

**The Town and Country Planning (Section 62A  
Applications) (Hearings) Rules 2013**

**ISSUES REPORT  
and  
OUTLINE AGENDA**

**Application Reference No:** S62A/2025/0107

**Designated Authority:** Uttlesford District Council (the Council)

**Applicant:** Chase New Homes

**Description of proposal:** Erection of 75no. dwellings with associated infrastructure and landscaping. Provision of playing fields and associated clubhouse.

**Site address:** Former Friends School Field, Mount Pleasant Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 3EB.

**Report by appointed person:** Grahame J Kean B.A. (Hons), Solicitor (HRA), MIPROW, MRTPI.

**Hearing to be held on:** 8 August 2025 at 10:00am

**Hearing location:** Council Chamber, Uttlesford District Council, London Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 4E.

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**Procedural matters**

1. The application was validated on 27 May 2025 under s62A Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA90) which allows for applications directly to the Planning Inspectorate where a local planning authority (LPA) has been so designated by the Secretary of State. A hearing is deemed appropriate in this case which is a major application. It will be conducted in accordance with Town and Country Planning (Section 62A Applications) (Hearings) Rules 2013.
2. The application does not include an Environmental Statement since an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required, as confirmed by a letter from PINS dated 4 June 2025 explaining that, in terms of the EIA regulations, the proposal is not likely to have significant effects on the environment.

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3. The notifications allowed for initial responses by 4 July 2025. All comments have been provided and published on the gov.uk website relating to this case. This can be found at this link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/section-62a-planning-application-s62a20250107-former-friends-school-field-mount-pleasant-road-saffron-walden-cb11-3eb#consultees>
  4. The appointed person has made an unaccompanied visit from public view points in the vicinity of the site and intends to make an accompanied inspection from within the application site, either during or after the hearing.

## **General policy background**

5. Decisions on planning applications are made in accordance with the development plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan comprises the Uttlesford Local Plan 2005 (ULP), Essex Minerals Local Plan, Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan and several neighbourhood development plans, the most relevant of which is the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan (SWNP) made by the Council on 11 October 2022.
6. The relevant ULP policies appear to be Policies S1; GEN1; GEN2; GEN3; GEN4; GEN5; GEN6; GEN7; GEN8; ENV1; ENV2; ENV3; ENV4; ENV8; ENV11; ENV12; ENV13; ENV14; ENV15; H3; H9; H10; LC1; and LC2.
7. The relevant SWNP policies appear to be Policies SW1; SW2; SW3; SW4; SW10; SW11; SW12; SW13; SW14; SW15; SW16; SW17; and SW19.
8. The new local plan is an emerging document, submitted to the Secretary of State on 18 December 2024 but it has not been tested at examination.
9. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023 contains relevant national planning policies. It is an important material consideration. Its central aim is to achieve sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) supports the NPPF. There is an increased emphasis on good design as set out in the more recent iterations of the NPPF.
10. As the proposal is in a conservation area, I must have special regard to section 72(1) of Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Further, in considering whether to grant permission for development affecting a listed building or its setting special regard must be had to the desirability of preserving it or its setting or features of special architectural or historic interest.

## **The proposal**

11. The application site is in the settlement of Saffron Walden and the total site area is some 6.72ha. The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of 75no.residential dwellings with associated infrastructure and landscaping including delivery of a multi-sport pitch and associated clubhouse. It has the following features:
  - 75 dwellings (a mix of flats, semi-detached and detached dwellings) at a density of 11 dwellings per ha;
  - 40% (30 units) will be affordable (70% rent, 30% shared ownership): a mix of 8x1 bed flats, 17x2 bed flats, 32x3 bed houses and 20x 4+ bed dwellings;

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- 74% of the market housing as three-bedroom houses;
  - 17% of all dwellings would be M4(3) compliant (13 units);
  - multi-use sports pitch (full size cricket pitch in summer and either 1 adult-size football pitch or 2 youth-size football pitches in the winter), club house and 182 ancillary car parking spaces;
  - access roads and parking provision throughout the development; and
  - public realm improvements including landscaping and planting 146 new trees.
12. Vehicular access to the site would be from Mount Pleasant Road via two internal roads into the site. Pedestrians would use this access as well as a new access in the north-east corner of the site, an access just north of the club house car park and into the housing development in Greenways to the south of the site.
13. The proposal seeks to address concerns raised on a previous application Ref: S62A/2024/0057. Essential differences include that:
- the current proposal seeks a reduction from 91 to 75 dwellings;
  - the previously proposed planting of 101 trees is increased to 146 new trees;
  - the 30 ancillary parking spaces are increased to 182 parking spaces; and
  - changes to the layout include two new pedestrian routes.
14. Concerns were raised in the previous application over what was seen as:
- limited planting and grass amenity areas on the main road frontage.
  - design of houses with very little articulation or contrast.
  - limited information on materials.
  - high level of parking given the accessible location.
  - The undesirable gated element
  - lack of play space.
  - housing mix failing to meet local housing need.
  - biodiversity net gain (BNG) not adequately secured.
  - loss of playing fields.

