

Standing up for Hertfordshire's countryside

Mr M. Peacock
Development Control
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Campus East
Welwyn Garden City
Herts. AL10 6AE

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

23rd September 2016

Dear Mr. Peacock,

Application No. 6/2016/1677/Maj
Erection of single dwelling, together with associated tree planting scheme, landscaping and car parking following demolition of exiting structures, at Blue Moon Paddock, Woodfield Lane, Brookmans Park.

CPRE Hertfordshire objects to this proposal.

The Applicant acknowledges in para. 6.1 of the Planning, Design and Access Statement that the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt under the criteria set down in the National Planning Policy Framework and the current Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan. As such, very special circumstances sufficient to outweigh the harm to the openness and other harm to the Green Belt must be demonstrated. The Planning, Design and Access Statement, and other documents accompanying the application purport to demonstrate a 'special case' to justify the development.

Paragraph 89 of the NPPF permits limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites, whether redundant or in continuing use, which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development. This site contains two partially derelict buildings, which the applicant intends to replace with the proposed new dwelling. However, comparison of drawings P/502 and P/600 demonstrates that the footprint of the proposed building is greater than that of the existing and photomontages and elevation drawings indicate a structure significantly higher than the existing. We fully accept the applicant's assertion that one should not 'plan by mathematics', but the proposed building will clearly have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt. We do not accept the argument that the positioning of the dwelling and the surrounding planting mitigates this. The site itself is Green Belt and its openness will be effected by this development.

The Applicant makes a number of points in support of ‘very special circumstances’:

1: ‘The truly outstanding and innovative architectural design’.

Aesthetics are always a difficult call. The drawings accompanying the application are insufficient to judge the quality of the design. As presented they show a fairly typical pastiche of a barn conversion, albeit utilising unconventional materials. Apart from the materials the design does not appear to be out of the ordinary.

2: Considerable sustainability and environmental credentials.

We accept that the proposal is to a high sustainability standard and that the environmental intentions for the overall site are good.

3: A unique opportunity to restore and manage the woodland.

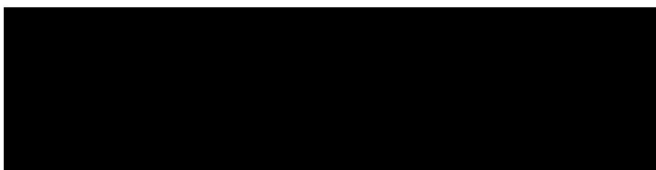
We do not accept that this is a unique situation, or that the residential unit is an essential element in it. Woodland the length and breadth of the country is successfully restored and maintained without the need for a 24 hour presence on the site. There is no clear case presented to demonstrate why this is necessary or how the dwelling creates a ‘unique’ opportunity and the woodland cannot be managed without it.

4: The development will bring economic and social benefits.

Apart from the possible use of the site as a educational facility for local schoolchildren, there is no case demonstrated of wider social benefit, nor is any economic case presented.

It is clear from the personal statement from the applicant that he is passionate about restoring the woodland and the bulk of the documentation accompanying the application relates to woodland management. However this application is for a substantial residential development in the Green Belt for which no clear need has been demonstrated. Consequently we urge the Council to refuse this application.

Yours sincerely,



David Irving