

From: Adele Peters [REDACTED]
Sent: 06 March 2023 09:56
To: Section 62A Applications <section62a@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Subject: S62A/2023/0015 - proposed development of Grange Paddock, Ickleton Road, Elmdon, Essex

Dear Inquiries and Major Casework Team,

I am writing in respect to the application for proposed development referenced **S62A/2023/0015 - Grange Paddock, Ickleton Road, Elmdon, Essex**

I would like to register my **opposition** to the above proposal.

Context

Elmdon is a small and relatively isolated village (610 people in the last census covering Parish of Elmdon Duddenhoe End and Wendons Lofts) in the North West corner of the Essex which borders of the Hertfordshire and Cambridge borders. It lies 6 miles to the West of Saffron Walden and 15 miles South of Cambridge. The village dates its history back to Domesday book, is attractive and contains many listed buildings. It is surrounded by farmland and countryside which might be described as its key asset and is such popular with walkers, cyclists and people who enjoy the countryside and the flourishing wildlife. Whilst its rural charm is a distinct asset, the village has extremely limited public resources/community assets other than a small village hall and a church. With no public transport residents primarily rely on cars to make their necessary journeys to school, work, shops etc via the narrow country roads to Saffron Walden, Cambridge and Royston. The village was categorised by Uttlesford UDC as unsustainable from a development point of view because of the lack of facilities and infrastructure. Elmdon has a Village Design Statement which sets out the context for development and concluded that "Future development of more than one dwelling should prioritise previously developed sites and not be on green sites".

Key Points of Objection - in principle

1. The site is a **greenfield site**, currently a horse paddock and been used for agricultural purposes previously. The development is **not supported by the framework in the Village Design Statement**, which states that only infill building should be permitted and not greenfield development. Additionally a development like this could set a precedent for future developments on other fields surrounding the village.
2. The site is **outside the settlement boundary** of the village as per the 2005 Local Plan.
3. The **scale of development** is too large in such a small village. 18 additional houses would be circa 10% increase in the population which is a large change for a small village with no facilities and narrow roads.
4. Elmdon was described as **unsustainable** by UDC previously due to the lack of infrastructure and facilities. The only facilities are a small (generally unused) village hall and a CofE church. There is no working pub, no childminder or school in the village. There is no public transport and therefore all residents would need a car to access a shop, the nearest which is 5km away in Ickleton.

Key Points of Objection - in design

1. **Elevation** of the site - The site of the proposed development is at a significant elevation to the houses on the south side of Ickleton Road. Therefore the outlook of the current houses on the south side of Ickleton Road would materially change from being rural to urban and light would be reduced. The outlook from local footpaths including the Icknield Way would also be dramatically changed. Given the slope of the site, any gentle slope changes would require significant landscaping and earth movements. The long standing traditional hedge along the northside of Ickleton road is deciduous and therefore would only offer limited screening through half the year.
2. **Road issues** - Contrary to the planning statement, Ickleton road is a one width road with no line markings. It has lots of cars parked on one side due to many houses not having off road parking. Additional traffic on this road would be a problem both in the construction phase and after. The traffic does not flow well along this road due to the parked cars and narrow nature of the road.
3. **Urban character** - having a housing estate style/layout is not in keeping with the rest of the village. The village has many old and listed houses. The village currently has no street lighting and therefore any lighting would urbanise the landscape and cause light pollution. Street lighting would also have a detrimental impact on the properties to the south of Ickleton Road, especially due to the heightened elevation of the site.
4. **Wildlife** - this would be greatly disturbed on and around the site, included the wooded area nearby. The village woods and fields are a magnet for wildlife, including owls, kites, roaming deer, bats, greater crested newts and badgers. Additionally mature trees and hedgerows would be disturbed and cut down to make way for the site and the new footpath proposed.
5. **Flooding** - there is an issue with flooding on the southside of Ickleton road (opposite the proposed development site), where rain water runs off the fields and floods certain properties. This has been a significant problem over the years as water runs off the fields, gushes down the road and into some houses on Ickleton Road. Sand bags are often used during the winter time when there is a lot of rain.

Key Issues against the Applicant's Planning statement Case

4.1 "this proposal would represent **sustainable development** that would **enhance the viability of existing community facilities and services**"

It is not clear how this development is sustainable. The development would certainly add to car usage as there is no public transport in the village. It is not clear what the energy supply to the development would be - there is no gas in the village and therefore houses rely on oil and many houses have septic tanks in their gardens. No details are provided on sustainable building construction methods.

As stated in the context, Elmdon has very few facilities other than it is situated in an isolated rural location. It is not clear how the development would enhance the viability of existing community services as these are very limited and the development would not add to facilities. Additionally, residents of Elmdon do not live in the village for their facilities but for the rural position which it enjoys.

4.2 "It is submitted that, whilst there would be some impact upon the openness of the countryside and intrusion by way of built form, this has to be balanced against the very significant **benefits of the proposal.**" It is unclear what benefits there would be to the village. This is a self contained housing estate and the rest of the village would not get any benefit from it. The scheme is offering an "open

space” for use of all. The village has plenty of open spaces, woods and public footpaths. Additionally the specifics on how it would be managed have not been provided.

4.42 "The Inspector also noted the opportunities for cycling and that such would reduce car dependence by a modest degree". This village is car dependent. The nearest shop is approx 5km away, up a very steep hill. It is therefore not an option to cycle there for the vast majority of people. There is no regular bus service from the village.

4.37 – Pathways. There are no pedestrian footpaths to the north side of Ickleton road where the proposed development is. The footpath to the south is narrow and uneven.

Village Consultation - The developer gave very little prior notice to residents before outlining his plans, the depth of feeling on this proposal was overwhelming negative. A village survey concluded that over 90% of villagers were against the development.

To conclude, I totally oppose this development. It is totally out of character for the village and would not enhance the village in any way. Elmdon is a very special rural place to live and it would be a terrible shame if the land surrounding it were to be developed in an unsympathetic way such as proposed with this development.

Kind regards,

Adele Peters

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