

Comments: S62A/2023/0015 – Proposed Development at Grange Paddock, Ickleton Rd, Elmdon

I have lived in the village since 1999 and both my children were born and raised here, they are now young adults.

My home is in the [REDACTED] so, like my neighbour [REDACTED], we would not be directly affected by a development at Grange Paddock. However, because Elmdon is small (some 139 households) any development of the size proposed would have a significant effect on the landscape, built environment and community life and therefore on everyone who lives here.

As you can see from the submissions this application has been greeted with universal condemnation from the community and there seems little point in going over the same ground again.

As part of their proposal the applicant states that they have “enthusiastically sought to work with the residents of Elmdon” This is not true. Some years ago the applicant approached the village about building some 40 odd homes on the site known as Grange Paddock and possibly purchasing the ailing pub. This was met with near universal opposition and they withdrew. Last summer, notices advising the village of a presentation in the village hall were put up very early one morning when no one was about, they gave little notice as the date for the meeting was a day or two hence. For many people who live here, attendance must have been difficult especially as it was held around 7pm and so many commute. There was a definite feeling that the applicant was carrying out a box ticking exercise and not keen to engage in meaningful discussion. Notwithstanding that, many people made a special effort to go and there were queues outside the door and into the road so it took some time to get in. Inside there was a plan or two on tables and the applicants and one or two of their agents to answer questions. There were no leaflets, no written questionnaires and no one seemed to record the comments and no opportunity for follow up questions after the event. Many questions were raised and most were not happy with the answers they were given and its fair to say that a number of people were very upset Particular concerns were raised about the effect on the homes opposite, the effect on traffic and the breaking of the development envelope. After that evening there was no follow up and from what I can tell no effort to actively engage further with the village save for a meeting, I am told, with the Chairman of our Parish Council who advised the applicant to consult in person with those most directly affected this advice was not, I understand, taken. Since the application was lodged on February 16<sup>th</sup> relations with the applicants have broken down completely. Neither they nor their agents attended the Extraordinary meeting of the Parish Council on March 2<sup>nd</sup> and from what I can see there has been no meaningful dialogue. All this is very worrying as this does not bode well for the future; this is an application for OUTLINE planning permission only so one must assume that if the application were passed there would be many, many important decisions to make and about which there should be discussion with the village. What hope is there of that when relations have already broken down so completely? It is fair to say, that few trust the applicants to keep to even the most basic of their applications’s specifications; the 18 house limit, the low cost housing element or to follow through with the necessary steps to make sure that the development is

sympathetic to the area for example. All this is particularly inexcusable as the applicants live in the village.

We live in an area where housing is extremely expensive and many struggle to find and afford suitable housing I would be in favour of a small, carefully sited and sympathetic development of such homes for rent and for purchase but for such a project to be a success close liaison with the community would be vital so that the new householders were fully integrated in to the community. This is not such a project as the development proposed has all the hallmarks of a gated community or estate designed to stick out rather than blend with the landscape and built environment of the village. Particularly concerning is the provision of street lights the almost total absence of which most villagers are proud of as we are able to enjoy, light pollution free skies on clear nights

Many have commented that the proposals break the development envelope and that in so doing the flood gates would be opened to swathes of development which would destroy the very essence of the village. Given that the applicant owns so much of the land around the village that would seem to be a very real risk as there has been no attempt to allay people's fears on this subject Elmdon has some 140 or so houses, it would not be difficult to drown it.

In conclusion, I do not support the applicant's proposals