

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 02 July 2025 18:27
To: Section 62A Applications <section62a@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Cc: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Subject: Section62A/2025/0107 - former Friends School, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 3RB

Dear Sir/Madam

We wish to make representation on the above application by Chase New Homes (CNH) for the Phase 2 development at the former Walden/Friends School site. I set out our comments below in bullet points for ease.

- We made extensive comments on the previous (refused) application by CNH on this site, and our position has not changed from that time.
- We used the sports (football) pitches, MUGA and Sports Hall extensively and continuously, over a period of many years, right up to the point where CNH acquired the site, and closed off all access to it.
- The pitches were only ever used by our football Club outside of normal school hours – i.e. evenings and weekends. We had an excellent relationship with Friends School. It is factually incorrect, and disingenuous, for the applicant to suggest that the facilities were only ever available during school hours.
- The pitches were always impeccably maintained by the School. They were the best pitches in Saffron Walden by some distance, and were flat, and well drained. They were very, very rarely “unavailable” for us to use. It would be completely incorrect to indicate that the pitch quality was poor, although of course that is not the case now since they have been neglected completely for several years.
- Our club has over 1,000 registered players and this coming season (2025/26) we will have 84 affiliated teams. This is against a background of circa 30 teams in the Club at the point that CNH closed the facility. This growth in football participation reflects the exponential growth in the population in the Town and District.
- This growth corresponds with a significant net reduction in facilities over the last ten years or so, including of course the loss of the Friends School site.
- We have multiple potential new players on our “waiting list”, and the only barrier to our further expansion is a lack of playing facilities.
- In particular, we have an acute need for U13/U14 sized 11v11 football pitches in Saffron Walden.
- Prior to the submission of the previous (refused) application for the site, CNH had some limited dialogue with our Club but then cut off all contact and proceeded with an application which almost totally ignored the advice that we had provided willingly.
- Immediately following the Refusal, CNH contacted us again and we had one meeting with their representative, at which we made comments on our needs and gave advice on the pitch requirements (including specifically the size we most needed), the changing pavilion, and parking provision.
- Unfortunately, all this advice has been ignored. CNH appear to have simply repeated their strategy of having limited dialogue with us (presumably to give the impression of a “consultation”) but then chose to almost ignore our comments fully in the application that follows.
- The application as it stands does not provide any real benefit to us for the following reasons:

1. The two football pitches indicated are for U11 and U12 ages. This is a small-sided format of 9v9 players, and a smaller pitch size of 80 yards x 50 yards. This does not reflect what we very clearly discussed with CNH. The format of pitch shown is very restrictive and cannot be used by other ages. It is, quite simply, not what we need.
2. There are just 25 parking spaces shown. This is grossly insufficient for two 11v11 or even 9v9 pitches where, realistically, we would expect there to be at least 40 to 50 cars for two games being run concurrently.
3. The changing facility is not appropriate for U11/U12 football and would be under utilised by this age group. A simplified layout is preferred and would be more cost effective for future running and maintenance purposes. We made this clear to CNH, but they have ignored this.

Overall, the significant loss of football facilities has been hard for us to deal with and this proposal would not make any meaningful difference to our ability to offer football in Saffron Walden. We did discuss the possibility of a S106 contribution, ringfenced to be used towards the cost of a new 3G artificial football pitch in Saffron Walden. However, the cost of delivering such a facility is in excess of £1m in 2025 prices. We understand (anecdotally) that a figure of £75k has been proposed – this is grossly disproportionate to the actual cost of a new facility, and to the effect that the “loss” of the grass pitches has had, and will continue to have.

In short, we object in the strongest possible terms to the loss of the best grass football pitch facilities in Saffron Walden, and to the derisory proposals for replacing them with two small format pitches, an almost pointless changing facility, inadequate parking provision and a frankly insulting S106 Contribution towards the cost of a new 3G AGP.

The pitches were of a high quality, well maintained, always available outside school hours and were extensively used. The only reason that they have not been used since 2017 is that CNH blocked all access when they acquired the site. Demand and need is higher than it has ever been. Any suggestion to the contrary is deceitful or, at best, ill informed.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Clare MBE

Club Secretary

Saffron Walden Community Youth FC

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