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Sent: 10 March 2025 19:08
To: Section 62A Applications <section62a@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Subject: Representation: S62A/2025/0077 – Land West of High Street, Stebbing

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As a resident of Stebbing for over 30 years, I object to the application to build 28 houses on the 2 parcels of land west of the High Street for the following reasons:

1. An almost identical Application (UTT/23/2496/FUL) has previously been rejected by Uttlesford District (UD) Planning supported by written objections from the Stebbing Parish Council and over 100 residents. The reasons for refusal still apply.

- Three main reasons for rejection were namely, i) harmful impact on the setting of the motte castle, a scheduled monument, and on the Grade II* Stebbing Park and the village Conservation Area, by encroaching on open land contributing to its prominence. ii) the proposal lies outside the development boundaries of the Local Plan (LP) and is building in the countryside that will harm its intrinsic beauty and character and iii) unacceptable development of designated Local Green Space.
- Despite Montare's submission directly to the Inspectorate these 3 reasons for refusal STILL APPLY; nothing in their plan mitigates the negative impact of the proposed development on the motte, Stebbing Park or the Conservation Area, or on the intrinsic beauty of the countryside/Local Green Space.

2. Montare's rationale for resubmission at this time is a ploy use the updated NPPF (Dec 2024), bypassing the UD refusal and appeal process, and is a cynical attempt to undermine the current Stebbing Neighbourhood Plan (SNP) adopted in 2022 and endorsed by 97% of the 551 residents who voted. The SNP remains valid and should be given full weight in decision making until an updated version can be made.

- Montare argue that the newly updated UD Local Plan (2021-2041) allocates 109 additional houses to Stebbing, thereby supporting the proposed development whilst ignoring the current SNP and wishes of the residents. Notably, this very recently assigned housing for Stebbing is not allocated until 2034 onwards! Furthermore, the current SNP does not allocate these 2 parcels of land as suitable locations for houses and in fact assigns them as Local Green Space.
- The SNP should be considered as valid until its update and given full weight in decision making. The Parish Council in conjunction with residents must be given time to plan for these future housing allocations and update the SNP accordingly. Stebbing residents recognise the need for additional housing in the village, suitable building plots will be identified and agreed via the appropriate planning activities. Housing will be allocated based on projected needs per the UD plan and by identifying and assigning suitable locations around the village. Approval of the new application without considering the current SNP undermines the fundamentals of local planning.
- Montare's cover letter also implies that their consultation in the village was positive and collaborative this is NOT TRUE and is misleading, given the sample size of 13 people who provided any comments (positive, negative and neutral - see Appendix 1 Planning Statement). Such statements should be given no weight as the plans do not reflect the wishes of the community.

3. Montare suggest that the 2 parcels of land proposed for development could be considered Grey Belt by not meeting the NPPF (Dec 2024) definition of Green Belt. This ignores

the NPPF's intent to preserve the character and settings of historic locations such as Stebbing. The Local Green Space designation of these parcels of land in the SNP should be upheld.

- The NPPF definition if taken literally as implied by Montare, focuses on towns to prevent urbanisation, and at face value does not appear to apply to rural villages such as Stebbing. However, the NPPF's intent should be seen in a wider context i.e. to prevent urbanisation and protect the countryside including in rural locations/villages, so should carry weight when determining if land can be considered Grey Belt.
- Green Belt definition 143d seeks to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns and 143b to prevent neighbouring towns from merging. While not a town, Stebbing is an historic village evolved from the hamlets of Bran End, Stebbing centre, Church End and Stebbing Green, the latter three all being conservation areas. Despite some infill in the 20th century, these hamlets have retained open spaces between them adding to Stebbing's special character and unique layout. The historic Grade II* Stebbing Park and the motte, along with the 2 parcels of land proposed for development are nestled between the village centre and Bran End and serve as the natural break to the west between these former hamlets. In fact the 2 parcels of land were part of the Stebbing Park estate until the early 1900s and so key to its setting; as noted in the UDC refusal and the objections raised by Historic England (letter dated 5-Mar-2025). As noted the SNP allocates the plan as Local Green Space.
- For all these reasons the SNP Local Green Space designation of these parcels of land should be upheld and rejected as possible Grey Belt, to maintain the historic setting in the village and prevent complete merging of the former hamlets.

4. The SNP designates the 2 parcels of land as Local Green Spaces that are also associated with important and protected views, thus highlighting their value and importance to the Stebbing Community, which should be respected. The proposed housing will have an irreversible impact on these Green Spaces.

