

██████████,
Case Officer,
Planning and Development Management,
Uttlesford District Council,
Council Offices,
London Road,
Saffron Walden,
Essex CB11 4ER

30th June 2022

Dear Sir,

**Planning Application Number: UTT/22/1578/OP
Land to the north of Eldridge Close, Clavering, Essex**

We object to the above planning application on the following grounds:

The Previous Appeal Refusal

The Inspector previously said that the harm to the countryside caused by the proposed 9 unit development was in conflict with Local Plan Policy S7 and with Paragraph 174 (b) of the National Policy Framework. This application for 32 houses must therefore be significantly more harmful than that previously refused.

Call For Sites Refusal 2015

This site was turned down in 2015 because of its potential damage to the countryside and the distance to village facilities. This has not changed,

Outside Village Boundary

The proposed site is outside the village boundary in respect of the Local Plan and to allow development here would set a precedent for other development and the threat to the area of countryside between Clavering and Arkesden.

Agricultural Land

The site area currently consists of excellent quality Grade 2 agricultural land, which has never been more important to our economy. It is easy to say that it is only a small loss but we are constantly seeing the loss of such sites to planning developments and we have a duty to protect such productive farmland at all costs. The Eldridge Close development was on a brown field site.

Urban Estate Developments in Clavering

Clavering is being subjected to urban estate style developments, which are totally out of keeping with the general linear housing layout in the village. These developments are destroying the rural character of the village and this is reflected in schemes such as the 31 dwelling development behind the village school and numerous developments submitted in the 2022 Call for Sites.

The Officer's Report in the previous application for 9 houses on this site concluded that such a development was inappropriate in the countryside and would have an urbanising effect out of context with the existing pattern of development and harmful to the setting and rural location of the surrounding area. It is difficult to see how the conclusion can be different when considering this significantly larger and more invasive application.

This development would have a serious impact on the landscape and be visible from a substantial distance over open countryside from local footpaths, including the one currently crossing countryside across the proposed site.

This is inconsistent with the intentions of the current UDC Local Plan and the National Policy Framework.

Affordable Housing

A recently conducted Parish Council Survey established that the need for affordable housing in Clavering has been amply met by the provision within the 31 unit development behind the village school. This scheme for the provision of a further 13 dwellings will purely provide an oversupply.

Development Layout

The provision of the proposed public open spaces and areas for wild flowers will do nothing to replace the existing area of countryside and the provision of a pond without a source of supply demonstrates a lack of understanding of the countryside.

Unsustainability:

The development fails all three tests of sustainability required by the National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF") in the following way:

- **First test failure – the economic test:**

- There are no jobs in Clavering capable of supporting large mortgages on houses like most of those proposed.
- The main facilities in Clavering are too far away from the development site to be reached by walking and as cycling is impractical for most journeys, cars will be used instead.

- **Second test failure – the environmental test:**

- The line of trees separating the site from the countryside beyond will not adequately screen the new houses even in summer, and less so in winter. They will be clearly visible from nearby footpaths and those more distant.
- There are significant gaps at either end of the line of trees on the western boundary of the site, allowing direct views into the site, so the new houses will be clearly visible.
- There is no guarantee that the developer will not fell the line of trees once planning permission has been granted, as happened with Eldridge Close.

- The need for screening simply illustrates the fact that building houses in this location will not fit in with the countryside views.
- **Third test failure – the social test:**
 - As the main facilities in Clavering (shop and school) are well beyond acceptable walking distance, the social benefits will only be available by car.
 - Walking to Clavering’s facilities is dangerous. The pavements in the High Street are uneven, with potholes in some places and the pavements narrow to as little as 27 inches with no physical possibility of a widening. This means they are particularly inappropriate for parents with children in buggies.
 - Cycling to Clavering’s facilities is unrealistic. A large or weekly shop cannot be accommodated on a bike and using bikes to get a family to an evening event in the village along the winding, narrow and busy High Street is an unsafe proposition.
 - Clavering has no bus service other than school buses. These run only during term time and at times of the day that are not suitable for shopping, employment or visits to medical facilities in nearby towns. The information presented by the developer about bus services is incorrect and the absence of a publicly available bus service in Clavering has now been accepted as fact by UDC.

Contrary to Local Plan Policies:

- **Contrary to Policy GEN1:** The distance of the development site from the village facilities will not encourage non-car journeys.
- **Contrary to Policy GEN7:** There is evidence of owl and bat activity on the development site. No account has been taken of this.
- **Contrary to Policy ENV5:** The development will use the best and most versatile agricultural land and there is no evidence that any assessment has been made for accommodating it on brownfield sites or within existing development boundaries.
- **Contrary to Policy S7:** The development does nothing to protect or enhance the particular character of the countryside.

Contrary to the July 2021 Version of the NPPF:

- **Contrary to Paragraph 174(b):** The development fails to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.
- **Contrary to Paragraph 8(c):** The development would not protect or enhance the environment surrounding the village of Clavering.

- **Contrary to Paragraph 159:** There are historic issues with the water table resulting in some of the gardens at Eldridge Close becoming waterlogged at certain times of the year. No account appears to have been taken of this in the application documents.

For the reasons detailed above, the development should be **REFUSED**.

Yours faithfully,

Mr and Mrs J Veitch

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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]