

Green Belt Assessment Addendum

Land east of Oxhey Lane, Carpenders Park, Watford

On behalf of Burlington Property Group Limited

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Pegasus Group were appointed by Burlington Property Group to prepare a Green Belt Assessment¹ (hereafter referred to as the GBA) in support of a planning application for residential development on land east of Oxhey Lane, Carpenders Park, Watford (hereafter referred to as the site).
- 1.2. The site falls within the local authority area of Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) for administration purposes and is located immediately to the east of the A4008 Oxhey Lane and the eastern edge of Carpenders Park within the Green Belt.
- 1.3. It is the judgment of the GBA that the Site does not strongly contribute to Purposes (a), (b), or (d) of the Green Belt. It is therefore considered to qualify as Grey Belt under the definition provided within the Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework NPPF. Further, the removal of the Site from the Green Belt would not fundamentally undermine the five Green Belt purposes when taken together with the remaining Green Belt within the wider plan area.
- 1.4. In the context of the GBA and its conclusions, the case officer – Mr Matthew Roberts – set out (in an email dated 19th September) his preliminary view that the Site contributed strongly to Green Belt Purpose (a). Notwithstanding this Mr Roberts indicated in the email that he remains open to considering further commentary on the contribution that the site makes to this purpose.
- 1.5. In response to the view expressed by Mr Roberts the following points are noted with regard to Green Belt Purpose (a).

¹ Green Belt Assessment – Land at Carpenders Park, Watford – March 2025

2. Green Belt Purpose (a): To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

2.1. With regard to Green Belt Purpose (a) the submitted GBA (§3.6) notes that:

“The Site benefits from physical and visual separation from the adjacent settlements of Watford / Oxhey 850m to the north, Bushey / Bushey Heath over 1.1km to the east and Pinner / Harrow over 1.1km to the south. The large expanse of woodland associated with Merry Hill open access land, managed by the Woodland Trust as a parkland accessible to the public, is located immediately adjacent to the eastern boundary spreading east towards Bushey. This woodland provides a high degree of physical separation between the Site as a new settlement edge to Carpenders Park, and Bushey, that is permanent in nature. To the south, the Site boundary is offset from the course of the Hartsbourne Stream and associated flood storage area, with Mutton Wood a further 300m south of the boundary and Grim’s Dyke golf course beyond, and with Hartsbourne golf course to the southeast. These features comprise mature woodland and belts of trees which form a further physical, permanent feature to distinguish and define the boundary of the Green Belt.”

2.2. At §3.7 the GBA goes on to note that:

“To the north, there is a degree of physical openness with short-distance views possible from within the Site, across the agricultural fields. The view is limited further north towards the boundary with Merry Hill open access land which adjoins Oxhey Lane approximately 400m north of the northern boundary, and there is an element of visual enclosure created by the mature hedgerows and trees along the Site’s northern boundary, and along the boundary of Merry Hill. While the northern edge is more open, the Site is still set back over 400m from the northernmost settlement edge of Carpenders Park, and there is a high degree of visual separation between the Site and Carpenders Park with Oxhey due to the belts of woodland throughout Merry Hill.”

2.3. In conclusion at §3.8 the GBA notes that:

“Given this association, it is considered that the Site has a ‘Moderate’ contribution to Purpose a) with reference to the PPG criteria. This conclusion is reached because the Site has physical features in reasonable proximity that could restrict and contain development i.e. the topography and woodland, is partially enclosed by existing development and has urbanising influences.”

2.4. Further points are noted as follows:

2.5. The criteria for assessment are set out in the PPG (Feb 2025) at Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 64-005-20250225 and note with regard to purpose (a) that:

“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.

They are also likely to include all of the following features:

- be adjacent or near to a large built up area***
- if developed, result in an incongruous pattern of development (such as an extended “finger” of development into the Green Belt)***

2.6. In contrast:

“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):

- having physical feature(s) in reasonable proximity that could restrict and contain development***
- be partially enclosed by existing development, such that new development would not result in an incongruous pattern of development***
- contain existing development***
- being subject to other urbanising influences***

2.7. It is important to note that the PPG indicates that an edge-of-settlement site is likely to make a “Moderate” rather than “Strong” contribution to the Green Belt where it includes ***“one or more features that weaken the land’s contribution to this purpose”***

2.8. Due to the factors noted in the GBA §3.6 – §3.7 it is self-evident that the site exhibits characteristics which weaken its contribution to purpose (a). In terms of physical features which could restrict and contain development these include:

- Oxhey Lane – a permanent physical feature which forms part of the Site’s western boundary.

- the mature hedgerow and trees along the Site's northern boundary – which are considered to form a robust, defensible boundary between the site and land further north; and
- the extensive mature vegetation within the Merry Hill Woodland Trust land to the east.

2.9. The flood zone to the south of the site – together with the Hartsbourne Stream Flood Storage Area – also forms a defensible boundary against future sprawl to the south.

2.10. Additionally, the site is subject to urbanising influences including existing built-up areas at Carpenders Park to the west of Oxhey Lane and the adjacent, visually prominent Carpenders Park Care Home and 5G telecommunications tower – east of Oxhey Lane.

2.11. The proposed development would accommodate a range of residential properties located within a strong landscape framework formed by the existing and proposed perimeter landscape features including an extensive landscape buffer to the northern boundary hedgerow. As such, the proposals, would not be perceived as sprawl and would not be unrestricted or unplanned in nature. Indeed, the layout and positioning of the proposals reflect very careful design and control and would reflect the existing character of the area. There would be no evidence of unrestricted sprawl beyond the site's well-defined boundaries. It is therefore considered that the proposals would not harm purpose (a).

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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