### **Consideration by the Council**

15. The Council's Planning Committee considered the application on 2 July 2025 including an Officer's Report. It objected to the proposal, commenting on:
- harm to the Saffron Walden Conservation Area (SWCA);
  - lack visitor parking and coach parking for the sports facilities;
  - loss of outdoor sports provision;
  - clustering of affordable homes; and
  - the housing mix being out of line with established needs.

### **Main Issues**

16. The main issues appear to be:
- whether the site is an acceptable location for housing having regard to open space and playing fields;

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- the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area including design and layout, having particular regard to the SWCA;
  - whether the mix of housing is appropriate;
  - the effect of the proposal on ecology and biodiversity;
  - sufficiency of green open space for informal recreation;
  - the effect of the proposal on living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties having particular regard to noise and disturbance;
  - the effect of the proposal on highway safety;
  - the effect of the proposal on flooding;
  - whether, having regard to the supply of housing within the locality, what is known as the 'tilted balance' set out in Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF applies, and if so, the effect of its application in this case; and
  - the overall planning balance.

### **Legal agreement**

17. A draft unilateral undertaking has been submitted by the applicant. The officers' report commented on the obligations that the proposal would need to provide against. The Council is expected to work constructively with the applicant to ensure any section 106 obligation is completed within the required timescales.
18. The Council should submit a document detailing how any monies or other obligations sought in a s106 document meet the test set out in Paragraph 58 of NPPF. These are: "58. Planning obligations must only be sought where they meet all of the following tests: a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; b) directly related to the development; and c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development."
19. The planning obligations test compliance document should be submitted no later than **Friday 1 August 2025**. This should demonstrate how any monies sought for infrastructure align with policies of the adopted development plan. It should also include a short section on the justification for the affordable housing contained within any submitted obligation under s106 of the TCPA.

### **Conditions**

20. The Council and some consultees have recommended or suggested conditions if the application is to be permitted. Without prejudice, these will be discussed at the Hearing as appropriate. Any discussion of their merits does not indicate that a decision has been made on the application, but only that the conditions suggested are to be assessed as to whether they are necessary, relevant, enforceable, precise and reasonable.
21. It would aid proceedings if, without prejudice to anyone's position, the Council and Applicant provide a final draft of suggested conditions to the appointed person via the Case Officer before the Hearing opens. These will be published on the gov.uk website. These should be provided no later than **Friday 1 August 2025**.

*Grahame Kean*

INSPECTOR



# Planning Inspectorate

## Outline Agenda

**Application Reference No:** S62A/2025/0107

**Hearing to be held on:** Friday 8 August 2025

**Hearing Location:** Uttlesford District Council Offices, Saffron Walden

*'5.1.2. In the event that a hearing is required its purpose will be for the Inspector to allow any who wish to make oral representations and for the Inspector to put questions to address any points of fact or outstanding queries they may have. It is not a forum for parties to seek to test the evidence of others through cross-examination or direct questioning.'*<sup>1</sup>

1. **Inspector's opening** – including confirmation of main issues.
2. **Oral representations** - made by those who have specifically requested to speak at the representation stage.

Approximate time limits for speaking (at discretion of the Inspector)	
Members of the public	3 minutes (each)
Councillors	5 minutes (each)
Statutory Consultees	10 minutes (each)
Non-statutory consultees	5 minutes (each)
The Council	15 minutes
The applicant	30 minutes)

NB: interested parties (eg neighbouring occupiers or local interest groups) may find it more effective and efficient use of their time to co-ordinate any oral representations.

3. **Questions from the Inspector**
4. **Conditions Session** – without prejudice
5. **Closing and any site arrangements**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-applications-process-section-62a-authorities-in-special-measures/procedural-guidance-for-section-62a-authorities-in-special-measures>