

From: Eryl Stafford [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 20, 2024 7:06 PM
To: Section 62A Applications <section62a@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Subject: S62A/2024/0057

With Reference to :
Section 62A Planning Application: S62A/2024/0057 Former Friends School Field, Mount Pleasant Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 3EB

Dear Sir,

I am writing to object to the above application for planning consent on three grounds:

Firstly, as a neighbour of the site the full extent of the existing planning consent is yet to be felt and absorbed by the local area. Despite having planning permission for a substantial amount of apartments within the existing consent, the developer has not attempted to bring those to market. This is an important factor that needs to be investigated prior to any new application being granted. The existing consent requires the renovation of the former school buildings which are a historic local landmark. The developer has so far failed to act on this part of the consent, allowing the building to deteriorate and more importantly not bringing the residential units to market. They have however concentrated on the new builds within the existing consent probably due to higher margins. Without the full impact of the existing consent being known through completion, it is impossible to fully assess the impact any new consent would have on the local traffic, and amenities.

Secondly, the proposal is to build on the former school sports pitches. These pitches were in full use by the community until the land was acquired by the developer. The developer was fully aware of the sports requirements and had their initial planning application turned down with input from Sports England, who stated that the pitches were a necessity for the community. The fact that the developer has denied access to these pitches for over 5 years has not diminished the need for them. This need has not been met elsewhere and the resultant is deprived facilities for the Saffron Walden youth. It makes a mockery of the system and renders political impotence, if a developer can bypass legislation regarding sports fields being used for house building, by just sitting and denying access for 5 years. The Sports facilities should be returned to public use and the current application does not go anywhere near to replacing the lost assets. A clear message needs to be sent that no matter how long you deny access, sports fields do not change their designation, and remain sports facilities.

Lastly, the green space within the town has decreased significantly over the last 20 years. This is the last remaining piece within the bounds of the town (save the Common) and needs protecting.

Kind regards
Eryl Stafford

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