- As already noted both parcels of land were part of the Stebbing Park deer park and as such are old meadows with many species of flora and fauna, also frequented by muntjac, buzzards and red kites; until the recent sale of the land to the current owner one meadow also grazed cattle, including rare breeds. Both meadows have public footpaths (#10, #12 and #21) running through them, so are already wonderful amenities for villagers who walk or jog and enjoy nature, as well as ramblers who come across the fields visiting Stebbing. Looking westward there are beautiful views across the Stebbing Brook valley particularly from the Downs and the entrance to Stebbing Park, these change with the seasons and have amazing sunsets year round. Walking the footpaths from the west into the village (12), or along the western boundary (10, 21) there are lovely views towards the Downs and Stebbing. Additionally footpath 21 has wonderful views of the castle motte/Mount in winter and in spring when it is covered with daffodils and other flowers, as well as eastwards over the field towards the hedgerow on the High Street. These are areas where buildings are less obvious and villagers can enjoy nature and the tranquillity of the countryside. The footpaths will by necessity run closer to properties and lose the openness.
- The proposed houses will irreversibly impact these green spaces and their treasured views, to the detriment of the wider community who enjoy and value them. The protected views of the SNP will be squeezed in between buildings, narrowed and drastically altered. Existing trees, shrubs and hedgerows will be ripped up and wildlife lost, replaced with buildings, driveways and a car park. Views from the footpaths to the Downs/High Street will never be the same, but dominated by new buildings, domestic paraphernalia and light pollution from the proposed large windows. The tranquillity of the open Green Space will be disrupted by family gatherings, BBQs and music on verandas particularly at weekends and no

longer be a good location to watch and enjoy wildlife. The green spaces being proposed in Montare's plan are contrived based on a planner's perception of village life with 'green gyms', and 'community compost yards'- these being more suited to urban development where residents do not have access to the true countryside and its benefits.

5. The proposed development will increase the risk of accidents on the Downs/High Street and at the school entrance and result in severe congestion at peak times.

- There are 4 proposed access points onto the Downs/High Street, 2 each are situated on either side of a blind bend located at the entrance to Stebbing Park; 1 access point which also doubles as the proposed car park entrance is located opposite the school entrance and close to the junction leading to Mount Fields. These additional access points on the Downs/High Street will increase the risk of accident, as cars enter/exit the developments and pedestrians try to cross the road, particularly during busy times. Cars and vans speed along the Downs/High Street and the blind bend hides parked cars and pedestrians from view.
- Montare acknowledges that the Downs/High Street is problematic with traffic and parked cars during school drop-off/pick-up times; the additional houses and proposed 23 car parking will only exacerbate and not alleviate this. The car park entrance will be in a notoriously difficult location being opposite the school entrance. This area will become even more dangerous because many cars will still park on both sides of the school entrance and along the High Street as parents seek 'quick exits'. Cars will compete exiting the school car park as well as the new car park opposite, with delivery vans, buses etc still trying to pass through at this time. On top of this the new car park will need parents and children to cross the High Street to/from the parking area and up to 23 cars to enter/exit the car park in a short space of time. This proposal will cause more chaos with frustrated drivers queuing to park/leave the location and increase the risk of serious accident particularly to school children.

5. The proposed house designs are not in keeping with the High Street or the Downs, and in particular with the houses in the nearby conservation area.

- Montare describes the house designs as similar to 'barns' or 'linked barns', with 'ample glazing', 'outdoor terraces' and 'extended roof canopies'; they also stress they will have the 'stunning views over the valley'. Such designs are not in keeping with the location on the High Street/the Downs where there are no barns or residential barns located in this part of Stebbing. Most are large 2 storey buildings, with steep pitched roofs, often with dark facias, having large glass fronts facing across the valley with balconies, terraces and canopies. They are UGLY and not in keeping with their surroundings particularly in such a large number, similarity in design, size and elevation; such buildings would be incongruous on the High Street/Downs where many houses are individual. Montare's brochure refers to 'stunning views' available from the terraces and upper floors; these will be for prospective occupants only, at the detriment of the villagers walking, cycling or driving along the Downs/High Street, as well as the current householders opposite the new properties, who will lose their existing views and see the backs of these large properties. The residents of Falcons will be severely impacted by Plot B.

6. The proposed facilities do not enhance the village or provide any new benefits to current residents. Montare describes the proposed benefits to the village as: offering new green space, a forest school, as linking the village, a car park, and a potential area for village events.

These do not offer any new benefits to the Stebbing community, which is already well served with such facilities; we really don't need them!

- There are several existing amenity areas within Stebbing: the largest is the Mill Lane cricket ground with its pavilion and playground – this has hosted village fetes and national celebrations for many years and is extremely suitable for all open air community functions, being a large flat field easily accessed by foot from both ends of the village, with toilets and a kitchen in the pavilion; a recent event coped with over a 100 classic cars with ease! At the lower end of the cricket ground a woodland walk has been created in existing old woodland, villagers are contributing by planting bulbs and wild flowers and placing nesting boxes etc. The cricket ground links to several footpaths in both directions through wooded areas and along the length of Stebbing Brook, which in some places is already accessible to the public. Stebbing Primary School has a Forest School ethos with facilities in its large sports field, as well as access to private meadows in the village (see School Website). Stebbing is also lucky to be well served by footpaths as well as byways in and around the parish, many of which are through ancient woods, along rivers or field boundaries, as well as some quiet lanes; ramblers, joggers, dog walkers, horses and cyclists are regularly seen using all these facilities. So residents young and old are well served by existing natural amenities that permit exercise and the enjoyment of nature.

In summary, I strongly object to this planning application; critically the plans have already been refused by UD and the reasons for refusal still apply. The proposals are not in alignment with the SNP and offer no significant benefits to the village and will be detrimental to the wider community not just during the building phase, but will irreversibly change the character and setting and our enjoyment of our historic village. I urge you to come and visit Stebbing to visit our historic sites and see for yourself our local Green Space and its wonderful views to fully understand why this application should be refused.

Shiona Lincoln