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Sent: 04 March 2023 21:35
To: Section 62A Applications <section62a@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Subject: S62A/2023/0015 Grange Paddock, Ickleton Road, Elmdon

For the attention of the Inquiries and Major Casework Team in regards to proposed development at Grange Paddock, Elmdon.

Elmdon is a small, tranquil and historic village in North West Essex. It currently has no school, no doctor, no shop, no pub, no childminder (contrary to the statement in the application), no train, no bus and no plans for any of this to change. The village hall is small and inadequate for the size of the village currently. Compare this to Manuden, a village used as a precedent in support for this development which has a large community centre, school and pub. It is definition of rural England and its personality is defined by agriculture. The land surrounding and stretching beyond Elmdon is covered in prime agricultural soil which is actively farmed to supply and sustain a variety of crops.

SUSTAINABILITY

The proposal S62A/2023/0015 sets out to build 18 houses on **Class A** arable farmland in an area actively farmed at a time when the food security of the United Kingdom is under the spotlight and following one of/the hottest and driest years on record in which agricultural output fell nationally. This is a trend that will continue for the foreseeable future. Once built on, the value of the agricultural land is irreparably lost. The extent to which the applicant owns surrounding land should be carefully noted, with the potential for a decision to set precedent.

It is right to acknowledge the shortfall in reliable and secure housing supply across the UK which must be addressed. The proposed construction project is not an effectively targeted and designed solution though. There is little/no latent demand for housing stock amongst Elmdon and nearby village residents. Houses do not regularly sell before coming to market and are not purchased within days of advertisement. The village has no amenities of any sort and travel is mandatory for education, work, leisure and shopping. All trips must be undertaken by car. The proposal provides for housing stock the majority of which will be priced to attract interest from those working in London or Cambridge with limited time to contribute to the local community.

ROAD SAFETY

Currently a number of residents on Ickleton Road do not have access to off road parking and use Ickleton Road to park their cars. There can already be congestion at busy times of day, especially as the roads are frequently used by farm machinery, horses and huge numbers of bicycles (including children). Speeding through the village is already a dangerous concern and the community watch group is organising

a speed watch to try and address this issue.

An extra 18 houses will likely mean at least 36 more cars in the village, with no access to public transport and no day to day important facilities within walking distance (contrary to what is suggested in the planning application). This, along with a surge in delivery lorries (including the large oil tankers needed to deliver oil for heating) and trucks and will substantially add to the road usage.

CONSERVATION AREA

Defined by its position and agricultural heritage, Elmdon is recognised as worthy of protection hence the designation of a conservation area through the majority of the linear village. The look and feel of the village is already recognised as paramount and existing residents necessarily navigate restrictive planning provisions to maintain and enhance it. Sitting adjacent to the conservation area and overbearing on a higher elevation, the proposed development is incongruous. The architectural design of the proposed properties makes no attempt to conservatively and carefully integrate or enhance the visual amenity of the countryside on which it is planned to be built.

LOCAL PLANNING

The Uttlesford Local plan adopted in 2005 states that the "rural nature of the district is recognised for its intrinsic beauty, its value for architectural production and its biodiversity. The strategy is to conserve and enhance the local distinctiveness and historic character of these rural settlements and support the character and the thriving rural communities.' This proposal will increase the housing stock in Elmdon by approximately 10% changing and dilute the local distinctiveness and historic character of this rural settlement.

No reference has been made to the 'Village Design statement for Elmdon, Duddenoe End and Wendon Lofts which was formulated in 2019. This clearly states that 'future development of more than one dwelling should prioritise previously developed sites and not be on new greenfield sites.' And that 'development should be sympathetic to the rural nature of the village.' It should be noted that Uttlesford District Council is currently in negotiations with a major land owner to bring other more suitable dwelling locations forward.

A village meeting was called to ask the villagers their opinion on this development. Unfortunately, the meeting was called with 2 days notice, meaning that a proportion of the village were not able to attend. A survey conducted in the village in 2023 showed that 90% of the residents were not in favour of this development.

LOCAL SERVICES:

The school in Elmdon closed before 1973 and now the local children feed into Chrishall Primary school which is fully subscribed. It is a small school which operates a mixed class system, taking a maximum of 20 pupils in each year. An extra 18 houses would increase the pressure on their resources.

Flooding has been a historic issue on Ickleton Road (including recently a number of houses in Manor row being flooded) and has not been recognised or accounted for in the application. An extra 18 houses on an upper elevation would put increasing pressure on drainage. Sewerage is currently under great strain and is prone to backing up and water pressure is low. The broadband is already in demand and the area is prone to power surges and small power cuts.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Currently there are no street lights in Elmdon and we are fortunate to have true 'dark skies'. This development, for safety, will require street lighting. As a result, the dark skies of Elmdon will have light pollution for the first time, in a very prominent raised village location.

As previously stated, there is no access to bus, train or any other public transport from Elmdon and so this development will increase air pollution in the area.

This land is currently high grade farmland. The building work will involve a reduction in biodiversity through the removal of hedgerows, grasslands and some trees. The ecological assessment was performed in 2022 in the snow. No evidence of badger sets were seen, but the report states a further visit should be performed. Driving at night in Elmdon badgers are regularly sighted.

It should also be noted, that a report from Essex County Council's Historic Environment consultant reports that 'The proposed development lies in close proximity to Elmdonbury, a site which encompasses the Scheduled Monument of Castle Grove a ringwork 370 metres northwest of Elmdon Church (SM1011780, EHER3878) as well as the historic farmstead. The proposed development has the potential to impact the setting of this scheduled monument. Further west is the Scheduled Monument of Dagworth moated Site (SM1012055, EHER124) formerly Dagworth Manor House. Within the vicinity of the proposed development prehistoric pottery has been identified indicating occupation in the locality (EHER46378). Ring ditches have also been identified through cropmarks to the north of the proposed development (EHER16273). There is therefore the potential for roadside development, prehistoric and medieval features within the proposed development site.'

