

**Statement by Victoria Prever for Planning Inquiry into
appeals relating to land North and South of Chiswell Green Lane**

My name is Victoria Prever, and I have lived at 5 Rosedene End in Chiswell Green for almost 12 years together with my husband David Prever and our two children.

Our house directly borders one of the fields subject to planning application 5/2022/0927 — Land south of Chiswell Green Lane, Chiswell Green.

I am opposed the above application for the same reasons as my fellow residents but also because of our specific situation:

1. Our home is the only house that sits less than 2 metres from the edge of the field. It is also built in a dip which is a full metre lower than the adjoining land. This was due to planning restrictions issued by St Albans District Council (SADC) at the time. Furthermore, the same planning restrictions curtailed the height of our home and forced the builders to direct all but two of our windows onto the field. Consequently, all the light that comes into our home is from the field. Our children's bedrooms only have skylight windows which already limits the light they receive. The planned 2.5 storeys (which could be up to 9.8m) at the edge of this site sitting less than two metres from our home will directly block our light, our privacy and security.
2. In addition, the same planning restrictions prevent us from making any changes to our home without full planning permission, so we will be unable to improve our situation in respect of this planned development without applying to SADC and incurring great cost. The previous decision taken by SADC to protect neighbouring houses should surely be taken into consideration for this planned development.
3. Cala Homes and the other appellants have appeared to ignore the existence of our house from the start of their campaign to build on this land. In the early documentation they shared with the local community, Rosedene End, was missing. It

also failed to be noted in the subsequent Design and Access Statement. Whether due to an oversight in the drawings or ignorance of the site is unclear. When they held their online public meeting, Calas's representatives ignored my direct questions about this error and have continued to ignore this issue, with no allowance made for our special circumstances.

4. The situation of our home within a dip is also a concern as we are at risk of flooding were the vegetation of the field to be removed and turned into roads and paved surfaces. Rain currently is absorbed by the field, stopping it from seeping into our garden. The field is often waterlogged and were this to be removed we are directly at risk of regular flooding and directly foreseeable damage to our house.
5. A final reasonably foreseeable consequence of the development of this land would be a loss to us of telephone and internet signal. We are already struggling to get signal due to our situation, and this development would block this further.
6. Living with a direct view of the field I can directly contest the claims by Cala Homes and its fellow appellants that there is little wildlife that will be destroyed by this development. They claim there are no bats roosting here, but I see bats coming out regularly at dusk throughout the summer months. The field is full of deer, pheasants, rabbits and birds, including red kites. A badger – also a protected species – lives in the woods in the centre of the proposed development. There are also many types of insects and butterflies and a wide variety of birds.
7. The appellants' claims that the proposed new residents will use public transport to commute to and from their housing estate are fantasy. House prices in Chiswell Green have always been lower than central St Albans and other suburbs because we are so badly served by public transport here. To commute into London, I (like my neighbours) am forced to drive to either St Albans City or Radlett Stations. Taking a bus is not a viable option – it would add too much time and cost to the journey. The train is expensive enough without adding the bus fare. There is no direct bus to Radlett which is the cheaper station from which to travel into London. Claims that

the new residents will use public transport have nothing to back them up. Cycling to the stations is also not an easy option.

8. I have previously supplied photographs detailing our proximity to the field and would be happy to show the Planning Inspector when he visits the sites.

I share with my fellow Chiswell Green residents, the same reasons for opposing the above-mentioned application (as well as the second application subject to this Planning Inquiry). These include the lack of infrastructure to cope with such a large increase in population; the already heavy traffic on roads that will not cope with an increase in traffic plus the absence of special circumstances.

Traffic in Chiswell Green is already heavy — sometimes at a standstill — leading to long waits to get onto the Watford Road and again to travel into St Albans or out to the M1 and M25 motorways. I experience this in varying degrees of severity every time I leave home. The high pollution levels created by the triangle of motorways within which our village sits are tempered slightly by the trees and other vegetation in the existing fields around us. To build on them will only serve to increase the problem.

I hope the Planning Inspector will halt the appellants. Development should not be agreed before SADC has a formal Local Plan that considers actual housing numbers needed and first makes use of brown field sites that could be used before destroying Green Belt land that we need to protect our environment. Chiswell Green cannot accommodate and will be destroyed by the proposed developments.