

From: Lori Flawn [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 December 2023 22:54
To: Section 62A Applications <section62a@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Subject: Application ref No S62A/2023/0027. Confirmation of receipt requested.

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to put on record my continuing objections to the Weston Homes repeated Application to build on the site known as Jacks Field on the boundary of Warish Hall Lane (repeatedly referred to as Smiths Green Lane though that is not its name) in the Parish of Takeley.

I have objected previously to the development of Bulls Field (which has been rejected predominantly on heritage grounds I believe) and also to the previous Jacks Lane applications all of which are appended to this response for ease of reference, as I believe they remain applicable and as relevant now as they were when written.

I am obviously misinformed, since I have been under the impression that in order to place a follow-on application for development the proposer must first address the concerns that led to its dismissal previously. This does not appear to have happened on this occasion as the only tangible difference that I can discern between the previous application and the new one, is that it adds insult to injury by suggesting that the proposal will encroach on land that is currently a bridleway and ancient drovers path to both hard pave and light it for pedestrians from the new 40 house development to access the Little Canfield development. You will note from my previous objections that I (and many others) consider this to be of serious detriment to the amenity of the current site. Thus this is so far from addressing any of the previous concerns as to be ludicrous. In this context it is worth noting that the roads between the B1256 and the molehill green road the curtilage of the Airport have flooded repeatedly along its length – at one point so as to be impassable, multiple times in the past two months. Rendering yet more of the land incapable of managing natural run-off and soak-away will add to an already growing problem. Conversely the field in question is actually prime agricultural land. The only reason it is NOT currently productive is because the owner – a property developer - has called a halt to its productivity thus rendering it ‘redundant’. This is transparently vexatious and given the current need for our arable land to be more not less productive, should in my view be legislated against.

I noted last time that I believe that for a developer to be permitted to continue to return to make that same or very similar proposals, in particular without addressing the concerns giving rise to the previous dismissal, goes against the concept of natural law – yet this is what is happening here. In law there is separate redress to deal with frivolous objections that would deal with any such problem. I think it is safe to say that the objections consistently put up against this development are neither frivolous nor without merit. Yet they are not being addressed. There needs to be a financial penalty on the proposer that prevents a continual battering with a view to wearing down those with objections.

The entrance to the site cannot be made safe without changing the nature of the protected lane (Warish Hall Lane rather than Smiths Green Lane). The benefits of such changes would be significantly outweighed by the costs: to the immediate area, including Smiths Green which has recently (November '23) been awarded Conservation status, to the ancient woodland of Priors

Wood; itself already massively encroached upon along its western edge by the huge warehouses currently being erected by Weston Homes; to the natural habit, increasingly being eroded by development, of many species which call it home and to the countryside which has, in recent years, been so hugely discovered as a natural recreational resource by the residents of Smiths Green and Little Canfield. It is genuinely sad that, having been encouraged to spend more time exercising for the benefit of our mental and physical health, as soon as people are given the opportunity and find a suitable venue, so often it is ripped away by developers.

As indicated, I am appending here my previous substantive responses to the development:

Previous response to Uttlesford UTT/22/3126/FUL

I would like to see this application refused in its entirety. The grounds have been fully discussed previously but specifically:

1. Access to the proposed development can never be satisfactory without significant "improvement" to what is a protected lane. It would likely be insufficient without totally destroying the very characteristics of the lane which make it worth protecting. For example – it is unlit, it should remain unlit, it may be too dangerous for the inhabitants unless it is lit!
2. As it is, it is becoming dangerous for walkers, drivers and inhabitants/neighbours alike as it needs more maintenance, because of higher loading, than it's receiving. The current condition of the road from end to end is unacceptable and any heavy traffic such as would be required to enable the build would effectively render it dangerous for the duration of build and destroy the nature of the small hamlet, Smiths Green, of which it will become a part, to such an extent it could never be returned to its former state or nature. Tyres and even wheels are common casualties! This is unsafe for traffic and pedestrians alike.
3. 40 extra dwellings more than **doubles** the size of the hamlet, Smiths Green, that it will become a part of. This in itself will irrevocably change the nature of the hamlet and the rural space it sites in
4. The sanctuary off of Jacks Lane, which has been created for wildlife, will I fear become largely inaccessible to those larger animals mainly deer, for which it was prepared. I fear this in itself may create further potential issues for the growing traffic density in the immediate area, as well as for the animals.
5. It is a green field site where there are other more suitable brownfield sites nearby that could more easily integrate a further 40 dwellings. Takeley a rural area has already taken more than its fair share of extra housing and it is noticeable that some new builds are simply not being "snapped up" While more housing may be a requirement, it is vital that services are provided to support any new population including in particular water and transport infrastructure. This should be addressed before permissions are granted not as an afterthought and with no clear instruction to provide.

