

Kelshall Parish Meeting

Ref. Appeal Ref 6006777 Land at Fears End

Reasons in Support of the Decision of NHC Planning and Rejection of the Appeal

Kelshall Parish Meeting has consulted Parishioners and been authorised to support the decision of NHC Planning and would urge the Inspector to reject this Appeal, for the reasons stated below:

Context

Whilst this Appeal relates to Planning Ref 25/03189/OP we would respectfully suggest that it be considered at the same time as Appeal Ref 6009246 relating to 25/02883/FP Woodcotes and Appeal No: 6008229 relating to Land at Fears End, since the substance of these planning applications remains the same.

Access to Information

The site of this development is in Kelshall Parish. Kelshall Parishioners have not had ready access to the sequence of applications relating to this and those at Fears End and Woodcotes as despite their location in Kelshall Parish, NHC Planning have classified the applications as being within neighbouring Sandon, not Kelshall. The main means of access from the location to the shopping and employment centre at Royston is through the village of Kelshall. This and the other associated developments will involve significant traffic movements through Kelshall so these developments should have been clearly advertised on the NHC Portal under the Parish of Kelshall .

Housing Development Restrictions Kelshall

Housing development in Kelshall has since the commencement of the N Herts Local Plan 2011-2031 been strictly confined to the limitations of its category B status – infill within the core of the village. Nine applications have been successfully accomplished and all but one supported by Parishioners. They have been confined to the core of the village, including one application related to the conversion of farm buildings on an active farm (19/02388/FP Manor Farm 28/10/2020) - also within the core of the village. At all times the NHC Planning has made it clear that development is confined within the Parish to infill within the core. This has also been emphasized in the rejection by the Council of the application for which this is an Appeal (*'The development does not constitute infill within a defined built core'*).

Open Countryside

A further comment by the Parish Meeting relates to the location of this and its adjacent developments in open countryside. To the rear (east) of this proposed development, and adjacent to the Hertfordshire Way is the historic Philpotts Wood where Sir John Philpott built his 16th century moated manor house and which is a homing area for the fallow deer. Winterbourne chalk streams of the River Rib have their origin in the immediate environment. We see no reference in the Application to this adjacent area of conservation and natural beauty. It is considered that the whole purpose of restricting development to infill at the core of Kelshall Village is to protect such

open countryside from development of this type. Again the Officer Report notes that it would *‘result in an unacceptable change in the character and appearance of the rural landscape’*.

Road Access and Adequacy

The adequacy of the road (Sandon Road or Gannock Lane) through to Kelshall to accommodate these developments has been commented upon by the Parish Meeting throughout the planning process. Suffice it to say that the road is narrow, with inadequate passing bays, badly maintained and can become impassable in Winter. It is noted that on this and the other applications Highways have consistently expressed reservations and stated in the case of the neighbouring Woodcotes development that the proposals were *‘contrary to Policy T1 of the Local Plan and to the principles of sustainability in the NPFF’*. Given access considerations and the remoteness of the site from services and facilities, householders would be solely dependent on private transport all of which acts against affordability criteria..

Local Need for Housing

The development does not fulfil a proven local rural housing need - as acknowledged by NHC Planning’s Decision Notice. Of the nine infill houses approved by the Planning Authority in Kelshall since 2020 only one is complete and occupied the others being held up by Developers through lack of demand. There are a number of infill sites still available within the built up core of the village able to satisfy local housing demand without opening up a poorly accessed housing development in open countryside.

Appeal Consequences

The Parish is very wary of the consequences of a successful Appeal. [Planning Application Ref. 22/01229/FP](#) involving an infill four bedroomed house in Kelshall went to Appeal (Ref APP/X1925/W/23/33162410 Red Brick 23/09/2023) and the Inspector allowed the Appeal and construction of a four bedroomed dwelling. Subsequent to the Inspector’s decision NHC Planning approved Developer’s proposals which provided for two five bedroomed houses on the same plot. This proposed development at Fears End has since March 2026 been actively advertised and promoted to Developers, subject to an Appeal, and may have been sold at the time of the Hearing and in the hands of a Developer. Should the Inspector be mindful to agree the Appeal there should be restrictions preventing Developers and the Planning Authority allowing development beyond that contemplated under the application the subject of this Appeal.

Class Q Consent

We note the constant reference to the ‘fallback’ Class Q consent or default scenario. We understand the planning process relating to the conversion of agricultural buildings does not constitute binding approval of the scheme put forward to facilitate the reincarnation of the buildings. Reversion to the proposed dwelling configuration would be impractical and unattractive to a Developer. Nor is the existing structure of the buildings capable of bearing the conversion. Had the existing buildings been capable of development the need for these further planning applications would have been unnecessary. It is worthwhile noting that the Conservation Officer has made no comment on the desirability of maintaining any aspect of the existing buildings, which mainly comprised a former piggery. Item 6 of the Statement of Case, in arguing for a positive decision by the Inspector somewhat undermines the case for fallback Class Q consent.

Stephen Ford
Chairman

Peter Gartside
Clerk

June 29th 2026