

**WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - PLANNING, PUBLIC PROTECTION AND GOVERNANCE**

DELEGATED APPLICATION

Application No: 6/2017/2964/MAJ
Location: Blue Moon Paddock Woodfield Lane Brookmans Park AL9 6JJ
Proposal: Demolition of existing redundant structures and erection of single family dwellinghouse (within envelope of existing structures), together with associated tree planting scheme (part of Centenary Woods project sponsored by Woodland Trust); landscaping and car parking
Officer: Mr Mark Peacock

Recommendation: Refused

6/2017/2964/MAJ

Context	
Site and Application description	<p>The site is approximately 1.33 hectares in area and comprised of land to the north of Woodfield Lane and to the west of Chestnut Farm. At the north of the site is a former paddock area with dilapidated stable and barn in the northeast corner. The site is accessed via an unmade track which runs along the eastern boundary from the road to the stables. The south of the site has a wooded area although tree cover is fairly sparse and patchy.</p> <p>This is the third application for planning permission which has been submitted subsequent to refused planning application ref: 6/2016/1677/MAJ and the Planning Inspectorates' appeal decision dated 17 November 2017.</p>
Constraints (as defined within WHDP 2005)	<p>The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and the West End to Brickendon Wooded Slopes Landscape Character Area as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.</p> <p>The site also lies wholly within Chestnut Farm Meadows Local Wildlife Site (Ref: 70/080). This has been identified on the basis of its grassland interest, which was (at the time of selection) regarded as species-rich acid / neutral grassland.</p> <p>GB - Greenbelt - Distance: 0 LCA - Landscape Character Area (North Mymms Common and Newgate Street Farmed Plateau) - Distance: 0 LCA - Landscape Character Area (West End - Brickendon Wooded Slopes) - Distance: 0 PAR - PARISH (HATFIELD) - Distance: 0 Wards - Brookmans Park & Little Heath - Distance: 0 CP - Cycle Path (Leisure Route) - Distance: 4.49 FM00 - Flood Zone Surface Water 1000mm (74554) - Distance: 0 FM00 - Flood Zone Surface Water 1000mm (7611286) - Distance: 0 FM00 - Flood Zone Surface Water 1000mm (7611313) - Distance: 0</p>

	<p>FM00 - Flood Zone Surface Water 1000mm (7611472) - Distance: 0 FM00 - Flood Zone Surface Water 1000mm (7662773) - Distance: 0 WILD - Chestnut Farm Meadows - Distance: 0 HEN - Existing S41 NERC Act habitat - Distance: 0 HEN - Existing habitat not currently qualifying under S41 NERC Act - Distance: 0 HEN - No known habitats present (high priority for habitat creation) - Distance: 0 SAGB - Sand and Gravel Belt - Distance: 0 TPO3 G63 - Distance: 0 TPO3 G64 - Distance: 9.78 TPO3 W26 - Distance: 0</p>
<p>Relevant planning history</p>	<p>Application Number: 6/2016/1677/MAJ Decision: Refused Decision Date: 20 January 2017 Proposal: Demolition of existing redundant structures and erection of single family dwelling house, together with associated tree planting scheme (part of Centenary Woods project sponsored by Woodland Trust); landscaping and car parking Appeal Dismissed: 17 November 2017 Reasons for refusal:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The proposal is contrary to the settlement strategy of the Council and, on balance, fails to achieve a benefit across the three dimensions of sustainability – environmental, social and economic for the reasons discussed within the report including, but not limited to, the location and its remoteness from existing services and facilities and from existing infrastructure. This is not outweighed by the limited environmental, economic and social benefits of the scheme. As such, the proposed development is fundamentally unsustainable, contrary to Saved Policies SD1, H1, H2, GBSP1 and GBSP2 of the adopted Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and the “golden thread” of the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to achieve sustainable development.</i> 2. <i>The scale and nature of the proposed development is harmful to the openness and visual amenity of the Green Belt, in both its physical and visual aspects, and conflicts with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt by encroaching residential form into the countryside and failing to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land. As such the proposal represents inappropriate development within the Green Belt. The Local Planning Authority considers that very special circumstances do not exist to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and the other harm identified. The development therefore fails to comply with the objectives of Saved Policies GBSP1 and GBSP2 of the adopted Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.</i> 3. <i>The urbanisation of this site is considered to result in an unacceptable erosion of the demonstrable physical attributes within the Landscape Character Area and would neither conserve, maintain, enhance nor strengthen the character of the</i>

wider surrounding area. As such, the proposal is not considered to comply with Saved Policy D1, D2 and RA10 of the adopted Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and The National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

