



The countryside charity  
Hertfordshire

31a Church Street  
Welwyn  
HERTS AL6 9LW  
[www.cpreherts.org.uk](http://www.cpreherts.org.uk)  
[office@cpreherts.org.uk](mailto:office@cpreherts.org.uk)  
01438 717587

Standing up for Hertfordshire's countryside

Germaine Asabere  
Planning and Building Control  
North Herts Council  
PO Box 10613  
Nottingham  
NG6 6DW

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

18<sup>th</sup> January 2023 (by email)

Dear Germaine Asabere,

**Application no. 22/03040/FP**  
**Land East of Bedford Road, Hitchin**  
**Residential development comprising of 53 dwellings together with the creation of vehicular access off Bedford Road and associated parking and landscaping.**

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

1. The site lies within the London Metropolitan Green Belt as defined in the recently adopted North Herts Local Plan which proscribes inappropriate development according to criteria indicated in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) unless very special circumstances are demonstrated. The Applicant's consultant in their Planning Statement (PS) accepts that very special circumstances are required to justify the application.
2. The PS also notes that the site is not allocated in the adopted Local Plan which makes sufficient provision for housing land supply as required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Further, the proposed development comprises a clear encroachment into the Green Belt, which would extend the boundary of the built-up area and lead to the loss of open land.
3. In our view, there is no basis to consider the application of very special circumstances in this case, particularly in the light of considerable local community concerns and recent Government statements regarding the significance of the Green Belt. The NPPF is clear that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered through the Local Plan process and not through individual planning applications.
4. The Secretary of State (SoS) for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities published a Statement on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022 which noted;

“It will be up to local authorities, working with their communities, to determine how many homes can actually be built, taking into account what should be protected in

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CPRE Hertfordshire is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation

President: Sir Simon Bowes Lyon, KCVO  
Chairman: Allan McNab

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each area—be that our precious Green Belt or national parks” (Hansard: Planning System and Levelling Up Bill: Community Control. 6.12.22).

It is clear that the Government’s intention is to retain the Green Belt in its present form and the constant attempts to undermine Green Belt protections for residential developments are in danger of bringing the planning system into disrepute.

5. In conclusion, this proposal is for inappropriate market housing of a type that Green Belt legislation was designed to prevent. CPRE Hertfordshire urges the Council to refuse permission for this inappropriate and speculative application.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Berry  
Planning Manager

NOTE: We would request that this letter is published on the Council’s website as a document relating to this application and should be grateful if you would notify us of the date of the appropriate meeting if it is to be determined by planning committee.