

Comment

WELWYN HATFIELD

17 JUN 2019

PLANNING

PEARSON ASSOCIATES
TOWN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANTS

30th May 2019

Your Ref: 6/2019/0218/LB

Mr William Myers
Planning Officer
Planning Department
Council Offices
The Campus
Welwyn Garden City
AL8 6AE

*Mr Myers
I sent this by
email but it
was returned
Thanks
RSD*

Dear Mr Myers

Re: Amended Application 6/2019/0218/LB
Northaw House, Coopers Lane, Northaw, Potters Bar EN6 4NG

I am appointed [redacted] East Lodge, Judges Hill, Northaw EN6 4NL, one of the two original gate lodges to Northaw House.

The amended application is still objected to on all of the grounds mentioned in my original letter of 19th March 2019.

I note that the amendments appear to relate to specific details within Northaw House and affect internal and external elevations and layouts, which are not commented on by me in my objections.

I also note that there is a detailed letter from Mr Tim Waller of Waller Planning on behalf of the Applicant in which he is responding to letters of objection, including my own, which have been received by the Local Planning Authority (LPA). As far as points raised in this letter, dated 15th May 2019, are concerned, I would advise as follows:-

1. Mr Waller accepts my comment that in order to achieve the repair and refurbishment of Northaw House, enabling development is justified only insofar as it is the minimum necessary to carry out the works to Northaw House. Mr Waller then advises on the financial viability of the scheme, but makes no significant addition to the financial statements other than to state that these matters were discussed at the pre-application stage. I consider that for an application of this size and complexity, the financial viability should be an open book viability assessment submitted as part of the application, and independently assessed to advise the LPA on its accuracy and competence. The Applicant has already accepted that the development should be the

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minimum necessary to achieve the restoration of Northaw House and I consider that without this open assessment, it is impossible for the decision-maker to properly consider the scheme. I would advise LPA request that an open book viability be submitted as part of the application with an independent assessment to be paid for by the applicant. This will inform the LPA in their decision making.

2. Mr Waller also advises, within the section on the green belt, that because the development is contained within the boundary of the site, there is no effect on the encroachment of the open countryside. I consider that this is an erroneous assessment as much of the site is open land and the various additions, including the new east lodge building, clearly represents an encroachment on the openness of the green belt, which is a principal objection to any development within the green belt without material consideration.
3. With regard to the additional eastern gate lodge, it seems to me unreasonable that the Applicant is advising that an additional lodge, in this location would be acceptable. Clearly, a lodge building already exists, being occupied by my client. That lodge building was sold off to raise additional funds some time ago, just as the western lodge building was sold some time ago. It is clearly not feasible to merely advise that as a significant passage of time has elapsed, that an additional lodge building would be acceptable. I assume that, on this basis, in another ten years, a further lodge by the eastern gate could be considered acceptable simply to raise yet further monies for whatever additional works are required at that stage. Clearly, such an argument is nonsense and should be seen as such with the second eastern gate lodge being proposed as part of this application. In any event, it may well be that with an open book viability assessment, there would be no need for an additional eastern lodge gatehouse.
4. Mr Waller advises, under residential amenity, that the application would not cause harm to my client's property, East Lodge, because of traffic noise. This is because of the volume of traffic already using Judges Hill. Again, I find this a strange argument because traffic exists on one side of my client's property, the argument would appear to be that objection cannot be raised to an access road providing traffic noise and vehicle movements on a second road in front of my client's house. Clearly, this is nonsense as my client would have the existing traffic on Judges Hill, which is set at a considerably lower level than his current land, as well as new traffic movements outside his front door, which must represent a loss of residential amenity.
5. Mr Waller also advises that the new proposed eastern lodge will be located some 30m away from the existing East Lodge and as the planning system does not provide a right to a view, there is no reason for my client to object. There is every reason for my client to object as the new eastern lodge will not only provide traffic noise and visual intrusion,

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but represent an unacceptable development in otherwise open land in the green belt. As already mentioned above, this is a principal reason to object to any development within the green belt without material justification as to why it is necessary.

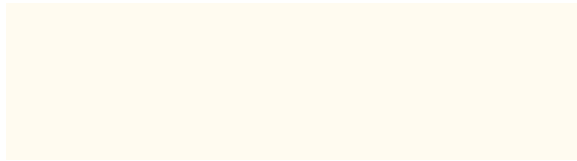
As indicated, the points set in my original letter of 19th March 2019 remain valid with the amendments being proposed, and I would suggest that the above comments, relating to the letter written by Mr Waller, should also be considered.

I wish to advise you that because of the issues raised by Mr Waller my client is in the process of appointing an independent traffic consultant who will also comment on the highway issue raised by this application.

In particular, I believe that an open assessment of the viability of the scheme is key to the whole consideration by the LPA of this very extensive and detailed application.

In the circumstances, the amended application should be refused and significant additional information requested.

Yours sincerely

A large rectangular area of the document is redacted with a solid yellow color, obscuring the signature and any handwritten notes.

MR R E PEARSON
B.Sc. Econ., Dip. T.P., M.R.T.P.I.