



Ellie Dilks
Planning and Building Control
St. Albans City and District Council
St. Peter's Street
St. Albans
Herts AL1 3JE

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

26th November 2021 (by email)

Dear Ms Dilks,

Application no. 5/2021/3033
Land off Baulk Close, Harpenden
Outline application (all matters reserved) – Residential development

I write with reference to the above application for speculative residential development, to which CPRE Hertfordshire objects strongly for the following reasons.

1. The site lies within the London Metropolitan Green Belt as defined in the St Albans District Local Plan Review which proscribes inappropriate development according to criteria indicated in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) unless very special circumstances are demonstrated. The applicant makes no attempt to identify such circumstances in their covering letter, and indeed makes clear that the application is simply to check the Local Planning Authority's resolve with regard to the protection afforded by the Green Belt.
2. The application demonstrates a clear encroachment into open countryside beyond the built-up area with severe impact on its openness and character in this location. It is not an infill site, as the applicant asserts, and constitutes an inappropriate extension which the Green Belt exists to prevent.
3. The applicant simply quotes the recent appeal decision in Colney Heath and the Council's decision at Sewell Park to justify the proposal on the grounds of the inadequacy of the Council's housing land supply and absence of an up-to-date Local Plan. No further information is supplied with regard to the local circumstances and planning legislation which requires each application to be determined on its merits.
4. The recent appeal decision referred to above has caused significant controversy and concern and it should be noted that the inspector was at pains to identify the specific circumstances at Bullens Green Lane, Colney Heath and that this should not be seen as a green light for all Green Belt applications. Significant representations are being made by CPRE



and other bodies to the government to clarify the technical guidance in the area of housing need with regard to protected areas.

5. It would be premature in our view to determine this application when the Minister for Housing (Hansard, Commons debate, 23rd November 2021) stated that “we are committed to protecting the green belt, as we set out in our manifesto”. Clearly, further statements and potential amendments to the National Planning Policy Framework may be anticipated in the near future and in the meantime it is necessary to maintain the protection provided by the Green Belt in such a sensitive location.

CPRE Hertfordshire urges the Council to refuse this wholly inadequate and speculative application.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Berry
Planning Manager