

3<sup>rd</sup> October 2025  
Our Ref: 24.5080

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Dear Matthew

## Carpenders Park – Additional Grey Belt Information (ref: 25/1020/FUL)

Thank you for your time on 25<sup>th</sup> September to discuss the application. This letter seeks to provide further information to assist your assessment as to whether the site constitutes Grey Belt, specifically in relation to the Site's contribution to Green Belt purpose (a). This letter is accompanied by the following documents:

- Appendix 1 – Grey Belt Plan;
- Appendix 2 – Site Photos;
- Appendix 3 – Legal Opinion from Lord Banner KC;
- Appendix 4 – Green Belt Assessment Addendum prepared by Pegasus; and
- Appendix 5 – Relevant Decisions.

## Background

As you are aware, our case is that the Site does not contribute strongly to Green Belt purposes (a), (b) and (d) and therefore meets with the definition of Grey Belt as set out in the NPPF. This case is set out in detail within Pegasus's Green Belt Assessment (March 2025), which has been submitted to support the planning application, which reaches the following conclusions in respect of each of the relevant Green Belt purposes:

	Purpose a: Checking unrestricted sprawl	Purpose b: Preventing the merging of towns	Purpose d: Preserving the setting of historic towns
The Site	Moderate	Moderate	No contribution

We understand that there is no disagreement with Pegasus's assessment with regards to purposes (b) and (d) ('moderate' and 'no contribution'), however following your initial assessment you considered that the site made a strong contribution to purpose (a): *"to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas."*



## PPG Guidance

Paragraph 004 of the PPG on Green Belt provides guidance on how the contribution land makes to the relevant Green Belt purposes should be assessed. Below is an extract of the guidance with regards to purpose (a).

Contribution	Illustrative features
Strong	<p>Assessment areas that contribute strongly are likely to be free of existing development, and lack physical feature(s) in reasonable proximity that could restrict and contain development.</p> <p>They are also likely to include all of the following features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- be adjacent or near to a large built up area</li> <li>- if developed, result in an incongruous pattern of development (such as an extended “finger” of development into the Green Belt)</li> </ul>
Moderate	<p>Assessment areas that contribute moderately are likely to be adjacent or near to a large built up area, but include one or more features that weaken the land’s contribution to this purpose a, such as (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- having physical feature(s) in reasonable proximity that could restrict and contain development</li> <li>- be partially enclosed by existing development, such that new development would not result in an incongruous pattern of development</li> <li>- contain existing development</li> <li>- being subject to other urbanising influences</li> </ul>
Weak or None	<p>Assessment areas that make only a weak or no contribution are likely to include those that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- are not adjacent to or near to a large built up area</li> <li>- are adjacent to or near to a large built up area, but containing or being largely enclosed by significant existing development</li> </ul>

It is clear from the definitions of ‘strong’ and ‘moderate’ that the key difference is whether there are physical features in reasonable proximity that could restrict and contain development. The ‘strong’ definition lacks these features, whilst the ‘moderate’ definition refers to one or more features, which can include physical features, as well as other features such as urbanising influences.

As set out in Lord Banner’s Opinion, just one feature can mean a site’s contribution to Green Belt purpose (a) is ‘moderate’ rather than ‘strong’. Furthermore, these features can be natural or man-made and they do not need to be present on all sides of the site. This is evident from the wording of the ‘weak or none’ category, which refers to ‘largely enclosed’ as being one of the factors (set out in further detail in Paragraph 24 of Lord Banner’s Opinion).

## Arup Green Belt Review (2025)

We note that the Green Belt Review has now been published, which is based on the Green Belt parcels from the 2019 Stage 2 Assessment. The Site is included within Parcel SO3 which comprises a much larger parcel of land than the Site, extending to the northern edge of Carpenders Park and to the golf club to the south (including the northern section of the golf club).

The 2025 Green Belt Review uses the results of the 2019 Stage 2 Assessment to match these to the PPG's 'weak', 'moderate' and 'strong' contribution scale. In respect of Parcel SO3, the Stage 2 Assessment concluded that the parcel's performance was 'significant' for purpose (a), 'moderate' for purpose (b) and purpose (d) was not assessed. Based on this assessment, the latest Green Belt Review concludes that Parcel SO3 is Green Belt rather than Grey Belt on the basis that there is a 'significant' contribution with regards to purpose (a), which the review corresponds to 'strong'.

Given the fact that the parcel comprises a much larger areas of land, the conclusions cannot be directly applied to the Site. This is confirmed on page 8 of the Green Belt Review which advises:

*“Looking at parcels within a GBR is helpful at a strategic level for plan-making. However, when considering the identification of grey belt in decision making, it is more relevant to assess at a site-specific level to ensure the assessment outcomes reflect the site itself and is not skewed by the characteristics of land potentially some distance from the actual site.”*

As such, it is considered that the site-specific assessment prepared by Pegasus, supplemented by the further information enclosed with this letter, represents a more accurate assessment of whether the application site should be considered Grey Belt.

