

11th January, 2023.

Your ref: S62A/2022/0014

Tel: [REDACTED]

Inquiries & Major Casework Team,
The Planning Inspectorate,
3rd Floor,
Temple Quay House,
2, The Square,
Temple Quay,
Bristol.
BS1 6PN

By Post & Email

Dear Sirs,

re: **PROPOSAL: Consultation on S62A/2022/0014 – Outline application with all matters reserved except for access for up to 170 dwellings, associated landscaping and open space with access from Thaxted Road.**

LOCATION: Land to the west of Thaxted Road, Saffron Walden.

I/we wish to register my/our objections to the above application.

This land in question is opposite a site on the east side of Thaxted Road now known as 'Poppy View' on which the developer originally applied for 300 dwellings. That application was refused and dismissed on appeal by the Planning Inspectorate in 2015 as it would have an '**adverse effect on the local highway network**', result in the '**loss of best and versatile agricultural land**' and exacerbate the already '**inadequate infrastructure, schooling and roads**'. Spreading that number over two sites does not really change the initial reasons for refusal and dismissal of the appeal.

An application for 150 dwellings on the Poppy View site was submitted in 2018 and subsequently approved despite overwhelming objections from all corners of Saffron Walden town, one of them being from the tenant farmer stating access problems to other fields making them less economically viable. As food and energy security are high on the agenda it is questionable whether the loss of high grade agricultural land can be justified or sustainable?

Further decimation of wild life habitat is also relevant as sparrow hawks and red kites have regularly patrolled over the fields in question, although sightings have been fewer since the Poppy View development began. Preserving the habitat and breeding grounds of these protected species and smaller birds and mammals should also be given consideration as no doubt the introduction of more housing and domestic cats will reduce numbers well beyond the development site.

With regard to infrastructure, the town's sewage works must be near capacity, the roads certainly are and air quality at a number of junctions in the town is at unacceptable levels. On 23rd December, 2022, after heavy rain, for at least the second time, a 100mm deep 'lake' had formed at the junction of Poppy View and Thaxted Road and more hard landscaping will only exacerbate this.

Cont.....

School places are non-existent, there is only one NHS dentist in the town and GP appointments have to be booked on-line and triaged to establish the severity of the person's condition and treatment, face to face being a rarity. The alternative is an hour wait on the telephone and the chance all appointments are gone anyway.

Commuter traffic crossing the town at peak times is now damaging to the environment and with the added development of the Walden/Friends School site, again against the wishes of the majority, will considerably add to increasing pollution, congestion, reducing parking availability and the continual misery of congestion due to temporary traffic lights.

The 'draft' Local Plan excluded Poppy View and the application site from development and although not adopted, the premise should be respected and not over-ridden. The recently adopted **Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan** specified that priority should be given to the development of brownfield sites and emphasised the retention of agricultural land concluding that any further development on the east side of Saffron Walden, away from commuter routes was undesirable.

I would note that due to recent lost seats a large number of Conservative MPs have rebelled against the imposition of housing quotas on their constituents stating that local residents should have more control over numbers and locations of development. This is a realisation that removing the right of the local planning authority to determine inappropriate developments is an affront to local democracy.

On 3RD December, 2022, Radio 4's programme 'The Week in Westminster' featured two politicians with similar views. Clive Betts Labour member of the Housing and levelling Up Committee said that 'brownfield sites should be given priority, communities should be consulted on where to build and not just numbers and the Local Plan and people should hold sway over decisions, not the national plan'.

Gavin (Lord) Barwell, ex Housing Minister, said that '**Neighbourhood Plans** should be considered in decisions and planning inspectors should not overrule Neighbourhood Plans'.

In all previous public consultations the residents of Saffron Walden have overwhelmingly raised objections to further outward development, particularly on the east side of the town and although new housing is important planning decisions should give equal consideration to the views and fast diminishing quality of life of existing residents.

Yours faithfully,

G. J. Griffiths.

Mrs. M. Creighton,

[REDACTED]

Mrs. H. & Mr. A. White,

[REDACTED]

Mr. & Mrs. D. Grieve,

[REDACTED]

Mrs. L. & Mr. R. Brooks,

[REDACTED]

Messrs. R. & V. Wisbey,

[REDACTED]

c.c. The Rt. Hon. Kemi Badenoch MP

