

**29 Ashridge Drive
Bricket Wood
St Albans
Hertfordshire AL2 3SR**

FAO Sarah Smith

Case Officer, Planning & Building Control

St Albans City & District Council

District Council Officers St Peter's Street

St Albans AL1 3JE

18 February 2021

PLANNING REFERENCE 5/2020/3022

**LAND TO REAR OF BURSTON GARDEN CENTRE, NORTH ORBITAL ROAD, CHISWELL GREEN,
ST ALBANS HERTFORDSHIRE**

We write to STRONGLY SUPPORT the application for this highly attractive, well-considered, and much needed development on the specified derelict, disused and unsightly area of land which cannot fulfil properly its current Green Belt designation.

We support it for the following reasons:

There is a proven need for retirement accommodation within the St Stephen Parish area to enable local residents to downsize to manageable bungalows and apartments while remaining close to family and friends, existing medical and dental practitioners, their current places of worship and familiar shops and cafes, such as Burstons Garden Centre.

The Parish area has a significant proportion of elderly residents for whom there is no retirement village accommodation. A desire for this was expressed in a community survey for St Stephen Parish Council's upcoming Neighbourhood Plan, and reflected in its Regulation 14 Consultation in November 2020. This has resulted in proposed policies in the current Draft Neighbourhood Plan which are relevant to this proposed development.

The down-sizing and move to local smaller accommodation will mean that elderly residents can free up their larger 3-4 bedroom houses for younger families to move into the Parish's three villages: again, a perceived need.

The facilities provided by the proposed development for elderly people will encourage their health and well-being, for example the planned community garden for their use, with raised beds, a community orchard, open grass spaces, a pond, and walks with wheelchair access. The designated footpath provides access to the local How Wood shops, to the Burston Garden Centre and to the wider community. The proposed bridleway and the woodland setting, together with extensive tree and shrub planting, and careful open landscaping around the buildings will give the area a highly attractive, green and sustainable environment and will also significantly increase wildlife biodiversity in this currently depleted unsightly area.

The Plans show considerable understanding of the need to protect and enhance the setting of Burston Manor for its historical significance. The measures taken with the site's design, its landscaping and planting, and the integration of the Manor's history through the provision of Information boards add significantly to the heritage awareness and enjoyment of residents, while respecting and protecting the privacy of Burston Manor itself.

The additional proposed traffic measures on the A405 to improve road safety and access to the proposed development and to Burston Garden Centre are much-needed and greatly welcomed.

The proposed development will bring increased employment opportunities to the area, and will lead to an increase in business for local shops and enterprises, including those at How Wood, and Burston Garden Centre.

In summary: this is a planning application which carries considerable advantages to elderly people in the local community, to the local community itself, to local businesses, to local traffic management, to its key local heritage asset, to the visual and actual enhancement of this derelict land, and the increase of wildlife biodiversity and woodland planting for climate sustainability.

For these reasons, we strongly SUPPORT this application.

Yours sincerely

Dianah and Henry Ellis