

Section 62A Planning Application: S62A/2023/0019 Land to the north of Roseacres, between Parsonage Road and Smiths Green Lane, Takeley, Essex, CM22 6NZ (Land known as Bull Field, Warish Hall Farm, Takeley, Essex)

Previous Applications for this site:

UTT/21/1987/FUL Refused

Appeal APP/C1570/W/22/3291524 Refused

Weston Homes are attempting to justify this application by quoting the proposals contained within the 2021/41 local plan. This document despite significant local opposition has been moved to reg.18 consultation. NPPF paragraph 48 is quite explicit:

*48. Local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:*

*a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);*

*b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and*

*c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given)*

Given the very early stage in its journey this plan should not be considered as having any influence on this application. Indeed, Dean Hermitage, UDC's Director of Planning stated, at the Local Plan Leadership Group meeting on the 4th October that at reg 18 the blueprint bears NO WEIGHT and should NOT be considered with regards to this application. The timetable for the new local plan includes a further consultation period in June/July 2024. Therefore, the plan that should be considered for this application is the plan and policies from 2005.

However, as part of that local plan UDC have commissioned numerous reports. The Aecom report, October 2023 refers to Takeley

*Historic environment whilst Takeley is currently notable as a larger settlement without a designated conservation area, the central Smiths Green area is associated with a strong historic character, and there was recently consultation on a potential Conservation Area. It is also important to note that a historic lane (and cycle route) links through Smiths Green to Bamber's Green to the north (north of the A120) via Grade I listed Warish Hall, which is also a scheduled monument. There is also historic character along the B1256 to the east of the village (a Roman Road), with a number of listed buildings including a notable cluster at Little Canfield (associated with a wooded stream corridor).*

- Biodiversity first and foremost, there is a need to note the proximity of Hatfield Forest, which has already been introduced above as highly sensitive to increased recreational pressure. Also, Priors Wood ancient woodland CWS is a significant constraint to growth, including recognising its value within a wider wooded landscape, with a position between Hatfield Forest to the west and High Wood SSSI to the east. There is also a notable concentration of woodland priority habitat within the central part of Takeley.*

- The Stansted Airport Countryside Protection Zone (CPZ) is an existing designation that has a clear purpose and is widely valued.*

The reference to the conservation area around Smiths Green is ongoing and is relevant in plan making.

The report goes on to highlight

*There are a range of important masterplanning considerations that warrant further detailed scrutiny. For example, there is a need to consider: A) maximising delivery of strategic open greenspace so as to minimise recreational pressure on Hatfield Forest; B) impacts to Priors Wood and its functional role at a landscape scale..*

*The LUC's elements of the report highlight the importance and uniqueness of the ancient woodland, Priors Wood with its adjoining trees and hedgerows to the area. The separation provided by Smiths Green and adjoining fields that prevent coalescence on local villages. The report also highlights the linear structure of local villages, spreading development such as proposed can destroy the character of the villages.*

The proposed estate sitting as it does on the plateau will clearly be visible from Smiths Green, destroying the agrarian setting of the emerging conservation area and the setting of the many historical assets that will be negatively impacted by this development. Night time light pollution will disrupt the nocturnal ecosystem. Owls, insects, small mammals and the like that inhabit the ancient woodland and natural corridors that will be destroyed by this development.

NPPF (2023) P.174 *Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the local and natural environment by:*

*b). Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystems services including the economic and other benefits from the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.*

*P.180 When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:*

*c). Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons, and a suitable mitigation strategy exists. Wholly exceptional reasons include national infrastructure projects. A small domestic development as presented can not be described as wholly exceptional.*

The impact on the local road network and the wider strategic road network can not be overlooked. There are no viable alternatives to road transport. Cycle routes are nonexistent, relying on pavements or roads, no separation is possible between lorries and cyclists. Buses are dependent on road conditions, no separation, no bus lanes exist. NPPF (2023) P. 112

My original objections to this development remain. Why would anyone consider it appropriate to develop a housing estate in the backyard of an industrial area and car park.

Mrs S F Critchlev

