



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

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

4th April 2025 (by email)

Dear Robert Brigden,

Planning application no. 5/2024/2271

**Land off Sandridgebury Lane and between the railway and Harpenden Road, St Albans
(1) Full planning application for the relocation and replacement of existing playing fields
and erection of pavilion annex; and (2) Outline planning application (access sought)
for the construction of up to 1000 new homes (Use Class C3) to include a mix of
market housing, affordable housing, age restricted specialist accommodation for the
elderly, adult disability service units; a care home (Use Class C2); a local centre (Use
Classes E and F); a primary school (Use Class F);...etc**

I write with regard to the above planning application to which CPRE Hertfordshire objects for the following reasons.

1. The land identified for this proposed development is designated as London Metropolitan Green Belt in the adopted St Albans City and District Local Plan Review where development is inappropriate unless very special circumstances are identified which clearly outweigh the harms caused, according to criteria in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
2. The Applicant's Planning Statement seeks to justify the proposed development on the basis of very special circumstances relating to the lack of housing land supply. No other very special circumstances are identified relating to the local conditions and circumstances which would justify development in this location as opposed to any other, apart from issues relating to the Green Belt.
3. The proposed development would clearly constitute a breach of the first and third purposes of the Green Belt as identified in the NPPF (paragraph 143) to prevent urban sprawl and encroachment on open countryside as it is a clear and substantial extension of the built-up area of St Albans.
4. The first purpose of the Green Belt refers to the effect of the urban sprawl emanating from the growth of London as the major development generator in this and the

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surrounding areas. The proposed development is clearly urban sprawl beyond the built-up area of the adjoining settlement which the Green Belt legislation was designed to prevent and, as such, the designation of Green Belt provides the “strong reason” required in this case to refuse development as noted in the NPPF footnote 7.

5. The Planning Statement notes the role of the North St Albans Broad Location for development in the emerging Local Plan which is presently due for Examination in Public commencing in April 2025. It is not appropriate in our view for such a significant allocation in the Green Belt to be determined outside the Local Plan process which includes its consideration as part of the forthcoming public inquiry which will investigate the appropriateness of housing land requirements in the St Albans City and District area both as a whole and specifically in this location.
6. The Green Belt in south west Hertfordshire is under unrelenting pressure for development which is jeopardising the highly valued benefits which protection brings, and its continual reduction is in danger of bringing the planning system into disrepute. The now standard practice in major planning applications in the Hertfordshire Green Belt of listing benefits, including public services and facilities and the like, reduces the consideration of such issues to a check-list of items irrespective of the conditions and circumstances of the location and inevitably renders them as less “special”.
7. We urge the Council to refuse permission for this inappropriate speculative development prior to the consideration of this site as part of the emerging Local Plan preparation process.

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.