



UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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The Planning Inspectorate
Room 3/J Kite Wing,
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Bristol,
BS1 6PN

Date: 16th April 2025

Your ref: S62A/2024/0075

Our ref: UTT/25/0101/PINS

Please ask for: [REDACTED]
email: [REDACTED]

Dear Major Case Work Team,

Town and Country Planning (Section 62A Applications) (Procedure and Consequential Amendments) Order 2013 (as amended).

Consultation on S62A/2024/0075 - Reserved matters (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale); pursuant to outline planning permission ref: S62A/2023/0031 for the erection of up to 55 dwellings, associated landscaping and open space, with access from Knight Park

Land North Of Knight Park, Thaxted Road, Saffron Walden

Thank you for your email dated 2 April 2025 advising of the additional information sent by the applicant for consideration. The LPA have now had sight of the supplementary details and Officers provide the following response to the applicants' rebuttal letter dated 28 March 2025.

Highways

In terms of the feasibility of the bus turning arrangements, Officers defer the Inspector to ECC Highways comments. It is noted that condition 20 of the outline consent requires the Developer to submit details relating to the bus facilities on site prior to first occupation. These are not necessarily a requirement to be resolved within the parameters of the current reserved matters application, but are a relevant consideration as layout is a reserved matter currently under determination.

It is noted from the applicants covering letter that discussions have been had with the Highway Authority, and it is the applicants' view the details submitted, as contained within the Technical Note confirms the development layout is bound by the design and principles set out in the consented scheme. Officers appreciate the position of both parties, but ultimately if changes are required to the consented access, this would be outside the parameters of the current reserved matters application.



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Flood Risk and Site Drainage

Officers have reviewed the response to the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), as per appendix 4. Appendix 4(a) provides a more detailed Drainage Strategy, while appendix 4(b) outlines the position of the applicant in relation to a manhole schedule.

Regarding appendix 4(a), the applicant maintains that their consultants have confirmed all plots, driveways and other impermeable areas will drain into the proposed sewer network, but also state they are not able to provide the exact connections of above ground drainage as this is reserved for detailed design stage. For appendix 4(b) it is further stated that the attenuation for the site has been designed using 'source control' storage estimates using the approved discharge rates at outline stage (1 l/s). Ultimately regarding the modelled manholes and pipes the applicant is confident the layout is deliverable and goes on to state that during the detailed design stage a network model will be produced to confirm the finer details, such as, accurate impermeable areas, plot drainage connections, pipe sizes and gradients to ensure there is no increase flood on site.

The LPA will defer to the LLFA for their views on the connections to the sewer network and the whether the site is deliverable. With regards to the details of manhole schedules being secured by condition, if the LLFA agrees, then Officers are broadly supportive of this approach.

At Planning Committee Members raised concerns as to whether two attenuation basins were necessary. The applicant states that routing of the discharged water between these basins facilitates enhanced filtration and to ensure the basins are sited to retain water effectively with minimal earthworks. On these points, Officers do not have any further comment, but again will default to the LLFA for their views on site drainage.

Connectivity

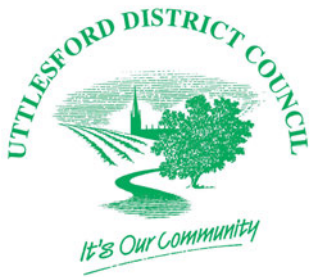
The comments regarding connectivity within the site are noted, particularly the provisions to connect with existing public right of way network and connections to Tiptofts Lane and connections to Knight Park. However, the Committee Report does discuss the limitations of connectivity within the development characterised by a series of dead-ends resulting in a disjointed development which limits the potential for better wayfinding within the site itself.

It is acknowledged that the Committee Report mentions that the lack of connectivity is not severe enough to warrant a formal objection which is still maintained. However, this was written with the intention that in isolation the Council would not object on this basis alone. Notwithstanding the above, this point and together with other issues were highlighted to Members for their consideration.

