



## **OBJECTION TO PLANNING APPLICATION 15/4286M - KING'S SCHOOL**

Our comments on individual sites are as follows:

### **Westminster Road/ Cumberland Street Site, Macclesfield**

It is our understanding that a large proportion of the play and open areas attached to the existing main school site were laid on the site of a waste tip - which would explain why the area is raised. If this is accurate, then it would be wholly inappropriate to place residential housing on this land. Putting that to one side, the open areas around the original historic listed building and other buildings on the main site, constitute an important green lung in an urban area and, because the original building is listed, its setting is of great importance.

CPRE is in favour of building on appropriate brownfield land in urban areas - and to a high density where suitable. We are members of the 'Smart Growth Coalition' which promotes such practices. But we contend that it would be entirely inappropriate to build on this site.

### **Fence Avenue**

In the first instance, it is important to point out that the proposals for the Fence Avenue site, which involve knocking down the existing school buildings and erecting up to 300 houses, appear to be misleading. The proposals here do not only involve the existing school site but also adjoining farm land. In fact, about 50% of the development site targeted here is farmland. This is not made apparent.

All the land involved in this site is not only within Green Belt but within the area designated in the Submitted Cheshire East Local Plan as being 'Peak Park Fringe'. In other words, it adjoins the Peak District National Park and its openness needs to be protected.

Although this site appears in the Submitted Version of the Local Plan as a potential strategic housing site (fig. 15.12, page 220), it was placed there prior to the comprehensive Green Belt review exercise being carried out. (Strategic sites have yet to be debated through the examination in public). In view of the high ranking it achieved in the Green Belt Review process, it should now be removed from the evolving Local Plan. CPRE will be making a case to the inspector for this to happen.

The national designation of Green Belt, of itself, ought to be sufficient reason for not developing/ over-developing this site, but it has been awarded the second highest rating by consultants Arup as part of the Green Belt review carried out on

behalf of Cheshire East Council for the examination in Public into the Local Plan. The review concluded that this parcel of land (ref. MF 35) makes an overall ‘significant’ contribution to Green Belt purposes (Green Belt Assessment Update 2015, Final Consolidated Report, Appendix C, page C86). The relevant document is listed on the Local Plan examination in public website as PSE 034. See the extract replicated from the Green Belt Review that was carried out at the inspector’s request on the following page.

**Extract copied from the Macclesfield section of the Cheshire East Green Belt Assessment Update by Arup**

Parcel	GREEN BELT PURPOSE: 1. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	GREEN BELT PURPOSE: 2. Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	GREEN BELT PURPOSE: 3. Assist in safe-guarding the countryside from encroachment	GREEN BELT PURPOSE: 4. Preserve the setting & special character of historic towns	GREEN BELT PURPOSE: 5. Assist in urban regeneration, encouraging the recycling of derelict & other urban land	GREEN BELT PURPOSES:  OVERALL EVALUATION	GREEN BELT PURPOSES:  OVERALL ASSESSMENT

