

Kelshall Parish Meeting

**Ref. Appeal Ref: Woodcotes Appeal No: 6009246 &
AP/26/00015/REF**

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 25/02883/FP /FP Woodcotes, we would respectfully suggest that it be considered at the same time as that relating to Planning Ref 25/03189/FP Fears End advertised and confirmed by NHC Planning as being subject to Appeal (now notified 9/6/26 as Appeal Ref 6006777), and Appeal Ref 6008229, since the substance of these planning applications share common implications.

Access to Information

The site of this development is in Kelshall Parish. Kelshall Parish Meeting has not had ready access to the sequence of applications relating to this and those at Fears End as despite their location in Kelshall Parish, NHC Planning have classified the applications as being within Sandon, not Kelshall. The Woodcotes site is closer to the village core of Kelshall than Sandon. The means of access from the location to the nearest shopping centre (Royston) is through the village of Kelshall. This and the other associated developments will involve significant traffic movements through the centre of Kelshall Village.

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 (19/02388/FP Manor Farm 28/10/2020) - also within the core of the village. At all times the NHDC 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 development in open countryside. It is considered that the whole purpose of restricting

development to infill at the core of Kelshall Village precludes such development in this location. 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 (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 the view that the proposals are *‘contrary to Policy T1 of the Local Plan and to the principles of sustainability in the NPFF’*.

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 a 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 NHDC Planning approved Developer’s proposals which provided for two five bedroomed houses on the same plot. At Fears End the developments are being advertised to Developers. 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 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 are redundant chicken sheds.

Stephen Ford
Chairman
June 8th 2026

Peter Gartside
Clerk