S6/2016/S005/PA – Demolition of existing redundant structures and the erection of single family dwellinghouse, together with associated tree planting (part of Centenary Woods project sponsored by Woodland Trust); landscaping (including poppy field supported by British Legion)

The pre application advice letter dated 14 March 2016 concluded the following:

The proposal has been found to be unsustainable, with regards to environmental, social and economic factors.

The proposal would cause harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness. It would cause harm to the openness of the Green Belt and would result in the encroachment of built form into the countryside and would fail to assist in urban regeneration, conflicting with two of the five purposes of including land within the Green Belt. To these factors I attach substantial weight.

There would be harm to the landscape character and appearance of this rural area and to established, protected, vegetation at the site, to which I afford significant weight.

The proposal would contribute to the housing stock of the Borough and would be constructed using environmentally sustainable techniques. However, given the unsustainable nature of the proposal and other identified harm, the benefits in this regard are not considered to be of sufficient weight to outweigh the identified harm.

Furthermore, it has not been evidenced that the building is truly innovative or outstanding. Even if it were, there is still considerable identified harm that must be outweighed.

Taking all matters into consideration, the considerations in support of the proposal do not outweigh the harm that arises. The very special circumstances that are therefore required to outweigh identified harm do not exist.

S6/2015/0524/FP – Erection of dwelling house, creation of a Centenary Wood and Poppy field and hardstanding following the demolition of redundant structures (Withdrawn 16/02/2016).

S6/1990/0063/FP – Erection of a block of four loose boxes and one tack room (Granted 02/03/1990). Condition 2 of this permission states:

- 1. The stable block hereby approved shall only be for the use of Mrs P Stare and her family at all times and shall not be used for commercial purposes including a riding school and livery use at any time in the future.*

REASON: To ensure that no commercial stabling or livery use

	<i>takes place which would be contrary to the Green Belt Policies of the Welwyn Hatfield Draft District Plan.</i>		
Consultations			
Neighbour representations	Support: 2	Object: 0	Other: 0
Publicity	Site Notice Display Date: 1 February 2018 Press Advert Display Date: 10 January 2018 Neighbour notification letters: 03 January 2018		
Summary of neighbour responses	<p>16 Chandos Avenue – summary of reasons for support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These proposals would be in keeping with the local environment, provide considerable tree planting/landscaping and enable the removal of unsightly redundant structures for the erection of an attractive family home within the footprint of the existing structure. • This proposal provides sustainable ecology for the local fauna and flora which is highly desirable as well as an ecologically and environmentally friendly dwelling which has considerable aesthetic benefits over existing buildings. <p>16 Heath Road – summary of reasons for support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The land subject to the application has deteriorated extensively since the late nineteen fifties • The planning proposal offers a rare opportunity to restore the land of the application to its former mainly woodland aspect. • The applicant has demonstrated considerable sensitivity in relation to the impact of this proposals, especially in the design of a dwelling. 		
Consultees and responses	<p>North Mymms Parish Council – <i>“North Mymms Parish Council are raising a MAJOR OBJECTION to this Green Belt undeveloped site. The existing buildings are those suitable for rural use whereas this application is for a new build house. We would re-iterate previous comments made in respect of planning application Ref: 6/2016/1677/FULL which stated our OBJECTION to the development. “This is speculative development and inappropriate in the Green Belt, where it will affect openness. There are no special circumstances to warrant this large proposal, which is not exceptional in quality or innovative in the nature of its design. The proposal is large both in area and height and must exceed the footprint of the temporary stables which currently exist. It would need a new driveway, which would have a material effect on Green Belt.” The slightly amended proposal whilst less tall is still large and an inappropriate replacement of agricultural stabling to residential accommodation. Wanting a family home in the Green Belt does not overcome the harm that such change would bring. The issue of a new driveway has not been addressed and therefore leaves the site at risk of “nibbling” applications for extra development should any housing be placed there. The site is not part of the WHBC Local Plan (existing or proposed) and NPPF 9.79 states ... “The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open” 9.88 states ... “LPA’s should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt.”</i></p> <p>Lead Local Flood Authority – Objects to the grant of planning permission on the above application based on the overall feasibility of the proposed drainage scheme for this site. The Flood Risk</p>		

