

Re: Grange Paddock, Ickleton Road, Elmdon: UTT/23/0246/PINS NM

We are taking the opportunity to comment on the above outline planning proposal and the reasons for our objection.

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

The proposed development is on high grade agricultural land currently used to graze horses.

If the development is allowed to proceed it could open the floodgates for further speculative developers in other Uttlesford unsustainable village locations with negative consequences.

Unsustainable location:

The only facilities in Elmdon are the Village Hall and Church. The design and access statement is misleading as it states that Elmdon has facilities, which make the village sustainable for development. The application suggests public transport provision is more accessible. The bus stop for route 31 is some three miles away in Ickleton, along with the nearest shop and Post Office. There is a no bus service in Elmdon, apart from one school bus, route 444, operating daily within term time only. Access to infrastructure such as GP surgeries, schools, railway station, requires reliance on car ownership and are in neighbouring larger communities, Great Chesterford (5 miles), Saffron Walden (6 miles) and Chrishall (2 miles). Chrishall Primary School is already full.

Any future occupiers would be heavily reliant on car travel for all services.

The application compares Elmdon to Manuden and Henham but both these locations have existing infrastructure including schools, shops, restaurants, employment and are sustainable villages. Elmdon is not. The pub in Elmdon closed in 2013 and has not re-opened.

Landscape:

The land rises and the properties opposite within the development boundary will be significantly overlooked. From GEN2 13.5.3 on Good Design "development should not have a materially adverse effect on reasonable occupational of residential properties because of loss of privacy, loss of daylight, overbearing or over shadowing." The development will be *overbearing* and create *visible harm* to the proposed area and surrounds.

The Grange Paddock application would result in the loss of green gap within the village, visible harm to open vistas and urbanisation. The application states there will be a limited degree of harm relating to landscape character impact. Given the scale and location of the development site this is disputed.

There is no acknowledgment to the local Village Design Statement (VDS). This document highlights the landscape and architectural heritage of the part of Essex Elmdon is located and how it should be retained.



Elmdon – showing open spaces and farmland.

Elmdon

GEN2 states “local characters reflect identity of surroundings visually attractive”. The outline proposal show the 18 houses inward facing and rear gardens facing the road. The houses opposite will therefore be looking at fences. The VDS guidance notes the avoidance unsympathetic use of close board fencing in front gardens because they do not reflect the rural character of the village. The design is not rural, more like a gated community and suburban. Lighting is also included in the elevated development, which again is out of character with the rest of Elmdon and will lead to light pollution.

Transport & highways:

Owing to the location and lack of public transport there is a reliance on car ownership The document gives the impression the public transport service, bus route 31, is easily accessible but, would require walking over a mile along a national speed limit road with no footpath.

With 18 new houses and reliance on cars it could expected there will be 36 additional vehicles plus delivery vehicles, given that many households now rely on direct home delivery of groceries and goods. The developers transport statement acknowledges the problem of speeding vehicles along Ickleton Road, some 15% of vehicles. Is it safe to have this new development, with new children’s play area, where speeds are routinely exceeded? The approach from the west to the access road entrance is on a blind corner. Therefore, combined with speeding, may lead to accidents.

Ecology:

At the Parish Council meeting held on 2nd March 2023 several residents mentioned the presence of badgers in the Townsend Planation. The developers own ecology report says there is no evidence. This needs further investigation. There will be the removal of trees and consequently, loss of wildlife habitat.

Affordable housing:

The only benefit of the scheme is the provision of 40% affordable housing and 18 new homes in total. However, we worry the building of affordable homes can be avoided, negotiated down or out to full market housing. It is unacceptable for developers to negotiate their way out of this responsibility. Witness the decision last month by Uttlesford allowing the developer to reduce the number of affordable homes in its planned estate in Woodlands Park, Great Dunmow, from 50 to 28. For those either living or wishing to live in Elmdon and support the application but whose only option is affordable housing, this would be a severe blow.

In summary:

The unsustainable location, added to the loss of open countryside would amount to considerable harm in a valued landscape, which far outweigh the housing supply benefits.

Sarah & Mark Swinburn

