

From: [REDACTED] >

Sent: 08 March 2023 15:52

To: Section 62A Applications <section62a@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>

Subject: Section 62A Planning Application: S62A/2023/0015 - Grange Paddock, Ickleton Road, Elmdon, Essex, CB11 4GR

Section 62A Planning Application: S62A/2023/0015 - Grange Paddock, Ickleton Road, Elmdon, Essex, CB11 4GR

FROM: Jennet Ashton, [REDACTED]

I write to object to this application. My objections are based on these points:

1. Unsuitable site, on grounds of:
 - a. Unsustainable village for development
 - b. Dominant location on a green field site (literally) in a village once officially classed as of "special landscape beauty"
 - c. Outside the village settlement boundary (2005 Local Plan)
 - d. Harm or detriment to the village
 - e. Traffic
 - f. Transport
 - g. Ecology and Wildlife

2. Application contains many errors of fact, misrepresentations and omissions

1. Unsuitable site

- a. Unsustainable village for development

In the last call for sites by Uttlesford District Council (UDC), these developers submitted this site. UDC deemed it officially unsuitable for development.

One of the reasons was, and still is, that Elmdon is classed as unsustainable in terms of the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 because it lacks any local services. The Act states, "*Local services*" includes, but is not restricted to, retail outlets, public houses, banks, health facilities, including hospitals and pharmacies, legal services, social housing, post offices, schools, public eating places, leisure facilities and open spaces"

- retail outlets: the nearest shop is in Ickleton, a village located 3.2 miles away
- public houses: the nearest is in Chrishall a village located 2.2 miles away (see also my comments below regarding errors of fact, misrepresentations and omissions in the application)
- banks: the nearest is in Saffron Walden, a town located 5.5 miles away
- health facilities: the nearest is in Great Chesterford, a village located 4.3 miles away
- post offices: the nearest is in Ickleton, a village located 3.2 miles away

- schools: the nearest is the primary school in Chrishall, a village located 2.1 miles away. The school is full to bursting, and is only able to accommodate its current pupils by means of a temporary classroom
- public eating places: the nearest is in Chrishall a village located 2.2 miles away
- leisure facilities: arguably, the Village Hall might be classed as such, but it is rarely used.

b. Dominant location in a village once officially classed as of "special landscape beauty".

The site is on a slope that faces into the village. The site is clearly dominant as a background above the village when viewed from the south and east. The majority of the buildings in front of it are contained in a dip in the landscape. This will be very clear to your inspector when they do a site visit.

The proposed development contravenes **all** of the following guidelines and statements contained in the publication, Village Design Statement Elmdon, Duddenhoe End and surrounding hamlets. **Adopted by Uttlesford District Council as "Council Approved Guidance for the purposes of Development Management and Planning Policy" at Cabinet on 13th June 2019**

Conclusion (p.32): *"future development involving more than a few houses could only be accommodated by developing green spaces or along the roads in the villages that are already inadequate for existing traffic"*

"There is concern that the established rural scene would begin to deteriorate. The views, the quality of the spaces between properties, the footpaths, hedges, trees and wildlife could gradually disappear"

Guidelines for development in Elmdon: (p.33):

- *Conserve the rural character of the area.*
- *Ensure that any new development responds to historic settlement pattern, especially scale and density.*
- *Future development of more than one dwelling should priorities previously developed sites and not be on green sites.*
- *New dwellings should not impact on the views of the countryside*
- *Protect the open landscape and landscape views around the villages.*
- *The rural nature of the villages should be kept by protecting, retaining and maintaining green spaces, ditches, verges, ... mature woodland areas.*
- *Street lighting should be kept to a minimum*
- *Protect the open landscape and landscape views around the villages.*
- *Development should consider the limitations of the narrow road network.*

c. Outside the village settlement boundary

The submitted document Design and Access, Heritage, Landscape and Planning Statement states that "*it is unambiguously the case that the development of the site would be contrary to policy S7 in that the site is outside of settlement limits*". That document attempts to suggest that the benefits of the development would outweigh the fact that it is outside of settlement limits.,

I argue in this letter that there are no benefits that would outweigh that, and that the harm caused would anyway "*significantly and demonstrably*" (NPPF) outweigh the putative benefits mentioned.

d. Harm or detriment to the village

Flooding

The application form (document B610-Supporting information) states "**YES**" in answer to the question, "*Would the proposal increase the flood risk elsewhere?*"

The development would likely cause runoff from the site, both during building and when finished. The proposed drainage pond would pipe overflow drainage water down the hill and into the existing drainage ditch that runs along the side of Ickleton Road. This ditch, and Ickleton Road itself, are already liable to flooding at times of heavy rain. (See protracted correspondence with Essex Highways about this over the last several years by the Parish Council and residents.)

e. Traffic

The document submitted as B900-AP Consultation Replies ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH – COMMENTS refers to the "*busy Ickleton Road*". The road is busy with commuter traffic in the mornings and evenings, as one might expect, and also during the day with residents travelling to other towns and villages to use the "local services" which Elmdon does not have, as detailed above.

