over by the Green Belt.

In aerial views the site clearly appears as part of the north-western fringe of the town. Signage on the A41 shows the A411 Hempstead Road as the entrance to Watford and, on the ground, it is clear that the town starts at the 'Watford, A Fair-trade Town' sign and the church beyond it. The fact that "*the west side of Hempstead Road is low density with an informal*

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CPRE Hertfordshire is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation

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

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layout which contrasts quite considerably to the eastern side of Hempstead Road that is excluded from the Green Belt and where dwellings are closely sited in a uniform building line.” (Design and Access Statement para. 9.7), does not mean the former are outside the built-up area as the applicant asserts.

Consequently the proposal is for residential development of garden land within the curtilage of an existing property in a built-up area, which is contrary to the provisions in the NPPF.

Even with the modifications which have been made, the proposed house is a substantial 4-bed building. Apart from its inappropriateness, the proposal would therefore also cause harm to the openness of the Green Belt. The garden forms a gap within existing housing and its development would intensify the built form in this part of the Green Belt, affecting both the visual and spatial impact, contrary to para.145 of the NPPF and Policy G12 of the current Watford Local Plan.

Apart from the minor modification to the design of the building, there is nothing in this application which changes the planning principles applying to it or the planning balance determined by the Council when considering the previous application.

We urge the Council to similarly reject this application.

Yours sincerely,

David Irving