

Representation from Mrs. D Bagnall

S62A/2023/0019 – Planning Application for erection of 96 Dwellings

I am writing to strongly object to the development of 96 homes on the Bulls Field site in Takeley by Weston Homes.

This development will not enhance the character and beauty of the area but will, instead, destroy the precious environment that already thrives here. This environment is enjoyed by many local people on a daily basis.

The value of this important amenity space was recognised by the Inspector when dismissing the appeal in August 2022, having particular regard to the intrinsic value of the setting and character of the open space including the Ancient Woodland.

This would also lead to a loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

I consider that the important paragraphs in the Inspectors reasons for refusal, as outlined in the 'Appeal Decision APP/C1570/W/22/3291524 dated 9 August 2022', are as follows;

64. In coming to this conclusion, I have had regard to the appellant's mitigation measures. While it is argued that design, layout, density and planting within the proposal would serve to mitigate its effects, I nevertheless consider that the proposal, by introducing an urbanising influence into the open, pastoral setting of these heritage assets, would be to the detriment of their significance, resulting in less than substantial harm.

71. It should be noted that this is a separate concern to that of the effect on Prior's Wood as part of the overall landscape and character and visual impact which I have dealt with above under the 1st main issue. In that regard, I have concluded that the proximity of the development to Prior's Wood in place of an open agrarian field would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area, including Prior's Wood. The concern under this main issue is that trees within the woodland itself would be harmed by the proposed development.

83. In respect of recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, I consider Policy S7, in requiring the appearance of development "to protect or enhance the particular character of the part of the countryside within which it is set or there are special reasons why the development in the form proposed needs to be there", is broadly consistent with NPPF paragraphs 130 and 174b. Consequently, having concluded that there would be significant landscape character and visual impact harm arising from the proposal without special reasons being demonstrated as to why the development in the form proposed needs to be there, I give moderate weight to this conflict with the last strand of Policy S7, given it is not fully consistent with the NPPF. In reaching this view, I have had regard to the previous appeal decisions cited by the parties that reach contrasting views on the degree of weight to be given to breaches of Policy S7 based on the specifics of each of those particular cases.

97. In this case, taking account of the extent of the shortfall in the five-year housing land supply, how long the deficit is likely to persist, what steps the local planning authority is taking to reduce it, and how much of it the proposed development would meet, and giving significant weight in terms of

the extent of that shortfall and how much of it would be met by the proposed development, in addition to significant weight to the public benefits identified above, I do not consider these considerations collectively to be sufficiently powerful to outweigh the considerable importance and great weight I give to paying special regard to the desirability of preserving the settings of the listed buildings and the conservation of all of the identified designated heritage assets.

104. While the proposal would not be harmful in terms of the effect on Warish Hall and the associated Moat Bridge Grade I listed building, the Protected Lane, the trees within Prior's Wood and those matters set out above under other matters, and would bring public benefits including those secured by means of the submitted S106 Agreement, I have identified that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area in terms of its adverse effect on landscape character and visual impact, would reduce the open character of the CPZ and would cause less than substantial harm to 11 no. designated heritage assets that would not be outweighed by the public benefits. Accordingly, the proposal would conflict with saved LP Policies S7, S8, ENV2 and ENV4, and NPPF paragraphs 130, 174b and 202.

We are all custodians of the natural world that we inhabit and it is incumbent on all of us to do all we can to preserve and protect the landscapes, Ancient Woodlands and Ecology for future generations to enjoy and appreciate. This, I believe, is in line with the overall aims of the NPPF

Allowing development in this location would be most harmful to the landscape and ecology and would have a detrimental visual impact as highlighted by the previous inspector.

Mrs D Bagnall

