

From: Bridget Green [REDACTED]
Sent: 12 March 2023 19:10
To: Section 62A Applications <section62a@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Subject: Planning Application S62A/2023/0015 Grange Paddock, Ickleton Road, Elmdon, Essex

From: Bridget Green, The Old School, Elmdon, Essex CB11 4LT
Sent: 12th March 2023
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Dear Sirs

I am writing to **object** to this planning application on the following grounds:-

*** Harms that would result from the development**

1) The site. The site of the proposed development is at present very good agricultural land. Once it has been built on that land can never again be used for food production.

2) The nature of the development. The proposed development is large and urban in character, which is entirely unlike the rest of Elmdon.

3) Increased traffic on Ickleton Road. It is noted that the applicant has not provided a Highways Report, also that while the location map shows adequate visual splay where the access road joins the Ickleton Road, it does not show the nearby bend to the left just beyond Hollow Road, which constitutes an obvious hazard.

Ickleton Road is already under considerable pressure. Many residents park on the south side for lack of sufficient off-road parking, and for much of its length the road is too narrow for two cars to pass. The road is used not only by cars, service vehicles, delivery traffic and farm vehicles often travelling at speed, but also by riders on horseback and cyclists, frequently in groups and sometimes racing. In a few places it is also used by mothers with wide pushchairs, children on bicycles and disabled people with walking aids, because stretches of the pavement are too narrow, obstructed, uneven or sloping to be safe for them. The traffic that could reasonably be expected to be associated with a development of 18 new houses, all of it necessarily using Ickleton Road in every journey, would greatly increase the number of vehicles regularly on the road and would make the congestion and the potential for accidents that much greater.

4) Loss of amenity. The site of the proposed development is on the side of a hill and if built it would dominate both the present houses in Ickleton Road and also the view as seen from much of the village and from a number of its footpaths. This would be a loss not only to the residents of Elmdon and the surrounding villages but also to the walkers and day trippers who come here regularly all the year round, often having travelled a considerable distance, to walk Elmdon's many and well maintained bridleways and footpaths. Several of the paths, including a part of the Icknield Way, run along high ground that gives a panoramic view of the village in its valley and the fields and woods around it, and the proposed development would stand out starkly in that view as being large and out of keeping with the rest of the village.

Elmdon is without street lighting and its dark skies with very little light pollution are one of its valued assets. The siting of 18 houses on a hillside, above the level of most of the other houses in the village and with associated street lighting and security lighting, however carefully planned, will inevitably create light pollution where it has never been before. It is also a quiet village, and the siting of a large development on a high ground above the village would greatly increase the noise and disturbance in the surrounding area.

5) Impact on Wildlife and Trees. The applicant claims that no ecological harm would result from the development. However, a nearby resident who is knowledgeable about wildlife says he has been seeing badgers in Townsend Plantation over the last five years or more, also many birds including nuthatches, and that the site of the proposed development is frequently patrolled by a barn owl. The Essex Biodiversity Checklist which the applicant's agent completed on 19/12/22, shows that he ticked Yes to 'semi-natural woodland; scrub thicket' and the form shows that the nationally protected species likely to be there includes badgers. It is in that same semi-natural woodland and scrub thicket that badgers have been regularly seen by the nearby resident using binoculars from his upstairs window. The PEA 4.2 Recommendations and Further Action, Badger and Proposed Access Route, could not identify badger setts but the survey was constrained due to being conducted in snow; they recommended a revisit prior to any work being embarked upon. In view of reliable sightings of badgers, I feel strongly that a revisit ought to take place before a decision is made about this planning application.

The Arboricultural Impact Report states that some ancient hedgerow would need to be removed and trees felled to facilitate the construction of the development and access road. It also states that the trees to be removed would include 10 ash trees, 7 of them of moderate quality and value but each of them having an expected remaining life of a minimum of 20 yrs. Even if the felled trees were to be replaced with saplings there is no undertaking that they would be cared for and would thrive. In view of the countrywide threat to ash trees from ash dieback disease this is a cause for concern.

6) Water, Sewage and Flooding. The mains water pressure in Elmdon is already variable and frequently low.

The SUDS report says that the Elm Court sewer is the closest foul sewer to the site and this seems to imply that they would consider connection to it. But that is a problematic sewer which already overflows into Elm Court, as witnessed by Anglia Water.

Flash flooding is already a problem when heavy rainfall runs off the hill on which the development is proposed onto the Ickleton Road, and sometimes it reaches the houses in Manor Row opposite. This would be made worse if the land were built on, even if the development itself was protected by its elevation from flooding.

* **Sustainability** Elmdon is classified as an "unsustainable" village and the site proposed was rejected as not being suitable for development by Uttlesford District Council in the Call for Sites for the 2016 Local Plan.

Elmdon has no amenities apart from an Anglican church, a village hall, a roadside egg stall and a large field for recreation. There is no longer a pub or a childcare facility here and the nearest shop is 3.4 miles away, mainly along a narrow road with a blind summit and bend and no pavement. The nearest railway station is 4.5 miles away. There is no bus service apart from the 444 that comes to Elmdon at 0751 and 1630, and that only operates on

school days. The village also has very limited and patchy mobile phone reception. It is difficult to live here without extensive use of a car.

The applicant describes the proposed development as sustainable but it is hard to see how that can be the case. It might provide a small amount of local employment but that would not make either it or Elmdon sustainable. The proposed development would inevitably add significantly to the traffic in the village - see **Harms that would result from the Developent** point 2) above - and it would increase the pressure on already oversubscribed schools, doctors' surgeries and other services in the area.

*** The proposed development does not conform to the guidelines adopted by the UDC in the Village Design Statement 2019 for Elmdon, Duddenhoe End and Surrounding Hamlets.**

The guidelines recommend that future development of more than one dwelling should not be on green sites. Furthermore The Council for the Protection of Rural England is currently arguing that we should be protecting our countryside. The proposed development would take Grade 2 "very good" agricultural land permanently out of cultivation.

*** The proposed site is outside the village development plan** as shown in the Local Plan 2005. While the site borders the existing development line the proposed development would be detached from the village, up on a hill and with no through road. The development if built would constitute a private enclave, not a part of the community.

*** The site map shows a footpath** labelled Path (um) but the footpath no longer exists.

***Finally** could I please request that representatives of the Inspectors visit Elmdon in order to understand fully and assess the effect the proposed development would have on the village.

Yours sincerely

Bridget Green