<p><b>MF 35: Land between Fence Avenue and the Macclesfield Canal</b></p>	<p>Contribution: Sited directly adjacent to Macclesfield's urban edge and the Macclesfield canal, this parcel is very well contained by the urban area and the canal. There is limited scope for ribbon development to form. Given this parcel of land's close proximity to the urban edge and high degree of containment within the urban area, development here would not be isolated and could assist in rounding off the existing settlement pattern.</p>	<p>No contribution . Part of the wider Green Belt but does not form a separate function in terms preventing settlements from merging.</p>	<p>Significant contribution. This parcel is characterised by playing fields and undulating agricultural land. Apart from the buildings of King's School, there are limited urbanising influences within the parcel. However, the views of the surrounding urban area do have the effect of reducing the sense of openness in places. Despite these influences, there is still a significant degree of openness.</p>	<p>Significant contribution: Macclesfield is a historic town &amp; is mentioned in the Domesday Book. It has a number of conservation areas which are located within the 250m buffer mostly on the eastern side of Macclesfield. The Buxton Rd. Conservation Area is adjacent to the western boundary &amp; the Macclesfield Canal Conservation Area forms the eastern boundary of the parcel thus the parcel makes a significant contribution to protecting historic assets.</p>	<p>Significant contribution: Macclesfield has 4.0% brownfield urban capacity for potential development , therefore the parcel makes a significant degree of contribution to the purpose</p>	<p>The parcel makes a significant contribution to Green Belt purposes. This parcel consists largely of playing fields associated with King's School agricultural land and a weir. Macclesfield Canal and the settlement boundary border this parcel. Given the parcel borders the Buxton Road Conservation Area and the Macclesfield Canal Conservation Area, the parcel makes a significant contribution to preserving Macclesfield's historic setting. The parcel makes no contribution to preventing towns from merging. Although the parcel is well connected to the urban settlement there is a significant degree of openness and it therefore has a significant role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.</p>	<p><b>SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION</b></p>
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## Alderley Road, Prestbury

The proposal for this site is to build a substantial new school campus “in a parkland setting” on a particularly fragile area of Green Belt between Prestbury and Macclesfield on over 50 acres of land currently used for dairy farming and growing potatoes. In addition to the main school buildings there would be a sports centre containing a six-lane swimming pool, dance studio, six badminton courts and a gym. The average height of the buildings would be 40 ft. There would also be internal roads, car parks, five rugby pitches, two hockey pitches, six netball/tennis courts and five outdoor cricket net lanes. Footpaths would require re-routing.

Despite the scale of these proposals, this development is not shown in the Submitted Local Plan and it is unclear how it would be dealt with in the Local Plan if planning permission is granted. However, we strongly advise against it being approved for the following reasons:

This site alone would contravene all five of the Green Belt purposes. It was given the highest categorisation of making a ‘major contribution’ to Green Belt by Arup, as part of its Green Belt assessment for the Local Plan process (ref. ANX 12). And the existing King’s School playing fields (parcel PR 15), which this site would adjoin and sit to the west of, were also given the rating of ‘major contribution’. The playing fields were dealt with as part of the main Green Belt Assessment Update in the Final Consolidated Report, Appendix C, on page C111 (ref. PSE 034 on the examination website). The site of the proposed new campus was dealt with as part a separate exercise that examined 12 more parcels (ref. PSE 034A on the examination website). (See extracts replicated on next page).

It is also worth noting that, immediately to the north of the proposed development site, sits Prestbury Golf Club, half of which was given the ranking of making a ‘major contribution’ to Green Belt (parcel PR 17) and half of which was rated as making a ‘significant contribution’ (PR 16). On the opposite side of the B5087, Alderley Road, from the proposed new school campus sits Macclesfield Rugby Club, again on Green Belt, (parcels MF 11 and MF 12). Both of these parcels which include and adjoin the Rugby Club were given the rating of making a ‘significant contribution’ to Green Belt. (N.B. The Rugby Club has submitted a pre-planning application to Cheshire East Council to build circa. 70 dwellings on their site. If this were also to happen in due course, Prestbury and Macclesfield would become one at this point).

The proposed development site is adjacent to a substandard staggered road junction known as Four Lane Ends which struggles to cope with existing school traffic generated by the two large schools immediately to the south of it, ie. Fallibroome High School (1,500 pupils) and Upton Priory (460 pupils). There is also a day nursery on the junction itself and another school is close by - St. Albans - with 310 pupils. Alderley Road is a winding rural road.

King’s School itself says it would not be aiming to grow in size from its present 1,250 pupils but there is nothing to say it would not. The traffic calculations have been based on it not growing the pupil numbers, on there being 210 members of staff and on the assumption a significant percentage of new traffic movements would be outside of peak travel times due to pre-school and post-school activities.

