

In December 2013 you will find some previous history of this site, as I submitted a pre - application for one dwelling on this piece of land (ref: S6/2013/2603/PA). This was for one reasonably sized house. I was advised in no uncertain terms by your planning officer Kate Phillips that such a proposal would not be granted, as quote *“the application site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt where there is a strong presumption against inappropriate development, such as the erection of new buildings. I would therefore advise you against submitting a formal planning application”*.

As far as I am aware nothing has changed in regard to the principle of the Green Belt as referenced to me above and therefore the proposal to build 26 dwellings, let alone one, is completely unacceptable. I would also quote back to you your own words of wisdom against my application, - *“The fundamental aim of green belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence”*. I could go on with quoting your planner’s defence of the NPPF and your own adoption of Policies D1 and D2, as adopted by Welwyn Hatfield SDG of the District Plan, but this can be read in my application reply of the 9th January 2014. However, the reference to permanence must have bearing here.

Having said this, quite obviously having made a formal pre – application in regard to building a dwelling on this site, I am not totally adverse to any development here. The construction of 26 houses is not an option, but anything from one to five might be acceptable, essentially provided that they reflect the standard and quality of build and home ownership already established here in Firs Wood Close and our close neighbours in Hook Lane. My proposal to build one house here would not have impacted on the identity or openness of local surroundings. 26 houses, particularly if they are to support social or assisted occupation in these numbers would have the greatest impact on this area, not only as a conservation area, but also on the quality of life here as we know it let alone the impact on local property values. I also understand that it is not entirely legal to take a diaspora in these numbers from one area to put them in another.

There are a number of issues with increasing the occupancy of Firs Wood Close to this degree other than those I have referred to in relation to my own previous interest in this site. Our location is not congenial to taking public transport into the local town of Potters Bar, which is why everyone here has to own a car. This is despite the proposer’s consultation report advocating the utilisation of Hook Lane bridle path as a convenient route to buses in Northaw village, as there are no continued public footpaths into Potters Bar along Coopers Lane Road. This is hardly a convenient route, as it is an unsurfaced bridle path and quite mucky in winter. Therefore another 50 plus cars required to accommodate the 50 to 150 occupants of these dwellings, would add significant pollution to our already compromised air quality here. I understand that the air quality tested throughout the local area is already at critical levels and exceeding illegal levels of particle contaminants. How will your climate emergency plan for zero net carbon emissions by 2030 be helped by adding this number of dwellings and the necessary vehicular transport to and from the site?

The unfortunate location of the adjacent Oswald Centre has already added considerable traffic concentrations to Coopers Lane Road, with frequent streams of cars and coaches making their way here from all over the country. We sometimes have difficulty exiting the close, whilst waiting for anything up to 20 cars at a time to pass the entrance. I have heard that they would also like to establish residential retirement homes within their site, which if effected would also impact this area beyond recognition.

It does need to be mentioned that the notice period given for responses to this application of just two weeks has been rather short and I would suggest compromised as a consequence. There was no public notice displayed around the site prior to the formal planning notice being posted out to the community and this was only done once it was pointed out to the council. In addition the notice that

has been displayed is not even near the site or in the close, it is over the other side of Coopers Lane Road where most people living here will never see it.

Needless to say, I am totally against this development in the capacity that it currently is. I will leave others to provide additional opinion and impact statements against the development of this number of houses here. Everyone in our community shares the same fear that the imposition of these numbers of dwellings here would impact on our quality of life irrevocably and likely mean an exodus for many who are still looking to live in the equivalent rural environment that we experience here today, rather than the inevitable encroaching urban sprawl, should this development go ahead.