

STAGE 4 HEARING STATEMENT SADM21 HS7 Land at Waterside

My responses to the Consultation Document detailed the reasons why, on behalf of the neighbourhood, I object to the proposal to build 20 dwellings on this site. I have requested that the site should be included in an extension of Urban Open Land Site AGS 37 and this matter was due for discussion at Stage 3 SADM17.

The Inspector's Preliminary Question 20 asks whether the proposed development of this Amenity Green Space for housing is consistent with policies SP11, SP12 and SADM17.

SP11

The land fulfills criteria i, ii, iii and iv in section Urban Open Land 12.19 which would be contradicted by development.

SP12

There are numerous references to the desirability of protecting existing recreational space not just officially designated urban open land. According to the Haldens Area section in the Assessment of Welwyn Hatfield's Open Space, Outdoor Sport and Recreation June 2009 there is a shortage of larger open space sites. I cannot accept the Council's argument that open space around the site is not an issue because it is adjacent to the so called Black Fan Valley Park. That the Park has Green Belt status should preclude it from discussion of the needs for open space within the urban area. There are issues of safety and accessibility which I referred to in my consultation responses. I also find it difficult to follow the Council's logic that because exceptional circumstances exist to necessitate the removal of land from the Green Belt there is no reasonable basis on which not to select a suitable site with no current designations. According to the sentiments expressed throughout SP12 and other similar parts of the Plan such as Section 14 and SP15 extolling the unique character of Welwyn Garden City this site needs reclassifying and protecting.

SADM17

This section succinctly summarizes the views I have expressed above of the desirability of correctly identifying and protecting areas of open land and recreation.

Cynically, I can only assume that HS7 was not classified as official Urban Open Land in the flawed surveys of 2001, 2002 and 2005 because the Council will benefit from an overage covenant which ceases in 2026. Development of this site is not justified and would render the Plan as unsound.

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