	<p>Assessment provided by the applicant does not provide a suitable basis for assessment to be made of the flood risks arising from the proposed development.</p> <p>Hertfordshire Transport Programmes & Strategy – No objection.</p> <p>Hertfordshire Ecology: No objection subject to suggested conditions.</p> <p>Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Advisor – No comment.</p> <p>Public Health and Protection – No objection.</p> <p>Environment Agency, Thames Water, Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust, Herts Spatial Planning & Economy Team; Landscape and Ecology – No response.</p>
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Relevant Policies

NPPF
 D1 D2 GBSP1 GBSP2 M14
 Supplementary Design Guidance Supplementary Parking Guidance Interim Policy for car parking and garage sizes
 Others: SD1, R1, R11, R17, R20, H1, H2, D8, RA10, RA16

Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission 2016

SP 1 Delivering Sustainable Development
 SP 3 Settlement Strategy and Green Bet Boundaries
 SP 4 Transport and Travel
 SP 9 Place Making and High Quality Design
 SADM 1 Windfall Development
 SADM 2 Highway Network and Safety
 SADM 11 Amenity and Layout
 SADM 12 Parking, Servicing and Refuse
 SADM 16 Ecology and Landscape
 SADM 34 Development within the Green Belt

Main Issues

This is the third application for planning permission which has been submitted subsequent to refused planning application ref: 6/2016/1677/MAJ and the Planning Inspectorates' appeal decision dated 17 November 2017. Since these decisions the development plan has not materially changed although the Local Planning Authority's new Draft Local Plan was submitted for examination on the 15 May 2017 and, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) para 216, decision makers may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans.

As the development has previously been determined through planning applications and an appeal, this report will assess the amended scheme against the reason for refusal and the relevant policies as well as any additional considerations that the applicant has put forward within the application.

The main planning issues to be considered are:

- Whether the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt; the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area and whether

the site would constitute a sustainable location for development; and

- If the proposal is inappropriate, whether any harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify it.

Whether the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt; the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area and whether the site would constitute a sustainable location for development

The Framework identifies that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The Framework states that inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt, subject to a number of exceptions as set out in paragraph 89. One of the exceptions is the limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it than the existing development. Policies GBSP1 and GBSP2 of the Local Plan define the towns and specified settlement where development will be permitted subject to other policies of the plan.

Policy SP 1 (Delivering Sustainable Development), SP 3 (Settlement Strategy and Green Belt Boundaries), SADM 1 (Windfall Development) and SADM 34 (Development within the Green Belt) of the Council's Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission 2016 show the policy direction of the emerging Plan and are, generally, refined versions of existing policy to be afforded significant weight in general terms.

The application site consists of a large roughly rectangular shaped piece of land, bordered on the southern side by Woodfield Lane. The majority of the site is covered by woodland, although there are two wooden structures located in the north east corner of the site, consisting of a long stable block (Building A) and a separate shorter, slightly narrower building in more of a state of disrepair (Building B). An access track roughly follows the eastern boundary of the site, linking the area of the buildings with Woodfield Lane. As a former equestrian use the site falls within the definition of previously developed land as contained in the Framework, and with regards to the first part of the exception to paragraph 89 therefore the proposal constitutes the redevelopment of a redundant previously developed site

Like the refused planning application ref: 6/2016/1677/MAJ, the proposal seeks to construct a single residential dwelling. However, in seeking to overcome the reasons for refusal, this revised scheme has been reduced in scale and now replicates the same footprint; floor area and volume as the existing structures which are to be demolished. The only exception being a frameless glazed link provided between the buildings which is required for functional purposes. The appearance of the building has also been simplified by replacing the charred larch and reflective stainless steel cladding of the refused scheme with soft timber and a tiled roof. The proposed landscaping around the dwelling has also been simplified with the omission of the pond and bridge and the inclusion of "grasscrete hardstanding" and a "wild landscaped area".

The area of the site where the proposed dwelling would be set has good screening to all sides and is not clearly visible from public areas, although it would be from a dwelling to the east which can already see the existing wooden structures on the site.