Evidently, Members have taken a view on the details presented and consider that connectivity within the site ought to be improved.

Parking

Officers do not wish to present any additional comments on parking other than those referenced both in the Committee Report and in the update Response Letter, dated 14 March.



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However, in response to the comments on tandem parking arrangements, it is noted the applicant states that the Uttlesford District Wide Design Code (2024) pre-dates the outline consent which Officers agree. Nonetheless, the Supplementary Planning Document is still a material consideration for the current reserved matters application.

Furthermore, again in relation to tandem parking, the applicant continues to maintain that the removal of this arrangement would 'potentially be unviable' but there has been little evidence to justify this stance.

In addition, it is acknowledged the Committee Report mentions that the provision of triple tandem parking is not severe enough to warrant a formal objection which is still maintained. Again, this was written with the intention that in isolation the Council would not object on this basis alone. Notwithstanding the above, this point and together with other issues were highlighted to Members for their consideration.

Evidently, Members have taken a view on the details presented and consider that triple tandem parking is not characteristic of good design and site layout, and Members are entitled to take a firmer view on this point.

Character Areas

Officers agree that it would be appropriate to secure a suitably worded planning condition so that the Local Planning Authority are able to approve materials for Knight Park and Rural Edge character areas prior to commencement of development.

While this is agreed, Officers consider it might also be appropriate to have a condition for all the materials be agreed for consistency purposes between the three character areas proposed.

Landscaping

Officers agree that it would be appropriate to secure a suitably worded planning condition so that the Local Planning Authority are able to approve landscaping details within the development prior to commencement of development.

Apartment Block Heights and Focal Building

Officers position on the key buildings have been referenced in the Committee Report and was echoed by Members within the Planning Committee meeting.

The applicant within their rebuttal letter advises the Inspector that landmark buildings have been incorporated at gateway and key locations within the development. They go on to state that the apartment blocks near the site access features bespoke dormers and dropped eaves alongside the use of dark stained boarding to provide wayfinding and welcomes visitors off Thaxted Road and into the Knight Park Character Area.

The justification of the flatted accommodation as focal buildings is noted, although Officers do not consider the design rationale goes far enough to justify these larger buildings as focal building. To reiterate the sentiment from the Committee Report, Officers do not consider that



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the scale of the building should be regarded focal buildings simply due to the scale of the buildings. Officers consider that a design opportunity has been missed.

As noted at Committee, Members regarded the heights of the flats as 3 storeys, rather than 2.5 storeys as suggested by the applicant. Typically a half storey represents limited accommodation within the said storey. However, in this instance, the floor plans of the flats clearly state there is a second floor of apartment blocks A and B. The applicant provides sections plans at appendix 5 to demonstrate the heights are 2.5 storeys by virtue of the ceiling heights being a maximum of 1.5m from the inside. This is appreciated, however, the floor plans clearly demonstrate there are 3 full floors within each apartment block.

Extract of Proposed Flat Block A below



Water Pumping Station

Officers agree that it would be appropriate to secure a suitably worded planning condition so that the Local Planning Authority are able to approve details of the Water Pumping Station prior to commencement of development. If the Inspector is minded to approve, then Officers will defer the Inspector to the response letter dated 14th March 2025.



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Location of LEAP

Members had raised concerns with the location of the Locally Equipped Areas of Play (LEAP), which had not been previously highlighted as a concern by Officers. Officers do consider this is a legitimate concern expressed by Members since the LEAP is situated north of the Recycling Centre and likely to impact the quality of the outdoor space with respect to noise implications.

The natural surveillance points are noted, however, Officers support the view that the location of the LEAP could be better located so that the space is not undermined by commercial activity.

ECC Waste and Minerals Planning response

The LPA do not have specific comments on the applicants' discussion with ECC Waste and Minerals.

