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To whom it may concern,

Application number S62A/2023/0015

I have lived in the same house in Elmdon since 1988 at the other end of the village, over half a mile from the site under consideration for planning approval. We will therefore not be very much disturbed by the creation of the proposed housing estate should the application be approved and implemented. There are some practical matters which I believe should be drawn to your attention.

The road to the south of the site is very narrow and always has cars parked along its southern pavement as there is no off street parking. With the additional traffic which will be generated the developers should be required to widen it. Because there is no bus service, motor cars are essential and the increased traffic requires that the roads around the development should be improved. Commuters to London will have to drive along this road and through the whole village to catch the train at Audley End station. The development will probably increase the car population by 36.

A school bus collects youngsters in the morning "rush" hour and returns them after school. This is opposite the entrance of the site and some road planning and works to take account of this will be required with the safety of the children particularly, in mind.

The houses adjacent to the road to the south of the site, are subject to flooding after even regular rain. Many use sandbags to keep the water out. They are well below the average level of the site. To me it looks like about 20ft. With the roads and additional hard standing inherent in the proposal there will be an increased runoff aggravating the problem. The developers should be required to include proper storm water drainage and its removal to the stream at the bottom of Hollow Road. This would require a trench to accommodate the drain and I expect the local authorities would need to be consulted. The cheap and cheerful option would be to extend the existing, obviously, inadequate ditch further east but this would cause water damage to the road, creation of potholes etc. It would anyway not solve the problem. There are the obvious safety risks of having a ditch alongside a busy and narrow road. Who would keep the ditch clear of blockages and vegetation. The drainage could be easily achieved at the same time as the necessary road widening. Unless this is sorted out, I would be surprised if water damage cover for these houses would be available.

About 400 yards away in a south easterly direction lies the sewerage works which serve Elmdon and other villages to the west. I am informed it is at capacity and may not be able to accommodate the additional sewerage and grey water produced by the development. Happily, my house is well upwind but I am told the works have recently started to smell badly particularly in the Summer. An independent assessment should be carried out to investigate the capacity aspect and advise whether upgrading or extension needs to be done by the developers to accommodate the extra load.

The proposal includes a pond, always a delightful feature if properly cared for. How will this be achieved? Will there be a caretaker? Where will the water supply come from? Without continuing husbandry, the pond will degenerate and become an eyesore and a liability.

For a long time, I have been of the opinion that Elmdon would benefit from more houses and the 18 proposed seems to be a reasonable number. It is about 12% of the existing stock, but more like 25% of comparable houses. Some years ago, plans were put forward for a housing estate of around 40 houses on the same site. This would have been far too many for this small village to accommodate. The same developers when asked if fewer houses could be considered advised that there was “not enough money in it”. Their views relating to this appear to have changed although this is doubtful. If the plans are passed then it should be made plain that this permission does not constitute the thin edge of a wedge to increase the number of houses, especially not back to the higher numbers proposed before.

If this proposal is approved then there are many other pieces of land where similar development could take place, given the precedent which will have been established. I have an unused spare acre which could accommodate some houses. Looking across at the next two neighbours, they too have at least an acre each which could be used for housing. There is easy access to the main road. Behind us another neighbour has about 10 vacant acres which he may be tempted to develop and opposite him is another piece of empty paddocks of around 6 acres. There are also others in other parts of the village with large properties who may be influenced. Your decision on the proposal under consideration will create a precedent which could transform the village into an ersatz suburb unconnected to any town, enriching quite a number of people in the process. There would still be no facilities such as a shop, public transport, school etc.

Unless the questions I have raised are dealt with effectively, i.e.:

1. Storm water drainage
2. Sewerage capacity
3. Road safety especially for the school bus
4. Road widening
5. Limiting the number of houses to 18
6. Creating a precedent in respect of undeveloped land in the village

I would object to the proposed development.

Yours faithfully,

PGR Syfret