

CHRISHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Belinda Irons, Clerk

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



Uttlesford District Council
Council Offices
London Road,
Saffron Walden
Essex

24th February 2023

Dear Sir

UTT/23/0246/PINS

Consultation on S62A/2023/0015

Application for outline planning permission for the erection of 18 dwellings including provision of access road, car parking and residential amenity space, a drainage pond, and communal open space, with all matters reserved for subsequent approval except for means of access and layout

Grange Paddock Ickleton Road Elmdon Essex

Chrishall Parish Council objects to this planning application as it will have a direct impact on Chrishall School, parking, highway use and potentially speeding issues.

Chrishall Parish Council takes the opportunity to comment on the whole application, as well as providing detailed evidence on the impact on Chrishall.

Outside Development Boundary in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt:

Development in the rural area beyond the green belt needs to be justified. This is a highly speculative application on high quality agricultural land, currently used as pasture to graze horses. The paddocks are well laid out with post and rail fencing.

The land rises from the highway, and properties within the development boundary will be significantly overlooked from the proposed development site.

This is not an agricultural or horticultural dwelling application, but a market development, in an unsustainable location. There is no reason for it to take place.

The loss of high grade agricultural land is unacceptable given the current inability of the UK to produce sufficient food for the indigenous population. This field does not need to be built on.

Uttlesford District Council is in the process of discussion with a major landowner to bring a significant number of dwellings forward. This application appears to be seeking to get in position before negotiations are complete. It is this Parish Council's contention that amendments to the Planning White Paper allow a District Council to consider the recommended numbers of new dwellings proposed by Central Government, but local conditions should prevail, even if that means those numbers are not fulfilled. This is a case in point. Local conditions are such that additional properties would be harmful to the local infrastructure.

Landscape:

This is one of the few remaining 'important green gaps' in the built environment in Elmdon. The vista across the field from the permissive path include the rural scene of horses and ponies grazing, and provides residents with the rural village ambience so beloved of this area. The compulsion to fill up important green spaces is anathema to local people. We move to rural locations to live in the countryside. We do not want to live in housing estates. Important green gaps enable residents to continue to feel part of the rural life and all that entails. That the Agent admits to a 'limited degree of harm' relating to landscape character impact is notable, given developers attitudes of exaggerating the benefits and minimising the negatives of applications.

Unsustainable location

Chrishall Parish Council refutes the applicant's statements relating to provision of services in Elmdon and the wider District, including lack of public transport, lack of infrastructure, and complete reliance on private transportation.

Services in Elmdon consist of a small village hall, the Church, a phone box functioning as a book exchange, and a barrow selling eggs from outside a house.

The pub has been closed for many years and needs extensive investment.

The Design and Access Statement document is misleading as it clearly states Elmdon has facilities which make the village sustainable for development.

Stating that residents will be able to walk to the village centre is disingenuous – there is virtually nothing there!

The application includes appeals allowed at Manuden and Henham. Both of these villages have substantial existing infrastructure including schools, community centres, shops, employment, restaurants and cafes. Elmdon has none of these.

The nearest shop is at Ickleton, some 3 miles along a national speed limit road with no footway. Stating that someone would walk or cycle a minimum of 3 miles to a shop and back is not compatible with known behaviour.

The infrastructure supporting Elmdon is extremely limited. The nearest doctor is at Great Chesterford, approximately 5 miles distant, hospital is more than 13 miles; the rail station is approximately 5 miles. Actually getting into a doctors or dentists is a feat in itself given the current shortages. Saffron Walden is the nearest town, at approximately 6 miles distant. Elmdon is not sustainable for development. Comparing Elmdon to Manuden is comparing crab apples to pineapples – they have nothing in common. Manuden has had significant investment in infrastructure, and this has resulted in correspondingly significant levels of development.

Impact on Chrishall:

Chrishall has the nearest primary school to Elmdon. This is a Church school, not a County Council School. Chrishall Parish Council shows below its presentation to Uttlesford District Council to retain the temporary classroom (UTT/22/1654/FUL) required as the school is heavily oversubscribed. The addition of potentially 18 households with children are unlikely to be accommodated in Chrishall School:

Chrishall Primary School has provided a detailed breakdown of anticipated school placement requirements which supports the ongoing need for the classroom. Removal of the classroom would mean children would have to leave the school and staff would be lost.

Shown below are the questions and responses received:

How many children should the school have attending/ on the role?

105

How many are actually attending/ on the role?