Paragraph 79 of the Framework highlights *"the essential characteristics of Green Belts are*

their openness and their permanence". There is no definition of openness in the Framework but, in the context of the Green Belt, it is generally held to refer to freedom from, or the absence of, development. Whilst the physical presence of any above ground development would, to some extent, diminish the openness of the Green Belt regardless of whether or not it can be seen, openness also goes beyond physical presence and has a visual aspect. In the visual sense, openness is a qualitative judgement.

Indeed, in line with the 2016 *Turner v Secretary of State and East Dorset Council* judgement the concept of openness should not be limited to a volumetric approach comparing the size, mass and physical effect of openness before and after development. Such an approach would be far too simplistic and ignore the wider aspects of openness which goes beyond the physical effect of buildings or structures. Factors relevant include how built up the Green Belt is now and how built up would it be after development has taken place. Consequently, although it may be accepted that the proposal to redevelop a brownfield site may not result in a materially greater volume and footprint compared to the buildings and structures currently in place, there are wider factors that must be taken into account in defining the effect of the proposal on openness.

In *Samuel Smith Old Brewery (Tadcaster) Oxtan Farm v North Yorkshire County Council & Anor* [2018] the visual impact of the scheme was considered as important as its "spatial" effects. Paragraph 38 of the judgement affirms that to exclude visual impact, as a matter of principle, from a consideration of the likely effects of development on the openness of the Green Belt would be artificial and unrealistic. A realistic assessment will often have to include the likely perceived effects on openness, if any, as well as the spatial effects.

In the present case, it is considered that the size, mass and height of the proposed dwelling would not be significantly different to the existing buildings. Notwithstanding the above, the proposed domestic use of the site would contrast greatly with its existing character and appearance, resulting in a more intrusive form of development and the perception of a more developed site.

Dwellings are not, as a matter of general principle, normally regarded as contributing positively to the visual amenity of the countryside. The existing stable and barn are lightweight timber structures which are essentially rural in nature and quite unobtrusive in the landscape and do not appear out of place within the site. In contrast, they would be replaced by a permanent dwelling of more substantial construction and domestic appearance.

A notable characteristic of the proposal is the addition of large areas of glazing, including a floor to ceiling window which is approximately 9m in length along the east elevation of Building A, the fully glazed link between Building A and B, as well as large floor to ceiling windows on the north elevation of Building B and the west elevations of both Building A and Building B. The visual impact of adding fenestration results in a building which is of a domestic character, particularly after dark when they would appear illuminated within what is otherwise a dark setting.

In addition to the physical form of the building, the introduction of a dwelling would markedly change the character and appearance of the site from one that is quite typical of countryside to one that is overtly residential in nature. Although the curtilage could be tightly drawn, outdoor areas would be likely to have an element of associated domestic paraphernalia, as evidenced by the existing situation. For example, it was noted during the site visits both in September 2016 and February 2018 that a large children's climbing frame with swing and a slide had been brought onto the site and located within the paddock approximately 40m west of the existing stable building. Other examples witnessed on site include tyre swings hanging from trees on the edge of the woodland area, as well as a barbecue and seating

area within the paddock. It was also noted in September 2016 that a close boarded fence and gates, approximately 2m in height, had recently been erected along the southern boundary of the site with Woodfiled Lane, without the benefit of planning permission. It is considered that the addition of further enclosing fences and ancillary domestic structures, patio areas, residential-style landscaping, play equipment, washing lines and a range of other domestic paraphernalia would be probable in the event that planning permission were granted for a residential use. All of these, as well as additional vehicles parked on the site, would be incongruous additions to the woodland and grassland character of the site and would not in keeping with the rural landscape.

The Planning Statement which accompanied this application notes the Council's concerns regarding a possible increase in domestic paraphernalia, but goes on to suggest that a defined residential curtilage would be functionally separate from the wider planning unit (encompassing the application site in its entirety). During the previous application and at the pre-application stage there were discussions on how the impact of residential paraphernalia could be reduced by clearly defining a residential curtilage, however, it is noted that the Inspector stated at paragraph 7 of his letter that *"the proposed limit of the domestic curtilage of the site would not assist particularly in this regard, with any domestic curtilage having an inevitable visual impact on the Green Belt when compared to the existing circumstances."*

The Planning Statement suggest that permitted development rights could be removed by condition. Whilst this may go some way towards limiting the impact on the openness, character and appearance of the site, the harm would not be entirely overcome and it remains questionable how effective these measures would be especially in terms of enforceability.

