

MP

103 Northaw Road West  
Northaw  
Herts  
EN6 4NS

PLANNING  
DEPARTMENT  
29 SEP 2015  
RECEIVED

Dear Mr. Heron,

Re: Proposed housing development at Northaw Equestrian Centre, Northaw Road West, EN6 4NT

Planning Application References: S6/2015/1159/MA  
S6/2015/1160/LB

We are writing to submit our objections to the above Planning Applications. These are listed below:

1. Site of the development

The proposed development is on the outskirts of the village at a distance from the village centre so would form a discrete housing development with no connection to the rest of the village. Furthermore, Northaw does not have any amenities apart from two pubs and a church so residents would have to drive to Cuffley or Potters Bar for services such as shops, post office and medical centres etc. The submission suggests that residents would walk or cycle but this is unrealistic as the connecting road is very busy, there are no dedicated cycle routes and the footpath to Cuffley is poorly maintained and overgrown by the adjacent hedge. Almost all residents in Northaw travel by car to Potters Bar and Cuffley and there is no reason to think that occupants of the new development would be any different. The bus service is infrequent and the service has recently been cut.

Furthermore, the development is in the Green Belt with no 'special circumstances' given to support it and in Welwyn Hatfield's draft Local Plan, this site not been earmarked for housing. The fact that this is 'previously developed land' does not mean that change of use from business to residential is appropriate. The business is still active and the site is in no way abandoned. Furthermore if this was a special consideration then anyone could propose any development where there are buildings in the Green Belt with impunity.

2. Loss of amenity and employment

The site has been used as an equestrian centre for many years and this is an appropriate use in this rural village. According to the figures presented in the Transport Statement, 15 people are employed on the site and it provides stabling, riding lessons and other leisure activities to the public. These would all be lost if the development goes ahead. Simply providing what looks like a field for use of the residents and public in exchange for this loss is inadequate, unnecessary and

inappropriate. Northaw already has a well equipped playing field and a large community orchard in its centre and areas for dog walking such as Hook Lane and Fir and Pond woods which are easily accessible to everyone.

### 3. Infrastructure – sewage and electricity

The Flood Risk Assessment states that there is no sewer connection on site and that any future connection is unlikely. How this would be resolved is not mentioned anywhere. Presumably any sewage treatment facility would have to be large to serve such a development and this would further impact on the site. Similarly there is an electricity pylon on the site which would be unattractive to potential purchasers. This is not shown on any of the plans or mentioned in any of the documents

### 4. Listed barn

The planning application suggests that the housing development would be the only way to improve and save the listed barn but that is not a reason to build the development. The current owner is already responsible for maintaining the barn's upkeep and if it has been neglected that is his or her responsibility.

### 5. Type of buildings

The houses proposed are large and presumably would be family dwellings. Both primary and secondary schools in the area are oversubscribed and the latter would have to be driven to. The materials used and the size of the houses especially the 2 storey dwellings are not appropriate to the rural site. At present the land is open and, being on the top of a ridge, affords views of open countryside which would be lost. Simply stating that there would be sight lines between the houses would in no way compensate. There has been no Landscape Character Assessment.

### 6. Ecology

Soprano Pipistrelle bats (a UK BAP Priority Species) have been reported in the area and the site shows 'medium potential for roosting bats' according to the Ecology Appraisal. It therefore recommends two Phase II bat surveys to be carried out by the end of September and should bats be found using the building then a further survey would be needed. Since none of these surveys are included in the submission one must assume that they have not been done. The report also states that removal of trees will have an impact on nesting birds and there will be a loss of grassland.

When the 'public consultation' was carried out in June, this was with limited notice and at an inconvenient time on a weekday so many residents were not able to attend.

Yours sincerely

Jane and Gary Brook

