

Welwyn Hatfield District Council
Planning Department
Council Offices
The Campus
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL8 6AE

22 July 2019

Dear Sirs,

**REF: 26 DWELLINGS ON LAND TO THE EAST OF FIRS WOOD CLOSE
APPLICATION REFERENCE NO: 6/2019/1370/MAJ**

We act on behalf of the owner/occupier of No. 33 Firs Wood Close, Potters Bar, EN6 4BY, [REDACTED] and have been asked to make representations on her behalf objecting to the above planning application.

We would, therefore, object on the following grounds:

1. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

- 1.1 The proposals map of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 shows the site is clearly within the Green Belt and also forms part of the Northaw Common Parkland Character Scape area.
- 1.2 Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which was updated on 19 February 2019, sets out the Government's Planning Policies for England. Section 13 of this document relates to the protection of Green Belt land with the fundamental aim of preventing urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, the essential characteristics of Green Belt are their openness and their permanence.

- 1.3 Paragraph 136 states that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified.
- 1.4 Paragraph 145 states that the Local Planning Authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt and goes on to list exceptions which are as follows:
- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
 - b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
 - c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
 - d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
 - e) limited infilling in villages;
 - f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and 43
 - g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would: – not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or – not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.
- 1.5 The erection of 26 dwellings, therefore, represent inappropriate development and no exceptions have been put forward to justify this.

2. WELWYN HATFIELD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 2.1 Current Local Planning Policies are set out in the Statutory Development Plan which comprises the same policies as The Welwyn Hatfield District Plan adopted in 2005.
- 2.1 Policy SD1 refers to sustainable development. The overall aim of this policy is to secure sustainable development in the district in order to improve quality of life. Therefore the Council expects that all developments should be consistent with the principles of sustainable development.
- 2.3 The draft Local Plan Submission document of 2016 refers to the replacement policy, SP1, which carries similar weight.
- 2.4 The site is located in a highly unsustainable location with no public transport services within close proximity and no footpath between the development and the nearest bus-stop on The Causeway.
- 2.5 The proposed development is also a considerable distance from any employment, shops, doctors surgeries', schools and hospitals and all future residents could only access these services in a private car. The proposals do not, therefore, meet the requirements of Policies SD1 and SP1.
- 2.6 The submitted Design and Access Statement states under paragraph 2.5.1 that the proposed site would benefit from reasonable access to local service and facilities but this is clearly not the case.

3. HIGHWAY SAFETY

- 3.1 Paragraph 5.5.1 of the submitted Design and Access Statement refers to a 6m wide access road to the East of Firs Wood Close with 2m wide footpaths but makes no reference to how this new road is accessed.
- 3.2 There are no footpaths on either side of Coopers End Road for a considerable distance and, therefore, future occupants would be heavily reliant on private modes of transport. It is highly likely that not all future occupiers will have such modes of transport and will be, therefore, walking or cycling along Coopers End Road which is totally unsatisfactory.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 It is believed that the proposed development does not fall within “Exception F” of paragraph 1.45 of the NPPF or any other exceptions listed within this paragraph and, as such, the proposals represent inappropriate development.
- 4.2 Planning permission for other residential developments within Firs Wood Close predates the current Development Plan as well as National Policy.
- 4.3 The proposals represent unsustainable development with very poor public transport connections and access to this is via a narrow road with no footpaths.

We trust that the above comments will be taken into account in determining this application.

Yours faithfully,

ALAN COX
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