

FAO Planning Team/ Tessa Hampden, Case Officer  
Mendip District Council

6 July 2022

Dear Sirs,

**PLANNING APPLICATION REF: 2021/2928/FUL-Bell Hill garage, Bell Hill, Norton St Philip-  
Demolition of garage/ erection of 21 dwellings-AMENDED PLANS**

CPRE Somerset objected in principle to development in the open field ( 'Old Orchard ' ) for the reasons set out in our letter 27 January 2022, and we wish to object to the amended plans for the same reasons.

We note and endorse the objections to development in principle in the open field ( 'Old Orchard' ) by the Conservation Officer ( Tessa Boldy response , dated 16.3.22 ) and the External Landscape Consultant ( Charles Potterton response , dated 15.3.22).

Old Orchard is identified as an Area of Landscape value in the Norton St Philip Conservation Area Appraisal and is designated under Policy DP2 in the Local Plan as an Open Area of Local Significance .

The Conservation Officer says that: ' The open field makes an important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and development here would fail to preserve those elements of the conservation area that make a positive contribution to its significance'. ( Extract from Tessa Boldy response , 16.3.22 ).

The Landscape Consultant says that: ' The open field element is an important part of the landscape setting of a number of listed buildings and is a key part of the character of the wider village. This is not simply an undeveloped open field, it has been identified specifically in the Conservation Area appraisal , which adds to its local value and importance.....the principle of any development on this important open field is unacceptable' ( Extract from Charles Potterton response , 15.3.22 ).

CPRE Somerset intend to support any future initiative to designate the Old Orchard in Norton St Philip as a 'Local Green Space' under the National Planning Policy Framework \*. This would provide a further layer of protection, but it is important to note that existing protection under heritage legislation and the LP designation ( Policy DP 2 ) [ and other relevant policy including DP1- Local identity and distinctiveness, and DP3- the significance and setting of heritage assets] is sufficient to justify refusal. The comments by the above two consultants would provide ample additional evidence to justify national Local Green Space designation.

Yours sincerely

Fletcher Robinson MSc Planning  
Trustee and Planner  
CPRE Somerset

\* A CPRE Somerset review of NPPF Local Green Space designation criteria confirm that the 'Old Orchard' field in Norton St Philip would satisfy relevant criteria ( relevant information - PPG guidance on the LGS designation and e.g. the CPRE Research Report ' Local Green Space ' published February 2022, available free online, which gathered information on 1184 Local Green Spaces ). To be designated an LGS the land must fulfil one or more of the following criteria: a) Beauty. This relates to visual attractiveness of the site and its contribution to landscape, character or setting of the settlement. The land would need to contribute to local identity, character of the area and a sense of place, and make an important contribution to the physical form and layout of the settlement. b) Historic significance. The land should provide a setting for heritage assets and/or other locally valued landmarks. c) Recreation Value d) Tranquillity e) Richness of wildlife. The Old Orchard site clearly would qualify on the first two criteria alone in this list. The specificity of the LGS designation implies that being particularly valued by local people is in itself a reason strong enough to protect small local areas of green space from development. Public access for recreational use is not required for LGS designation if one or more of the other criteria are fulfilled. In the CPRE Feb 22 report referred to above, analysis on the size of LGSs showed an average size of 1.8ha and a median size of 0.6 ha. Sizes vary greatly ranging from 46 ha to 0.001 ha ( 10 sqm ).