We currently have 111 on roll and below are our projected numbers for future years

2022 – 2023	2023 – 2024	2024 – 2025	2025 – 2026	2026 - 2027
117	120	117	121	119

Does school have capacity to take more children and if so, how many?

Yes, but only because we have the mobile classroom

Does the school have capacity to take more children if the temporary classroom were removed?

No, not at all

What is the area allowed per child is

See document

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/905692/BB103_Area_Guidelines_for_Mainstream_Schools.pdf

How many children use the temporary classroom?

Currently, there are 26. Last year we had 36 in the room and future class sizes are as in the table above

Where would the children be accommodated if the temporary classroom were removed

We do not have the space to accommodate the children in the main school building.

If the temporary classroom were removed, how would it impact the school: where would any children not accommodated go to school?

We would have to reduce our numbers on roll (PAN) which would have a huge impact on the demands

Budget would be impacted - staffing implications and resources for the children

Quality of provision would be reduced which will have an impact on the desirability of the village

School's current reputation would be at risk/impacted

Staffing - smaller budget would mean staff reductions/redundancies would need to be made

We would not be able to meet the needs in the village

We would potentially not be able to take all the Rising Five children who attend our pre-school which would have an impact on our relationship in the community

Would public transport be available to village children if there is no space at school?

No, because this is the catchment school

Further Comment:

We have worked incredibly hard to build up the provision in the school and have a good reputation and relationship in the community. As a small school, we have been able to manage times when families move out of the area and into the area by oversubscribing in year groups when we can. This not only meet the needs in the community, but also provides sustainability for the school. In addition, as a Christian school, this flexibility has allowed us to accept 4 Ukrainian children into school and we have been able to help them settle into the community.

It would be likely that staff members would leave should we have to reduce our numbers as the School Offer would significantly be reduced and career opportunities would also be impacted. In light of the above, we are committed to continuing with our current provision and are keen to start planning for a permanent structure.

Chrishall Primary School is approximately 2 miles from Elmdon. A child's walking speed is stated as 2.89 miles per hour, with smaller children taking longer. There is no school bus to bring primary school aged children to school. The alternative is the 5-minute drive. Common sense states the parents will drive. Parking around the school is terrible as it is countryside. Parents are often seen speeding to get to school on time.

If children are unable to attend the nearest primary school, they will need to be driven to the next nearest school, which is Great Chesterford. There is no bus service to Gt Chesterford. This village has received an unprecedented amount of development and is still subjected to extensive applications. It is unlikely that the Chesterford primary school would be able to accommodate more children.

The continual building of dwellings without the accompanying infrastructure to support communities is unacceptable.

Highway: Safety Issues

The rural roads are unrestricted, with no footways. It is noted that the speed survey shows the 85th percentile is 40 miles an hour in a 30 mile an hour zone. This means that 15% of vehicles are travelling far in excess of 40 miles an hour.

Is it really safe to have a new estate built where speeds are routinely exceeded? When combined with the attraction of a sparkly new playground, where are the safety considerations for the children?

Visibility splays: the proposed visibility splays of 43 meters will require the removal of a substantial amount of hedging, thus opening up the proposed estate to the whole village. This will completely change the rural ambience of the street scene.

Bus timetables

Great care needs to be taken interpreting the timetable in the applicant's transport document. For clarity, the only bus available in Elmton is the 444 – the school bus for children, termtime only. All other buses have to be caught outside the village e.g., bus 31 nearest stop is Chrishall village, which leaves at 7.08am near the school, getting to Cambridge at 8.11am, returning to Chrishall at 17.52. There are no evening or Sunday buses.

the Transport document indicates that Pinkeneys, Chrishall, is an acceptable walking distance to catch a bus. This is a 1.3 mile walk along a national speed limit road, with no footway, and single track in places. The alternative route are the public byways, which can be impassable in bad weather, as the stream (which does not have a bridge) is too deep to ford in the winter.

All the buses stated may be available, but would require transport to get to the out of village bus stop to access them. It is disingenuous of the applicant to put these in to give the impression that public transport is easily accessible.