However, Officers note from the dialogue between both parties that it is evident that the area north east of the recycling facility has been intentionally designed so that housing is not featured within this area due to the noise implications. Appendix 6 attached is a plan demonstrating the noise contours overlayed with the parameter plans. The applicant within their rebuttal letter references Tetra Tech, the applicants' noise consultants, states *'Importantly, the proposed houses are outside of those areas shown in red and orange, denoting the higher noise levels in the noise modelling exercise'*.

The LPA do not wish to comment on the imposed condition from ECC Waste and Minerals Planning, although, to reiterate the above concerns raised by Members the location of the LEAP is directly situated within the orange and red areas denoting the higher noise implications.

Extract of appendix 6 below (Parameter Plans, Noise Overlay Plan)





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Summary

Taking into the above comments the Council as Local Planning Authority **is not supportive** of the above mentioned development.

Without prejudice to the Council's position and case put forward above, if the Inspector is mindful to grant approval, could the suggested conditions be taken into consideration.

See Appendix 1 for the meeting minutes following the UDC Planning Committee on 12 March 2025.

Yours Sincerely

[Redacted Signature]

[Redacted Name]
Director of Planning

To consider making observations to the Planning Inspectorate in respect of UTT/25/0101/PINS.

Minutes:

The Senior Planning Officer presented a S62A application seeking reserved matters permission for up to 55 dwellings with associated landscaping, open space with the main vehicle access to the site from Knight Park retail site. As the principle of the development had been established at outline stage along with access arrangements; only matters relating to appearance, scale, layout and landscaping were to be considered.

The overall layout of the scheme and connectivity within the development could be improved, although officers did not consider these significant. The housing mix and tenure were well distributed throughout the site. There was little distinction between the Rural Edge and Knight Park Character Areas, but a condition had been requested to vary the materials palette to provide visual interest. She said that subject to conditions, and with the details available, officers viewed that matters relating to appearance, scale, layout and landscaping were broadly appropriate.

She said that as this was a PINS application, UDC were acting as a consultee and could submit observations to PINS.

In response to questions from Members, officers:

- Said that in respect of para 14.8.3, no comments had been received in respect of SuDS details but that these would go direct to PINS. SuDS comments were considered to be crucial. UDC was working with Essex CCC regarding drainage issues.
- Recognised that Tiptofts Lane was a water basin shallow stream.
- Said that drawings had been provided for blocks claiming them to be two and a half storeys rather than three. Three storey blocks are contrary to the Design Code within the approved outline.
- The proposed two attenuation ponds could be considered excessive, but this would be reviewed by SuDS.
- Confirmed the applicant to be as stated in the report.
- Said that access considerations had already been dealt with at outline stage.
- Outlined the make-up of materials.
- Confirmed that Flood Risk Zone 1 represented the lowest level of risk.
- Said that an additional condition could be suggested in respect of further planting to be carried out.

Members discussed:

- Their overall disapproval and disappointment with the scheme, together with the unimaginative poor design.
- The fact that this application was not in accordance with the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan.
- The need to focus on the SuDS views, when expressed.
- Concerns regarding the elevation of three storey buildings at the top of a hill, together with the fact that the alleged 2.5 storey buildings are seen as focal buildings is unsatisfactory.
- The need for pedestrian footways with the general lack of connectivity.
- Management of noise and odours near the Recycling Centre. Much of this had been picked up in proposed Condition 7.
- The need to ensure a good balance of materials.
- The need for further boundary planting to take place and that it should be at the start of any works.
- Triple tandem parking arrangements.
- The need for light pollution to be considered.
- The proposed play area being re-sited as the location was considered poor.
- Access to what was considered to be an isolated public open space.
- The need for the water pumping station to have sufficient screening to reduce noise and condition 9 (as outlined in the addendum list) will need amending to reflect this.
- Highways concerns re management of traffic at the junction with Thaxted Road; this would be picked up with Highways outside of this application.

Members again expressed their strong disapproval and disappointment with the scheme, together with the unimaginative poor design. They were content for all the above views to be put to PINS, together with the suggested list of eight conditions were they to be mindful to approving the reserved matters scheme.