The Proposed Site Plan (P/502B) shows the access road and parking area. A "landscaped garden area" is annotated to the north east corner of the site and a "wild landscape area" to the west of the proposed dwelling. Whilst a detailed landscaping scheme, including boundary treatments and hard landscaping features, could be secured by condition, there remains a strong likelihood that domestic uses would extend beyond the residential curtilage to the wild landscape area and woodland beyond. The introduction of hard boundary treatments or formal landscaped boundaries would not be appropriate to the character of the site and would result in harm to the Green Belt openness in their own right.

In respect of the wider setting of the building, the site lies wholly within West End to Brickendon Wooded Slopes Landscape Character Area. Policy RA10 for development within Landscape Character Areas states that:

"Proposals for development in the rural areas will be expected to contribute, as appropriate, to the conservation, maintenance and enhancement of the local landscape character of the area in which they are located, as defined in Welwyn Hatfield Landscape Character Assessment."

This is consistent with paragraph 109 of the Framework, which states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, among things, protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.

The Landscape Character Assessment describes the strategy for managing change in this area is to *"conserve and strengthen"*. The strategy and guidelines include the following bullet points which are considered relevant to this planning application:

- *"development proposals that would result in permanent change to the historic landscape character of this area will not be permitted..."*
- *promote through education and access the multiple uses of ancient woodland and woodland products...*

- *encourage the management of woodland to ensure age diversity, a species-rich ground flora and a variety of management types, such as high forest, coppice, coppice-with-standards and wood pasture...*
- *promote the planting of locally indigenous species only, of local provenance where possible”*

The proposal includes new planting to reinforce the existing woodland. Also, that the Applicant is proposing to allow some degree of community access to the site, possibly involving Chancellors School. Whilst these aspects of the proposals would accord with the strategy for managing change in this area and are welcomed, the development as a whole would result in permanent change to the historic landscape character of the area which should not be permitted.

Paragraph 55 of the Framework seeks to promote sustainable development in rural areas. In this regard, reason 1 for refusal of the previous planning application ref: 6/2016/1677/MAJ is relevant:

“The proposal is contrary to the settlement strategy of the Council and, on balance, fails to achieve a benefit across the three dimensions of sustainability – environmental, social and economic for the reasons discussed within the report including, but not limited to, the location and its remoteness from existing services and facilities and from existing infrastructure. This is not outweighed by the limited environmental, economic and social benefits of the scheme. As such, the proposed development is fundamentally unsustainable, contrary to Saved Policies SD1, H1, H2, GBSP1 and GBSP2 of the adopted Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and the “golden thread” of the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to achieve sustainable development.”

It is also noted that the Inspector also concluded at paragraph 17 of his letter that the site would not constitute a sustainable location for development. Clearly the constraints of the site in terms of its location and its remoteness from existing services and facilities and from existing infrastructure have not altered with this current application. Furthermore, the proposal is not materially different from the refused scheme, in terms of the other sustainability considerations, which would lead to a different conclusion in this regard.

It is therefore concluded that in visual terms the proposal would have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development. Furthermore, in doing so the scheme also fails to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, one of the 5 purposes of the Green Belt, and would therefore not comply with the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The proposal is therefore inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and as such conflicts with the Framework.

In addition, the proposal would be contrary to paragraph 55 of the Framework. Whilst the proposal would comply with one of the core planning principles of the Framework in that it would reuse land that has been previously developed; it would conflict with other ones, including actively managing patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport and walking. The proposal would also be contrary to Policies SD1, H2, D1, and D2 of the Local Plan, which when taken together, state that development will be permitted where the principles of sustainable development are satisfied, that windfall residential development will be assessed against a range of criteria, including the location and accessibility of the site, and that all new development should be of a high standard of design which respects and relates to the character and context of the area in which it is proposed.

Whether any harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify it

It is necessary to undertake a balancing exercise to establish whether there are very special circumstances that outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. Paragraph 88 of the Framework advises that, when considering planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. "Very special Circumstances" (VSC) will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

No very special circumstances have been advanced by the applicant, however, there are factors that can reasonably be taken into account as being material considerations.