I implore you to reject this application on the grounds that it does not and indeed cannot resolve the difficulties which caused the earlier, wider application to be rejected last year.

Previous response 2

My deep concerns about the Jacks Green site are predominantly that it is the very thin end of a very thick wedge. It is clear that Weston Homes intends to push very hard at every boundary to fully develop the entire area which it acquired (in blue on the design and access statement) and it will chip away gradually until it achieves it. The CPZ will at that stage have been eroded to the point of non-existence (as usual!)

Calling it Jacks Green is laughable – it currently is green; once a ton more bricks and concrete has been thrown at it, it will clearly not be. I believe contrary to the findings of the plan that development of the green will have potentially severe ramifications for water run-off in inclement weather. The application acknowledges that the ways through the surrounding area (across bulls field and along the side of priors wood) are not easily passable during wet and inclement weather – removing yet more land currently permitting soakaway for this development will make that worse, not better, and the ditches do practically overflow after heavy rain already. Weston homes suggests it will take this into consideration and improve the position. This sounds more like a threat than a promise and suggests that further development will be suggested ostensibly to improve our “amenity “ of the countryside by making it more traversable. This in and of itself will change the rural nature of the countryside. Warish Hall Lane (or smiths green lane as the documentation has it) would need to be drastically changed in order to provide safe access for pedestrians cyclists and vehicles, in my view to such an extent that it would jeopardise any potential for retaining its ancient lane status going forward simply because it would no longer look any different to any other country road that has suddenly had numerous housing estates built along their curtilage.

There is no doubt that we are squeezing the biodiversity out of the area, but you can't keep moving it on. When the bats butt up against the edge of the airport zone they will surely pack their little cases and move on or simply dies off. Similarly for the deer. They do still have places to roam but those places are being squeezed more and more. We are talking about protecting species that are in danger but that seems to ignore the need to protect those that are NOT in danger so that they don't become endangered. It should come as no surprise that this country has reduced its biodiversity over many centuries to a greater extent than almost all the rest of the western world. It's because we are an island and things can't keep being moved on because there is literally NOWHERE TO GO. If you have a small space things fall off the edge. Simples.

Regarding the plan itself. It appears to be a box ticking exercise. Our fault we love a good box ticking exercise. But it's a fairly small site 40 homes yet the plan is to have a mixed site with some giants and some very small residences. Looking at the pictures fills me with gloom because although they may all look fine in their place, mixing them all together in that manner will, I fear, render the whole incongruous, incoherent and potentially lead to a small haphazard 'community' that lacks any tangible thread to literally build any community spirit on – potentially a recipe for disaster both at an individual and common social and mental health level. Yet the application talks up the need and the will to foster integration at the wider level.

How? And what possible mechanisms do they have the levers over other than the community design of the proposed site. Its not some isolated model village! Yet I fear it will look like one.

For Completeness I am also appending my response to one of the previous applications to develop Bulls Field (dismissed I believe on the grounds of Heritage but I submit equally relevant here given both a) the proximity to the said site and b) the nature of the concerns I outline, which not unlike radio waves are not constrained by tarmac and concrete although we persist in pretending its OK to treat them like they are!