Impact on Listed Heritage:

Chrishall Parish Council would comment that the setting and amenity of the listed buildings 'The Hoops' and 'Mulberry Cottage' which are sited opposite and close to the site, is unacceptable. Chrishall Parish Council draws attention to UTT/21/3616/FUL and shows below the refusal:

1 The principle of the development is unacceptable because paragraph 11(d)(i) of the Framework offers a clear reason for refusal through paragraph 202, and because paragraph 11(d)(ii) is also triggered due to the heritage, countryside and environmental harm that will significantly and demonstrably outweigh the minimal benefits of the scheme. Countryside harm arises from the unjustified built form that will urbanise and erode the distinct rural and open countryside character of the area. Environmental harm arises as the area is void of services and facilities, causing sustainability concerns due to the heavy reliance on private cars. Therefore, the proposal fails the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan Policies S7, GEN1(e), and the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

Page 2 of 5

2 The development will harm the setting, significance and special interest of a listed building (Drury Cottage - Grade II), to a degree of 'less than substantial harm'. The scheme is incompatible to the existing pattern of development because Drury Cottage is not a farmhouse nor within a historic farmstead that would make a barn-style dwelling appropriate. The harm also arises from the location of the development, its large scale and massing, its incongruous rooflights, and its effect on the attributes that positively contribute to the setting of the asset, detracting from the prominence of the listed building. The development fails to make a positive contribution to the local character and distinctiveness and to the heritage asset. No clear and convincing justification for the harm was submitted, whilst the Framework affords 'great weight' to the conservation of the asset. Therefore, the

proposal fails the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan Policies ENV2, GEN2, s66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Essex Design Guide, and the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

The application has failed to mention the potential heritage impact on Elmdonbury, which included the Scheduled Monument of Castle Grove, and the associated historic farmstead. It also fails to mention Dagworth moated site, also a Scheduled Monument. Both are raised by Place Services. It has also not mentioned the archaeological importance of the site and wider area, and the potential impacts of development. It is therefore recommended that a full heritage statement be undertaken before a decision is taken. Place Services has recommended consultation with English Heritage.

Design:

The Elmdon, Duddenhoe End and Wenden Lofts Village Design Statement and the Heydon Parish Landscape Appraisal (part of the Heydon Community Led plan) have not been acknowledged or referenced as part of the application. Both documents detail the landscape and architectural heritage of this lovely part of Essex and heights of Cambridgeshire which border Uttlesford.

The Government website on Permission in Principle states that design should be subject to the next phase of the application, and should not form a significant part of the application. However, the application describes the attributes of the proposed site, including lifetime homes and inclusive access using pavements built to adoptable standards. Given the site is on a steep incline, the question of inclusive access is considered a major issue which has the potential to call into question the suitability of the site for housing development.

Topography and SUDs

The site is steeply sloping. The proposal to site the SUDs in the centre of the site, which is at a higher elevation than areas closer to the highway, seems very strange as water flows downhill. Is the intention to pump it up hill to the attenuation pond?

Conditions:

Should this application be granted, Chrishall Parish Council would comment that the following conditions may be appropriate:

Highway mitigation: physical speed reduction measures should be installed as part of the S106 both sides of the access road.

Lighting: exterior lighting should be minimised to reduce the environment impact to reduce light pollution is what is a reduced light sky, and specifically to reduce impact on bats

Environmental enhancements: the inclusion of built in bird and bat boxes in the fabric of the proposed houses, including swift boxes. All soft landscaping including shrubs, hedges and trees to be subject to a 10-year replacement requirement by the contractor should any individual or group of plants fail. There should be a net gain in biodiversity which should of necessity be a minimum of 10% gain. The proposed hedge removal to achieve the 43-meter visibility splays need to be mitigated in full through landscaping which includes hedges on site, managed by the proposed Management Company.

Management Company: This has the potential to be highly contentious as the costs will need to be spread across all households. Any agreement will need to be non-transferable and specific to the properties on the estate. Sufficient cost needs to be raised to not only repair play equipment on an annual basis, but to fully replace it probably every 25 years which seems to be the life of such equipment. As an example, replacing a climbing frame at current prices will cost between £15,000 and £60,000. Children other than those living on this estate will want to play on the equipment. How would this be factored into the charges for those living on the estate? Will children be prevented from using the new equipment? Is there potential to use natural, long-lasting material rather than equipment which has a relatively short life before replacement is required?

The costs of grounds maintenance, road and footway surfaces, and electricity charges for communal lighting all need careful consideration and the climate implications need to be considered.

Climate Change: this is not addressed as part of the application. There is potential for a community heating system to be installed, such as an estate wide ground source heat pump, solar photovoltaic panels to every roof space, all properties built to Passivhaus standards.

40% affordable: this must be achieved with no negotiation down or out to full market housing. It is unacceptable that developers are able to negotiate their way out of this responsibility.

Yours sincerely

Belinda Irons
On behalf of Chrishall Parish Council