

From: Takeley Clerk [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, January 10, 2025 3:59 PM
To: Section 62A Applications <section62a@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Cc: Takeley Clerk [REDACTED]
Subject: S62A/2023/0019 Land to the north of Roseacres, between Parsonage Road and Smiths Green Lane, Takeley, Essex

Re: Section 62A Planning Application - S62A/2023/0019 Land to the north of Roseacres, between Parsonage Road and Smiths Green Lane, Takeley, Essex

The Parish Council maintains our previous objections and we wish to add comments on several changes in circumstances relevant to the proposals.

- a) Call-in to the Secretary of State is appropriate for harm to ancient woodland – In January 2024, a revised Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2024 was published in response to s.136 of the Levelling up and Regeneration Act 2023. The Consultation Direction sets out that LPAs are now required to consult the Secretary of State where a development affects Ancient Woodland, which is clearly the case, with the proposed location of the housing and details of the road, paths, lighting and drainage works causing direct and indirect harm to the ancient woodland.

According to UDC's expert Mr Drummond's arboricultural evidence at the hearing, and his proof of evidence to the previous appeal inquiry, the harm at the pinch-point access route from 7 Acres into the proposed housing site and the harm from a proposed lit walking and cycling route adjacent to Priors Wood cannot be mitigated – see the TPC appendix 6 from our initial submission

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64f99a509ee0f2000db7bff8/Takeley_Parish_Council_6_Mr_Drummond_proof_of_evidence_Land_at_Warish_Hall_UDC_22-015-JB-PoE-Appendix_2-4.pdf

The Highways conditions do not protect a buffer zone of at least 15 metres from the woodland, they would introduce street lighting into a rural setting of dark skies, impacting on the ancient woodland and wildlife, and introducing an urban influence on the setting of the Smiths Green conservation area.

The Woodland Trust in their objection letter of 7th September 2023, stated the extent of potential harm to the ancient woodland.

Contrary to Weston Homes' interpretation, the harm to ancient woodland was not fully explored in the appeal on the wider site and, unlike the previous application, there is no alternative road access therefore this matter is of significant concern.

Adequate protection for Priors Wood must take priority over the provision of 96 homes which would be better located elsewhere, in a layout proposed by UDC in its submission version New Local Plan.

- b) Uttlesford District Council Housing Supply of 4.1 years, with a submitted Local Plan and policy areas map – these proposals conflict with the development plan as a whole.
- c) Countryside Protection Zone – The study supporting the submission version CPZ is found in Weston Homes (WH) Appendix CC. Page 16 figure 11 states that the Bull Field/Smiths Green parcel of the CPZ is important 'to protect settlement identity'. This is in line with the previous 2016 LUC CPZ Study, the policy wording of ULP Policy S8 and the enhanced wording for the new Local Plan CPZ policy.

- d) Submitted new Local Plan allocation Land East of Takeley for 1500 homes – See attached UDC Policy 10 relating to respecting the ‘unique and special characteristics of the Takeley area’, Appendix 3a housing allocation template, which shows the area of Bull Field to be protected as open space, to protect the settlement identity and Policy 10a new policy wording for the housing allocation.
- It is clear that this proposal conflicts with UDC’s allocated development, which recognises the importance of the agrarian setting and ancient woodland and has moved all housing from the areas shown in the Regulation 18 consultation. In the Regulation 19 layout there is no housing in Bull Field, adjacent to the ancient woodland or in the setting of the conservation area.
- e) Smith’s Green Conservation Area Designation in November 2023 (see WH appendix Z) - An extract of the Conservation Area Appraisal explains the significance of the setting, which would be severely impacted by the proposed development, ‘The Conservation Area draws significance from its setting, particularly to the north. The flat and open fields permit views when travelling to and from the Conservation Area, here the rural character is prominent and particularly important. The surrounding agricultural land has a close functional relationship to Smiths Green and contributes to our experience of the Conservation Area, including our understanding of the surrounding landscape and tranquillity.’
- f) Constraint on housing delivery of the approved 40 homes development S62A/2023/0027 (approved in March 2024)- No permission has been granted for the access route, which is subject to a s16 application to the Secretary of State for permission to remove an area of Registered Village Green for access to the approved housing site. No timetable has been set for the decision and it cannot be considered a foregone conclusion that access can be created in Smiths Green for the approved 40 homes. The Parish Council has stated that access to the 40 homes should be made via the new Local Plan housing allocation site for 1500 homes immediately adjacent to the east of the 40 homes development.
- This constraint is also relevant to delivery of the proposed works to create 3m wide surfaced foot and cycle paths through the Village Green protected verges, which would need permission from the Secretary of State in a separate process, with no reason to assume that those changes would be approved.
- g) The new NPPF (19th December 2023) – The proposals conflict with paragraph 187 b) ‘recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;’ and paragraph 193 c) ‘development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists’
- The NPPF states in paragraph 215. ‘Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal...’ and in our view, the harm to the setting of the conservation area outweighs the public benefits of this proposal. This development would also compromise the mitigation in relation to UDC’s allocation of 1500 homes in the emerging Local Plan, where this area would be protected as open space.
- h) Lack of adequate mitigation for Takeley – The developer has offered no financial contribution to the village whereas all other proposals of this size make s106 provision for community centre and sports provision in the village. Furthermore, there has been no progress in the take-up of the approved health building in the Weston Homes industrial

estate at 7 Acres which was offered in mitigation of the 7 Acres development. There are no doctor or clinic services in Takeley and residents need to drive to Gt Dunmow, Stansted or Bishops Stortford. Community and sports services are insufficient for the growing community and Weston Homes fails to address these shortfalls in its proposals.

Please consider our comments in addition to those previously submitted and made at the hearing. Should another hearing be arranged, Takeley Parish Council would like the opportunity to speak against the development.

Kind regards

Jackie

Jackie Deane
Clerk to the Council

Working days Monday to Thursday

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