## Assessment of the Site

In the case of the Site, there are various physical, topographical and urbanising features to take into account as part of this assessment, which are illustrated on the Grey Belt Plan at [Appendix 1](#) and are summarised below:

- **Oxhey Lane** – This is a permanent physical feature which forms part of the Site's western boundary. Various decisions listed at [Appendix 5](#) take account of roads as physical features within their assessment of purpose (a).
- **Carpenders Park** – The settlement boundary of Carpenders Park lies to the west, which can be seen from the Site and is an urbanising influence.
- **Carpenders Park Care Home** – To the immediate west is the care home which is a physical feature and an urbanising influence which contains the development to the west. It can be seen from within the site and is illustrated in the photo at [Appendix 2](#).
- **5G Mast** – There is a 5G mast close to the Care Home, which can be seen from within the Site and is an urbanising influence. This is illustrated in the photo at [Appendix 2](#).

- **Woodland Trust Land** – To the east is the Merry Hill Wood, which is an area of woodland owned and management by the Woodland Trust. This is the UK’s largest woodland conservation charity, therefore the ownership and management of this land highlights the fact that this is a permanent physical feature which will restrict and contain development. This area of land also wraps around the northern boundary of the land to the north, which creates a further physical boundary to prevent unrestricted sprawl to the north.
- **Flood Zone and Storage Area** – As set out in the Legal Opinion, the flood zone 2-3 area to the south, which includes the Hartsbourne Steam Flood Storage Area (FSA), is a defensible boundary against sprawl to the south. Furthermore, the Hartsbourne Stream FSA is a strategically important flood defence and has been constructed to protect the areas of Carpenders Park and South Oxhey from flooding up to the 1 in 200 year event. The embankment is 280m in length and 6m high and there are large engineered abutments passing beneath Oxhey Lane. This is therefore a significant engineering operation and a permanent feature in the landscape which is a further urbanising influence.
- **Trees along Northern Boundary** – There are mature trees and hedgerows along the northern boundary, which are considered to form a robust, defensible boundary between the site and land to the north (set out in 2.8 of the Green Belt Assessment Addendum). As confirmed in the Tree Report, these are predominantly Category A trees which are significant in size and form a physical feature which will prevent sprawl to the north.

In summary, there are physical features on all sides of the site which enclose and contain development. However regardless of the view reached on the northern boundary, at the very least the remaining features partially contain the site which is a characteristic of the ‘moderate’ definition. This is confirmed in the overall conclusion reached by Lord Banner on purpose (a) (Paragraph 30):

*Overall, there are multiple significant factors which fall within what the PPG envisages are features that “weaken the land’s contribution to this purpose”. Given that only one such factor can be sufficient to mean that a site’s contribution is no more than “Moderate”, the presence of multiple factors here supports the conclusion that this is a strong, rather than borderline, case for concluding that the contribution to Green Belt Purpose (a) is no more than “Moderate”.*

### **Relevant Appeal Decisions**

We have provided a table below summarising some recent Appeal Decisions and the relevant paragraph references with regards to the purpose (a) assessment. Full details of these decisions, including the Appeal Decisions/Committee Report, plans and imagery are provided at [Appendix 5](#).

It is clear from these decisions, all of which conclude that the application/appeal site is considered to be Grey Belt, that there do not have to be features on all sides of the site for them to fall within the ‘moderate’ category. This is illustrated on the aerial views of the various sites that form part of [Appendix 5](#). Furthermore, many of the decisions take into account existing trees and vegetation as physical features (for example Bermesley Road) which can restrict and contain development, which is particularly relevant in the case of the Site’s northern boundary.

The Woodlands Park Decision also clarifies that physical features are still relevant even if they cannot be seen from the site, and urban influences e.g. electricity pylons are also a relevant consideration in terms of purpose (a).

Site	Reference	Relevant Paragraphs
Bemersley Road, Staffordshire	APP/B3438/W/24/3351328	15-20
Bedmond Road, Abbots Langley	APP/P1940/W/24/3346061	176
Hanham	APP/P0119/W/24/3357956	16-24
Bushey Golf Course	24/1022/OUT	5.18-5.19
Hemel Hempstead, Dacorum	APP/A1910/W/24/3345435	147
Wandon End, North Hertfordshire	APP/X1925/W/25/3359065	16-24
Weylands, Hersham	APP/K3605/W/24/3352866	18
Woodlands Park, Iver	APP/N0410/W/24/3347353	5.19-5.25

In summary, it is concluded that the Site does not make a strong contribution to purpose (a) (or purposes (b) and (d)) and therefore meets the Grey Belt definition. We trust that this information is useful to inform your assessment with regards to whether the Site is Grey Belt, specifically in relation to purpose (a). We look forward to your thoughts and if there is any further information you would like from us in the meantime please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



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