

James Dwyer



The Planning Inspectorate
3rd Floor, Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6PN

8th September 2024

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Application Reference: S62A/2024/0057

Site Address: Former Friends School Field, Mount Pleasant Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 3EB
Applicant Name: Chase New Homes

I am writing this letter as a homeowner whose house backs onto the south end of the site with the address stated above. Please see below my objections to the proposed development based on the major impacts it would have on me, my fellow Greenways residents and my surrounding community:

- 1. Proposed land use:** This latest proposal follows on from the previously refused application in 2019 (UTT/19/1744/OP), where a key element for refusal was against the negative impacts local and proposed residents would face from the use of the sports pitches proposed at the north of the site. The latest development flips the proposal and places them at the south of the site, along with increasing the quantum against the comments from Uttlesford in respect to the land designation (Open Protected Space). This land, when previously in use, was school playing fields and the impact on local residents was minimal, and therefore acceptable, due to the occasional usage – usually a Sunday morning. But the current proposal suggests that floodlights and crowd noise will very seriously impact on surrounding houses (especially those that actually back onto the site), and that the disastrous proposal to include a through path into Greenways will turn our narrow, quiet cul-de-sac into a major parking/dropping off area. Past experience has shown us that extreme anti-social behaviour will also result from this. When there was a play area on the Greenways green, it encouraged marauding gangs of youths who set fire to the play area, terrorised neighbours by knocking on doors and peering through windows, and broke into gardens. Wherever these new public playing fields are placed on this site, which is surrounded by residential properties, impacts from noise, light, traffic and antisocial behaviour will definitely be experienced on an on-going basis..
- 2. 3G Pitch upgrades:** Sport England was consulted on the original application and recommended that a 3G pitch would be required in order to provide all-year-round facilities, including floodlighting, which would be made available to groups during evenings and weekends. They were consulted again earlier this year with respect to the latest proposal and made no reference to this, although it did imply that they felt

more area of the site should be allocated to pitches. If 3G pitches were to come forward, in the quantum that may offset any housing development on this site, impacts from light pollution and noise disturbance would have a severe impact on the surrounding residential properties – especially those properties, like mine, that actually back onto the proposed playing fields. Although this is not reflected in the current application, it is a very serious concern and would be a life-changing situation if it were to be stated as a condition during the planning response, or came forward in subsequent applications because of impacts all year round and into the evenings. Sport pitches, such as those being proposed, should be on the outskirts of the town where they do not have such a damaging effect on local residents – not in the middle of existing residential housing.

- 3. Noise disturbance:** As a local resident directly affected by this proposal, I am deeply concerned about the significant noise disturbance that these playing fields will introduce, which is contrary to the principles of residential amenity preservation as stipulated in both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and our current local plan. The NPPF emphasises the importance of safeguarding residential amenities and ensuring that new developments do not have an unacceptable impact on the living conditions of existing communities. The introduction of playing fields in close proximity to our residential area will lead to persistent noise pollution, particularly during evenings and weekends when organised sports events typically occur. This would obviously destroy our quality of life and turn our quiet lives into a nightmare as well as being at odds with the local plan, which seeks to protect residents from excessive noise that could harm their quality of life. Obviously there has not been enough work done here to totally understand the impacts this will have on local residents. There has been no care or consideration for the existing residents who reside in the properties that surround and back onto the proposed playing fields.
- 4. Lack of public consultation:** Although not a legal requirement, due to the designation of Uttlesford in respect of the consideration of major planning applications in the district, this has allowed the applicant to apply directly to the Secretary of State, and we believe most strongly that this has minimised the opportunity to provide meaningful input on the proposal. The applicant held pre-app meetings with Uttlesford and Sport England against this proposal, purely to get ideas on how to tweak their proposal, irrespective of the overall negative responses received. Once again I repeat, there has been zero consideration for, and total lack of respect for existing residents
- 5. Increased Traffic on Greenways due to lack of parking:** Within the proposal 28 car, 2 disabled and 2 coach unallocated spaces are indicated next to the clubhouse. There are an additional 8 spaces unallocated as well across the development. Within this area, there are 20 proposed apartments across 3 blocks with 20 car and 6 disabled spaces allocated. Considering within Saffron Walden, 30.3% of homes have 2 or more cars (Office for National Statistics), there is a high probability that they will be using some of the unallocated spaces on a regular basis, including those around the clubhouse. This will limit the capacity on site, pushing regular users to seek alternate parking.

