



Max Sanders
Planning and Building Control
Hertsmere Borough Council
Civic Offices, Elstree Way
Borehamwood
Herts. WD6 1WA

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

6th January 2023 (by email)

Dear Max Sanders,

Application no. 22/1826/OUTEI
Shenley Grange 43 London Road Shenley Radlett
Demolition of existing buildings and structures and development of the site for up to 177 dwellings, plus community hub (use class E/F2), associated parking and landscaping, sustainable drainage (SUDs) features and play areas. (Outline application to include Access, with other matters of Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale Reserved)

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 adopted Hertsmere Core Strategy 2013 and Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan 2016 which proscribes inappropriate development according to criteria indicated in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) unless very special circumstances are demonstrated. The Applicant's consultants in their Planning Statement (PS) accept that very special circumstances are required to justify the application and makes it clear that this application is in response to recent planning appeal decisions nearby (Bullens Green Lane and Codicote) and a decision by St Albans Council to permit development at Sewell Park on the basis of the lack of a five year housing supply.
2. The applicant simply quotes these decisions 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 either the local circumstances or planning legislation which requires each application to be determined on its merits, particularly where the land affected is statutorily protected.
3. 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 constitutes an inappropriate urban extension which the Green Belt designation exists to prevent,

preventing the coalescence of settlements and maintaining the character of the open countryside.

4. The recent appeal decision at Bullens Green Lane referred to in the Planning Statement has caused significant controversy and concern, and it should be noted that the Inspector was at pains to identify the specific circumstances of that application, and that this should not be seen as a green light for all Green Belt applications. It may also be noted that a subsequent recent appeal decision at Broke Hill, Sevenoaks, in broadly similar circumstances, established the primacy of designated protected status in determining the appropriateness of development, notwithstanding the lack of a five year housing supply.

5. 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, especially in the absence of an up-to-date Local Plan. The Government's position is evolving with regard to protection of the Green Belt in response to local community and local planning authority concerns.

6. The recent Regulation 18 public consultation for the Hertsmeare Draft Local Plan received a record-breaking number of representations from organisations and individuals, including CPRE Hertfordshire, and the majority of these responses opposed site allocations for future residential and commercial development in the Green Belt. This has led Hertsmeare Council to 'pause' the preparation of their Local Plan pending further consideration of proposals.

7. Recent Ministerial Statements, which have policy weight, have reiterated the Government's strong support for protection of the Green Belt. Most recently the Secretary of State (SoS) for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities published a Statement on 6th 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 each area—be that our precious Green Belt or national parks" (Hansard: Planning System and Levelling Up Bill: Community Control. 6.12.22).

8. 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. Further, local community concerns were reflected in the statement by Council Leader Councillor Bright in January 2022 that "the potential decimation of large swathes of green belt (sic) has been too much for local people and local councillors to accept."

9. The application also refers extensively to the provision of affordable housing as a justification for the proposed development. Present Government definitions of affordable housing are generally regarded as inadequate and recent research undertaken by CPRE



Hertfordshire demonstrates that an average earning household in Hertfordshire is unable to afford an average priced house in the County.

10. Given the situation regarding land development values in the Hertsmere area, the stated intention of providing policy compliant affordable housing based on present definitions and criteria is most unlikely to address issues relating to the affordable housing crisis and cannot be considered as contributing to very special circumstances needed to outweigh the significant harm to the Green Belt that would result from this development.

11. 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 wholly 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.