The application site includes a range of woodland, in varying condition. Planning application ref: 6/2016/1677/MAJ and the subsequent appeal were supported by evidence detailing how the appellant has worked with the Woodland Trust, and is committed to enhancing the woodland through maintenance and new planting of some 100 trees as part of the Woodland Trust's Centenary Wood project. A Woodland/Landscape Management Plan, confirmed by a Section 106 Agreement, would ensure that the proposals would provide ecological benefits, conserving, maintaining and enhancing the existing woodland. Such a scheme would have defined and definite ecological and bio-diversity benefits. Policy RA10 of the Local Plan states that proposals for development in rural areas will be expected to contribute to the conservation, maintenance and enhancement of the local landscape character of the area. The detailed woodland provisions of the proposal would comply with this policy. However, for the reasons given above concerning the design and visual impact of the scheme, the proposal as a whole would not comply with this policy.

Taking all matters into consideration, the factors in support of the proposal do not outweigh, let alone clearly outweigh, the harm that arises. The very special circumstances that are therefore required to justify the proposal still do not exist.

Conclusion

The proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and the Framework establishes that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. In addition the scheme would cause harm to the visual aspects of Green Belt openness as well as the character and appearance of the surrounding area and would not be a sustainable site for residential development. While entirely laudable the enhancement proposal and the redevelopment of a brownfield site that the scheme would provide would not *clearly* outweigh the harm that the scheme would cause. Consequently, very special circumstances that are necessary to justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt do not exist. The proposal has therefore failed to overcome the reasons for refusal of planning application 6/2016/1677/MAJ.

The proposal would comply with national and local planning policies in terms of other material planning considerations associated with this development subject to appropriately worded conditions.

Reasons for Refusal:

1. The proposal is contrary to the settlement strategy of the Council and, on balance, fails to achieve a benefit across the three dimensions of sustainability – environmental, social and economic for the reasons discussed within the report including, but not limited to, the location and its remoteness from existing services and facilities and from existing infrastructure. This is not outweighed by the limited environmental, economic and social benefits of the scheme. As such, the proposed development is fundamentally unsustainable, contrary to Saved Policies SD1, H1, H2, GBSP1 and GBSP2 of the adopted Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005; Policies SADM 1, SADM 34 and SP 3 of the Council's Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission 2016; and the "golden thread" of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 which seeks to achieve sustainable development.
2. The design and nature of the proposed development is harmful to the openness and visual amenity of the Green Belt and conflicts with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt by encroaching residential form into the countryside and failing to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land. As such the proposal represents inappropriate development within the Green Belt. The Local Planning Authority considers that very special circumstances do not exist to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and the other harm identified. The development therefore fails to comply with the objectives of Saved Policies GBSP1 and GBSP2 of the adopted Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005; Policies SP 3 and SADM 34 of the Council's Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission 2016; and the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.
3. The urbanisation of this site is considered to result in an unacceptable erosion of the demonstrable physical attributes within the Landscape Character Area and would neither conserve, maintain, enhance nor strengthen the character of the wider surrounding area. As such, the proposal is not considered to comply with Saved Policy D1, D2 and RA10 of the adopted Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005; Policies SP9 and SADM 16 of the Council's Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission 2016; and the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

REFUSED DRAWING NUMBERS

4.

Plan Number	Revision Number	Details	Received Date
P/508		Proposed Tree Planting Plan	22 December 2017
P/501	A	Existing Site Plan	29 March 2018
P/503	A	Existing Sectional Elevations	29 March 2018
P/504	A	Proposed Sectional Elevations	29 March 2018
P/506	A	Proposed Roof Plan	29 March 2018
P/502	B	Proposed Site Plan	29 March 2018
P/505	A	Proposed Floor Plan	29 March 2018
P/500		Location Plan	22 December 2017
PRI19248-03		Tree Protection Plan	22 December 2017
PRI19248-01		Tree Reference Plan	22 December 2017

1. POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

The decision has been made taking into account, where practicable and appropriate the requirements of paragraphs 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework and material planning considerations do not justify a decision contrary to the development plan (see Officer's report which can be viewed on the Council's website or inspected at these offices).

Determined By:

Mr Chris Carter
5 April 2018