In their pre-app response, Sport England stated that 30+ parking spaces would be sufficient but also advised to consult Saffron Walden Community FC (SWCFC) as

they see them being the primary user. The nearest SWCFC location is the Herbert Farm Playing Fields. There are 4 primary pitches at this location with circa 80 parking spaces provided and during peak times, parking overflows onto Debden Road and into the local residential areas. This ratio is 1:20 (Pitches: Parking) irrespective of the overflow. These pitches are, of course, on the outskirts of Saffron Walden where the impact on local residents is minimal - whereas the current proposal is bang in the middle of a totally residential area where the impact will be maximum and cause massive disruption on a permanent basis.

Essex Parking Standards, Design and Good Practice 2009 advise 20 spaces per pitch for outdoor team sports pitches. Sports England guidelines, outside of the pre-app, suggest around 20 – 50 parking spaces per pitch, depending on the expected usage levels and the number of concurrent matches or training sessions. Spectator numbers should also be factored in at all levels but may vary depending on the specific nature of the event.

The NPPF emphasises the importance of providing adequate parking that reflects local conditions and the specific needs of a development. Developments should aim to avoid any adverse impact on the local road network and ensure that there is sufficient provision to avoid on-street parking that could inconvenience local residents.

The current proposal does not have adequate parking to serve the proposed pitches and, with the potential of pedestrian only access from Greenways, there is a high probability that this will be used as overflow parking due to the limited restrictions in place stopping people from doing so. Even if not used for parking, there is anticipated traffic for drop-offs to avoid driving around to the only vehicular access on the North of the site, along Mount Pleasant Road. This road, and indeed many other roads in town especially at peak times, is already severely congested and struggles with traffic - regardless of the addition of the 180+ new residents from Phases 1 and 2 of the applicant's development and users of the sports pitches, so at peak times, people will seek alternate ways, with Greenways anticipated to be the primary option. But Greenways is a narrow cul-de-sac and was designed for residents and visitors parking only, it was never designed for additional parking or for dropping off on the scale anticipated for this proposal.

- 6. Connection to Greenways:** From a design code perspective, it is understandable why connecting access to the site is proposed via Greenways – but the implications this would cause to this narrow, quiet residential street is frightening and appears never to have even been considered by the applicant. As stated above, the access and parking implications will cause severe disruption, anxiety and harm and, therefore, if public provisions are to be located on site, this must be taken into account. Due to the land designation and history, it is unlikely that the site would be purely residential, although in doing so, it would reduce the impacts due to how the access would be used. If the proposal is to proceed, and further mitigation could not be provided, we would strongly propose that **access is totally removed from Greenways** and alternate locations are considered to avoid impact on this and local streets. We are stating that there should be **no access through Greenways** for the many reasons we have stated.

- 7. Impact on local wildlife and protected species:** The proposed development would have a very negative impact, not just on local residents of Greenways, but also on the local wildlife which currently inhabits the field, such as the Muntjac deer and, in particular, the bat colony which resides in the trees at the south end of the former playing field and, of course, the pheasants.

Summary of Impacts to Greenways residents:

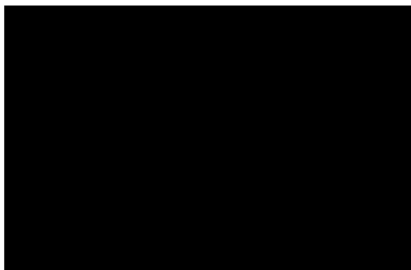
Greenways is a residential cul-de-sac with its own open protected space, which is used by the local community and wildlife on a daily basis. Children play and learn to cycle on the road, families congregate, and it is seen as a safe haven.

The concerns of traffic implications alongside severe noise disturbance and the extreme potential light pollution resulting from this application are very troubling and must be taken into account when determining this application, along with the very real possibility of anti-social behaviour.

I TOTALLY OBJECT TO THE CURRENT PROPOSAL, and for future applications, I believe that a lot of further work and local consultation is needed to understand and mitigate impacts on existing residential properties surrounding this site.

Thank you for taking into consideration the points I have raised in this letter, and I trust that a thorough assessment and a hearing will be conducted before a decision is made regarding the application. When a hearing is arranged then I would wish to make oral representations.

Yours sincerely,



James Dwyer