There is much movement of very large farm machinery at all times of the day in all seasons, as this is a heavily agricultural area. The roads are only just wide enough to accommodate the traffic and the cars that are necessarily parked at the sides. Adding a potential 49 vehicles to the daily mix would increase the risk of accident and mishap, especially at the proposed new junction onto the site opposite Hollow Road, and at the narrow points towards the west end of Ickleton Road.

f. Transport

Bus

The only bus that serves Elmdon is the 444 school bus service that leaves the village towards Saffron Walden at 0751 on schooldays and returns at 1600. The public may use the bus, but only if there is room. It would be unthinkable to use this as a regular means of commuting to Saffron Walden, or the station at Audley End. It is essential to have access to private transport for this, and for travelling to local services.

Walking

To suggest, as the document 20221216-TS-Rev A Grange Paddock Ickleton Road does, that one would walk several miles in each direction to catch a bus in Chrishall or Littlebury Green is disingenuous, to say the least.

For a primary school age child to regularly walk to school in Chrishall or Great Chesterford is unthinkable. The road is narrow, with no pavement, and cars cannot pass each other at some points. The field paths are unmade up, and are impassable in winter and at times of heavy rain.

Cycling

Likewise, primary school children would be unlikely to cycle to school regularly. The roads involved are very narrow for small children to cycle to school in Chrishall. Cycling to Great Chesterford would be even more unlikely, as it is further and involves very steep hills and narrow roads.

g. Ecology and Wildlife

Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

The application form (document B610-Supporting information) states "**NO**" in answer to the questions "*Is there a reasonable likelihood of the following being affected adversely or conserved and enhanced within the application site, or on land adjacent to or near the application site? a) Protected and priority species b) Designated sites, important habitats or other biodiversity features*":

It is known that the site is a habitat of the great crested newt (a priority species), badgers, and owls. The destruction of the trees at the entrance road would affect the badger setts and owl roosts adversely, and the housing would affect the great crested newts adversely.

Trees and Hedges

The application form (document B610-Supporting information) states "**YES**" in answer to the questions "*Are there trees or hedges on the proposed development site? And/or: Are there trees or hedges on land adjacent to the proposed development site that could influence the development or might be important as part of the local landscape character?*"

The arboriculture report details the many trees that would be destroyed if this application were to go ahead.

2. Errors of fact, Omissions, Misleading statements contained in the application documents

The application contains many errors of fact, misrepresentations and omissions. These include the following.

CONSULTATION

The application form (document B610-Supporting information) states “**YES**” in answer to the question, “*Have you consulted your neighbours or the local community about the proposal?*”

The applicants have NOT spoken to the neighbours closest to the site, despite promising the Chairman of the Parish Council that they would do so. I am one of those neighbours.

OVERLOOKING EXISTING HOUSES

The Planning Statement says, “*the proposals would result in the introduction of built form to the rear of the existing properties on the north side of Ickleton Road*”.

The properties referred to are on the south side of Ickleton Road. In fact, it would affect the **front** of these properties, not the rear.

The properties include The Hoops (Listed), Manor Row, (early 19th century cottages), and Elm Court. The houses in Manor Row open directly onto the pavement facing the development. They have no front gardens, and so are very close to the front boundary of the development

The Planning Statement says, “*it is considered that the proposed dwellings would not cause direct overlooking or any loss of light or outlook*”.

The statement evidences this by way of a section drawing from the viewpoint of the pavement outside Elm Court. This is misleading, as the viewpoint chosen is not directly opposite the front boundary of the development. The houses in Manor Row would be directly opposite the proposed development on its south side. They would be overlooked the proposed houses. What is more, the view from the upstairs front windows of the existing houses would be directly onto the windows of the proposed new houses, and so the development would in fact cause direct overlooking, loss of light and outlook.

Document 20221216-TS-Rev A Grange Paddock Ickleton Road Redacted.pdf

FACILITIES

3.3 “*Elmdon village provides a few limited facilities, including bus stops, a church, a pub, a childminder, and a village.*”

In fact, Elmdon does not even provide the services listed there:

- Bus stops: there is only one bus stop, and the only buses that use it are the secondary school bus, as detailed above.
- Church: holds a maximum of one service per month
- Pub: this closed nearly 10 years ago
- Childminder: this closed several years ago
- Village: does this mean village hall? If so, the hall is very small, and has very few bookings.

3.4 Bus.

As described above, the only bus that serves Elmdon is the 444 school bus service. To describe in section 3.4 any other bus routes as if they passed through Elmdon is misleading in the extreme.

ROADS

3.13 Ickleton Road

"The road has two marked lanes and is circa 6m in width for its entire duration."

In fact, Ickleton Road does not have any marked lanes.

It is not 6m wide for its entire length. For example, at one point (between Badgers and Whitehaven), it narrows to circa 3m width.

Conclusion

The harm that would be caused to Elmdon by the proposed development is not sufficiently mitigated in the supporting documentation. A Planning Inspector will be able to verify this during their expected site visit.

Jennet Ashton
Resident