It is questionable as to how realistic this is and the resulting small difference predicted to the travel times seem very unrealistic. Proposals for highway improvements around the staggered junction appear to be very modest. There are none for beyond the immediate site area. There are no off-site measures proposed to enable safe cycling to school and the main feature of the travel plan is an offer to provide two extra mini buses to encourage more pupils to travel to school by sustainable means.

Extract copied from the Cheshire East Green Belt Update (Annex Parcels) for Cheshire East Council by Arup

Parcel Ref	GREEN BELT PURPOSE: 1. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	GREEN BELT PURPOSE: 2. Prevent nearby towns from merging into one another	GREEN BELT PURPOSE: 3. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	GREEN BELT PURPOSE: 4. Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	GREEN BELT PURPOSE: 5. Assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	GREEN BELT PURPOSES:  JUSTIFICATION	GREEN BELT PURPOSES:  OVERALL ASSESSMENT
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<p><b>Anx 12: Land between Alderley Road, Big Wood &amp; Spencer Brook</b></p>	<p>Significant contribution: The parcel has a strong boundary to the south (Alderley Road) but the remaining boundaries are more moderate in nature. The parcel lies between Macclesfield and Prestbury but is completely detached from both settlements. The parcel also has a role to play in preventing ribbon development spreading outwards along Alderley Road</p>	<p>Significant contribution: the parcel lies in a largely essential gap between Macclesfield and Prestbury where some limited development may be possible without perceived or actual merging of settlements. There are some views across the area and comprehensive development could lead to a significant reduction in openness between the settlements.</p>	<p>Major contribution: the boundaries are strong and moderate and are likely to prevent further encroachment in the future. However. The parcel is largely agri-cultural use and is free from urbanising influences and built development except for Fleets Farm, Fallibroome Farm and a limited number of residential properties in the S.E. corner. The parcel has a very weak relationship with the urban area and strong relationship with the countryside. The parcel also has some open long line views and supports a major degree of openness. The northern part of the parcel is in use as a golf course, supporting a beneficial use of the Green Belt.</p>	<p>No contribution: the parcel is not directly adjacent to a settlement and does not play a role in preserving the setting and special character of an historic town.</p>	<p>Contribution: although not directly adjacent to a settlement, the parcel is adjacent to development extending outwards from Prestbury. Prestbury has a limited (0.8%) brownfield capacity and the parcel makes a limited contribution to this purpose.</p>	<p>The parcel makes a major contribution to Green Belt. Although its boundaries are likely to prevent further encroachment in the future, the parcel is very detached from the urban area, has a major degree of openness and the Green Belt designation protects the openness of the countryside. It does not play a role in preserving the character of historic towns and has only a limited role in assisting in urban regeneration.</p>	<p><b>MAJOR CONTRIBUTION</b></p>
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## Concluding Comments

This planning application presents a totally unsustainable proposition which has not been justified.

No special or exceptional circumstances have been put forward to make a case for building on either of the two Green Belt sites, both of which were given very high rankings in the recent Cheshire East Green Belt review. Part of the proposed housing site at Westminster Road/ Cumberland Street is thought to be on the site of a former waste tip - a totally unsuitable location for housing.

The figures on which the traffic data has been calculated for the Prestbury site are questionable and the mitigating measures proposed for potential traffic problems appear to be very modest and very localised.

This proposal would result in the loss of good quality farmland (3A in the case of the Prestbury site), trees and hedges and would require the re-routing of public footpaths. Open vistas would be affected at Fence Avenue and at Alderley Road and there is a strong likelihood that, if the new campus were built at Prestbury, the Green Belt between Prestbury and Macclesfield would be lost entirely - particularly if the pending application by Macclesfield Rugby Club came into play as well.

CPRE urges Cheshire East Council to refuse this application.

Yours sincerely,

**Andrew Needham**  
Chairman, CPRE Cheshire Branch