

Appeal by Castleoak Care Developments Limited in respect of proposals for land to the rear of Burston Garden Centre St Albans AL2 2DS.

Local planning authority reference: 5/2020/3022/LSM

PINS reference: APP/B1930/W/21/3279463

Effect upon Landscape and Visual Matters, inclusive of Green Belt - matters of common ground

Matters of Common Ground	
1.1	LVIA methodology and extent of study area
	The methodology for the LVIA is acceptable.
1.2	Landscape Character Baseline
	The landscape character baseline assessment is acceptable.
	The immediate context to the Appeal Site is urban fringe, settled landscape, with major infrastructure (A405, M25, railway line).
	The Appeal Site has a very contained character.
	There are buildings on the Appeal Site that diminish openness.
	The Appeal Site is unused, of poor quality, low landscape value and has been the subject of a Landscape Improvement Area Policy.
1.3	Visual Character Baseline
	The baseline visual assessment is acceptable.
	The Appeal Site is well contained within the landscape. Visual receptors are limited to those in the immediate vicinity.
	From the immediate viewpoints users are aware that they are on the urban fringe
	The existing close boarded fence along the boundary with the bridleway has an adverse visual impact on users.
1.4	Green Belt Baseline
	The Appeal Site is a very small part of Green Belt Parcel 26. (See CD3.16)
	Green Belt parcel 26 itself play following role against GB purposes (NPPF para138), as defined in the Council's Green Belt study Nov 2013): a) checking unrestricted sprawl of large built-up area – limited or no contribution b) preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another – partial contribution - c)safeguarding countryside from encroachment – limited or no contribution d) preserving setting and special character of historic towns - limited or no contribution e) assisting in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict land other urban land - [Not assessed in Council report].
	The Appellant considers that Appeal Site itself plays a lesser role as follows: a) checking unrestricted sprawl of large built-up area – No contribution b) preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another – Limited Contribution - c)safeguarding countryside from encroachment – Limited Contribution d) preserving setting and special character of historic towns – No Contribution e) assisting in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict land other urban land – [Not assessed] The Council considers that the Appeal site plays the following role:

	(a) checking unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas – partial contribution b) preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another – partial contribution c) safeguarding countryside from encroachment – partial contribution d) preserving setting and special character of historic towns - no contribution (e) assisting in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict land other urban land – [Not assessed]
1.5	Landscape Impact Assessment
	The proposed development would introduce built form spread across the site at 1, 2 and three storeys in height. It is agreed that the development will result in a degree of loss of openness. The Appeal scheme has a reduced mass and footprint when compared to the previously dismissed Appeal scheme. Correspondingly the Appeal scheme has an increased proportion of amenity space and green infrastructure in comparison to the previously dismissed Appeal scheme.
	The increased amenity space is principally to the north and west but also through the middle of the scheme.
	The Appeal scheme through reduction of the proportion of development provides opportunities for creating a better- quality environment and sense of place.
	Effects upon contextual landscape character are not significant.
1.6	Visual Impact Assessment
	The visual impact of the Appeal scheme is very localised, limited to visual receptors in the immediate vicinity.
	The impact on the limited number of immediately adjacent visual receptors is moderate adverse, with the removal of the close board fence being a positive visual outcome. The effect on all other visual receptors is neutral to negligible.
1.7	Green Belt Impact Assessment
	Any change in openness is limited to the Appeal Site itself, where there would be a degree of harm to the openness of the Green Belt.
	The Appeal scheme is more open than the previously dismissed Appeal scheme.
	The Appeal scheme does not affect the openness of Green Belt Parcel 26 outside the Appeal Site boundary.
	In relation to purposes (NPPF para 138), the appellant considers that the effect on the green belt is as below: a) checking unrestricted sprawl of large built-up area – neutral. b) preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another – very limited to neutral. c) safeguarding countryside from encroachment - neutral d) preserving setting and special character of historic towns – neutral. e) assisting in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict land other urban land – through provision of new homes on derelict land – a positive effect. In relation to the purpose of (NPPF para 138) the Council considers that the effect on the Green Belt is as below: (a) checking unrestricted sprawl of large built-up area – significant b) preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another – moderate. c) safeguarding countryside from encroachment - significant

	d) preserving setting and special character of historic towns – neutral. e) assisting in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict land other urban land – through provision of new homes on derelict land – neutral.
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Signatories:

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On behalf of Appellant	On behalf of St Albans City and District Council
Date:	Date: <i>26 November 2021</i>