From: Lori Flawn [REDACTED]
Date: 6 September 2023 at 16:22:05 GMT-4
To: section62a@planninginspectorate.gov.uk
Subject: Bulls Field

Dear Sirs,

May I first say that I feel this is becoming more like trial by Iranian court! One thinks one is nearing the end of ones sentence and suddenly a new charge (or proposal in this case) is launched. Defending Bulls Field, Jacks Lane and Smiths green feels like it needs to become a full time occupation. Why can the applicant spend as much time as they like preparing submissions, yet those opposing them have very limited time against a backdrop that it is NOT their full time occupation. Just downloading the documents and zooming out up down and round enough to even know whether it needs to be given consideration is an epic journey. Further, they have little or no access to what one might term “equal and opposite” expertise and are basically being subjected to a planning regime which appears to be geared to the grinding down of opposition. As the local residents, those who will inevitably be most impacted by the proposals, there seems to be an expectation that we will become increasingly resigned to having little or no say in the matter ultimately. And thus we will cease to object. Dream on!

The amount of documentation that goes with this application is quite impressive - or depressing depending on your point of view. In particular the arboriculturalists seem to have no remit but to consider the protection of the root system of individual trees. This surely misses the point. There is no mention of the need for a wider curtilage to protect not only individual trees but the sustainability of the wood as a whole and the ancient lights to which I would hope the natural inhabitants have some right. Any development of either side of the wood; bulls field or the field to the north, would without doubt change irreparably the context of this ancient woodland in its heritage setting with its historic green, protected lane, grade I and other listed buildings and all round beautiful ambience. I understand that it is recognised that the preservation of ancient woodland Must be recognised as sacrosanct since it cannot be restored once gone. Butt 96 dwellings right up against it and I genuinely cannot imagine its “survival” in any meaningful sense of the word, nor indeed that of its inhabitants. Ecosystems are much wider and deeper than those that we feel we see and personally experience, I believe the emerging scientific evidence for this is indisputable fact. I am no Malthusian, but the retention of balance rather than the wistful hope that it may be restored once lost is a different matter and there appears to be an increasing dependency upon restoration tomorrow rather than retention now. It genuinely makes me feel sick to my core.

A number of expert witnesses have been summoned to opine. But what is the point of asking the water companies whether there is a problem. Their duty is to provide water; to acknowledge

a difficulty is to admit they are not up to the job. Indeed, to risk their authority to provide, one imagines. Instead perhaps ask East Anglia water or whichever wider authority it was that recently acknowledged that there is indeed scarcity of water in the East of England. Why ask whether there is a danger of flooding to be told no? It is undeniable that throwing concrete and asphalt on the land reduces drainage and thus increases risk. For sure these things can be mitigated and if the worst happens, resourcefulness applied which can take away the impact. But not I would argue without opening up the potential need to change radically and further the design context of the initial offending construction.

We are promised “nice new roads” or paths and cycleways hardened to improve access where we currently ‘have none’. Not true! We have managed with our footpaths for centuries. It entails wearing appropriate footgear and the occasional washing of muddy paws. I can however assure you that most of us who walk these paths would no more think of wearing stilettos for the task than expecting to find a burger bar and lemonade stop at the other side of our travails. (Please god!) And for sure our four footed friends are very much better equipped to cope with such paths than the hot -or cold - hard asphalt or worse dried cinder that comes with the built up territory. I am furthermore intrigued by the reference to some footpath that apparently gives access through the Croft from Jacks field into the estate. Do tell us more....its a walk I have not thus far experienced.

I believe the original application was rejected not merely because of the access from a protected lane (Which this application does address, but instead loads parsonage lane even further when as yet we have no experience how much of an effect the already built new estate behind the church will have) but also the impact on the heritage of the area. It will not I fear be inconsequential. Further the access at the pinch point as currently conceived encroaches significantly on the buffer zone that I believe is recommended for the preservation of woodland. This happened in spades along the flich way. Indeed the curtilage of the country park was all but “disappeared” on some stretches, there is sadly no going back as the wielders of chain saws well know.

I would ask that my previous responses are considered in so far as they are relevant to this application and I would implore you to reject in its entirety this application.

Yours Sincerely

Lorraine Flaawn

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