

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

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

18<sup>th</sup> March 2022 (by email)

Dear Laura Saxton,

**Applications nos: 5/2022/0471 and 5/2022/0425  
Fredericks Wood, Coursers Road, Colney Heath  
Prior Approval (app. 0471) for erection of buildings for office accommodation and  
processing plant AND Certificate of Lawfulness (existing) (app 0425) for  
erection of earth bund along the site boundary with Coursers Road  
(resubmission following withdrawal of 5/2021/3471)**

I write with reference to the above two applications for works and buildings in Fredericks Wood to express our serious concern about what is taking place in this designated Green Belt location. Very significant despoliation of the countryside has taken place in this location and following a site visit it is difficult to ascertain the nature of what is intended.

The land has been seriously disturbed recently and moved roughly into mounds and there must also be concern regarding the effect this may be having on the River Colne watercourse which runs through the site. The damage to the woodland is leading to significant local community concern, and it appears that these applications seek to regularise a forestry use.

We believe that insufficient information has been provided to determine whether the development which is proposed is appropriate within the terms of both the General Permitted Development Order and a Certificate of Lawfulness. The level of earth-moving which has already taken place could be said to constitute development and we would urge the Council to consider whether a planning application is required rather than applications for Prior Approval and a Certificate of Lawfulness.

The application for Prior Approval is also in error in stating that no development can be seen from a public road. In fact Coursers Road runs alongside the site for its full length and this enables the earth works to be fully visible to the public.

The 'bund' which is the subject of the Certificate of Lawfulness application appears to be nothing more than heaped earth immediately adjacent to Coursers Road. The entirely



inadequate Planning Statement accompanying the application for CoL suggests a number of bunds and the presence of hedgerows which are presumably meant to shield them from sight.

The plan accompanying the application however shows only one long 'bund' running immediately east of Coursers Road for the full length of the site south of the gated entrance. This does not presently exist other than in the form of mounds of earth and so would appear not to constitute a development that could be subject of a Certificate of Lawfulness.

Notwithstanding the legal position regarding prior approval or certificates required, a responsible land owner should be aware of the significance of the woodland in the Green Belt. We would ask the Council to investigate these matters further to satisfy itself that the correct procedures are being followed with regard to this sensitive woodland area.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Berry  
Planning Manager