

Objection Letter

RE: Objection to Resubmitted Planning Application (S62A/2025/0087) Land between 84–108 Ragged Hall Lane, Chiswell Green, St Albans

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write to formally object to the resubmitted planning application (S62A/2025/0087) concerning the proposed development of seven dwellings on land designated as Green Belt between 84–108 Ragged Hall Lane, Chiswell Green, St Albans.

This marks the third iteration of an application that has already been dismissed twice by the Planning Inspectorate—on 9 October 2023 and again on 20 January 2025. On both occasions, the Inspectorate found that the proposed development constituted inappropriate development within the Green Belt, causing significant spatial and visual harm to its openness. In each case, it concluded that the harm was not clearly outweighed by other considerations, and that no “very special circumstances” existed to justify a departure from national or local planning policies.

1. Recycled “Grey Belt” Argument Previously Rejected The latest application pivots on the claim that the land falls within a so-called “Grey Belt,” citing paragraph 155 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This argument was specifically considered—and rejected—by the Inspector in the January 2025 decision. Paragraph 15 of that decision clearly stated: - The land is not previously developed; - It does not fall within a village setting to allow limited infilling; - The proposal would contribute to urban sprawl rather than prevent it.

As the Inspector concluded, “The proposed development does not meet the policy tests... and would cause harm that the new NPPF wording does not offset.” The site’s undeveloped, open character and edge-of-settlement location continue to disqualify it from any relaxed interpretation under the NPPF.

2. Continuing Importance of the Green Belt The Inspector also reaffirmed the site’s Green Belt function, noting that it helps to prevent urban sprawl and safeguard the countryside from encroachment—two of the five core purposes of Green Belt designation under paragraph 138 of the NPPF. These are substantive planning concerns, not matters of aesthetics. Neither landscaping buffers nor reinterpreted policy arguments mitigate the fundamental harm that would arise from development on this site.

3. Attempt to Circumvent Proper Legal Processes The refusal decision issued on 20 January 2025 became final after the expiry of the statutory window for legal challenge on 6 March 2025. Rather than pursuing a judicial review under Section 288 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the applicant has chosen instead to resubmit a near-identical scheme under a new application.

This tactic raises serious procedural concerns. It undermines the purpose of the Section 62A designation, which is intended to facilitate timely, impartial decision-making by the Planning Inspectorate. The repeated resubmission of substantively identical proposals—absent any new material considerations—suggests a strategy of attrition, placing undue burden on local authorities, national bodies, and the wider community.

Conclusion This is not a new proposal. It recycles previously rejected arguments without addressing the substantive issues raised in prior Inspector decisions. No material change in planning policy or site circumstances has occurred, and no “very special circumstances” have been demonstrated to justify overriding Green Belt protections.

The applicant's reliance on legalistic arguments ought properly to have been pursued via judicial review. The failure to do so underscores the strength and finality of the previous decisions.

The continued resubmission of substantively the same proposal places an unnecessary strain on public resources and undermines public confidence in the planning system's principles of certainty and good governance. This application should be refused once again, and serious consideration should be given to whether this pattern of resubmission constitutes an abuse of process.

Yours faithfully,

Jasmine Cassidy

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Jasmine Cassidy.

28 April 2025