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Standing up for Hertfordshire's countryside

Georgia O'Brien
Planning and Building Control
Hertsmere Borough Council
Civic Offices
Elstree Way
Borehamwood
Hertfordshire
WD6 1WA

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

18th August 2021 (by email)

Dear Ms O'Brien,

Application No. 20/2141/FUL
Land at Cowley Hill Stables, Cowley Hill, Borehamwood
Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 16 dwellings together with
associated parking, amenity space ...etc...

I write with reference to the above planning application for proposed development in the Green Belt. CPRE Hertfordshire objects to the application for the following reasons:

1. The proposed site lies within the London Metropolitan Green Belt as defined by Policy CS13 in the adopted Hertsmere Local Plan 2012-2027 and as required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Para 134 of the NPPF notes that a key purpose of the Green Belt is "to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment".
2. The proposed development constitutes a significant encroachment into the Green Belt from a well defined urban area defined by Cowley Hill. The site is surrounded on three sides by open farmland and this proposed development would introduce development into a clearly designated protected area.
3. Para 143 of the NPPF requires the establishment of "very special circumstances"(VSC) to be established for "inappropriate development" in the Green Belt. The developer's consultants have made no attempt to establish this requirement in their Design and Access Statement or Supplementary Planning Statement accompanying the planning application.
4. The above Statements assert at great length that the proposed development is in keeping with surrounding development and will cause no harm to the Green Belt or the open countryside. This is clearly incorrect and challenges fundamentally the reasons for the Green Belt in this location.

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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5. The existing former stables and buildings constitute a low density with a low impact on the surrounding countryside. The proposed development would mean a very significant increase in the amount of inappropriate development on the site with considerable impact on the openness of the countryside in this location.
6. The consultant's Supplementary Planning Statement (as noted above) also cites "Planning Precedents" which, in our view, are entirely inappropriate. Planning applications are determined entirely on the circumstances pertaining in each case and the conditions affecting this site provide no reasons to approve this proposed development in the absence of VSC.
7. Another key purpose of the Green Belt is to prevent the coalescence of urban areas. This proposal would contribute to the removal of the countryside gap between Borehamwood and Shenley and could potentially lead to the consideration of further inappropriate development in this designated protected area.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Berry
Planning Manager