

QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

TO THE PLANNING COMMITTEE ON 3rd December 2024

Item 6 – 22/00721/FUL – Land Adjacent 14 Creekview Road, South Woodham Ferrers, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 5GU

Statement from Mr B

I would like to submit the following points in opposition to this proposal:

- 1). There is no need for additional housing stock in SWF given that 2000+ houses are planned to be built on radar hill very shortly.
- 2) successive occupants of 14 Creekview have applied for permission to build over the past 25 years, all of which have been for similar numbers and sizes of property, with rejections in each case. This latest application is no different so why should the outcome be any different as nothing has changed.
- 3) there exists two other green spaces with ponds in SWF, none of which have been built upon and all of which remain to be enjoyed by local residents. Additionally the ability to look over and enjoy these spaces provides a price premium to those surrounding properties, which was reflected in the purchase prices.

Question from Mr and Mrs W

We have lived here since 1982 when our house was first built. Ours & several others were built around the pond & green open space with the benefit of seeing ducks on the pond and endless wildlife. Which was then an advertising flagship for S.W.F . The pond and green open space was fenced off against our wishes with the pre-tense to stop children falling into the pond so why now has the potential development included a play area still near to a pond. Are children's lives less valued now than they were then ?

Why did they not replace the supposedly damaged trees with T.P.O's on them as requested by the council?

The pond over the years being reduced and reduced was this once again the beginning of the end ?

Also land water rainfall drainage pipes from houses 18 & 20 have been blocked by the levelling of the ground that used to be banked.

This land was never meant to be build on and should not be allowed to do so now.

Statement from Mrs B

Intro:

Thank you chair. My name is xxxx and I am the agent for this application.

Discussion

I am presenting a scheme tonight which is a culmination of robust collaboration between officers and the applicant which has addressed and resolved every planning issue presented to us in full. I would like to publicly thank Katherine and her colleagues for their role in the planning process. They have held us to account but undoubtedly their scrutiny and input has resulted in the highest quality scheme being presented to members tonight.

It is accepted that the only reason the previous appeal was dismissed was due to the loss of the existing trees which whilst mostly unprotected, formed part of the established character of the area. The current proposal seeks to retain all but 3 category C trees with an additional 4 trees to be planted, thereby maintaining the woodland character.

Whilst the Inspector never raised an issue regarding the removal of the pond in its entirety, the proposal seeks to retain and reshape this manmade feature which will benefit local wildlife. The proposal will achieve 10% biodiversity net gain on site.

The 6 units are well designed in keeping with the established character of the area. Please note that the site is a private garden which the owner is struggling to financially maintain and the proposal will not result in the loss of any public open space.

Each dwelling has been carefully designed to ensure that it will not impact any neighbouring amenity in terms of loss of outlook or sense of enclosure. Safeguarding privacy has been a priority for all with windows carefully positioned to prevent overlooking. Separation distances are a minimum of 16.7m from the nearest element of the neighbouring properties.

Highways safety is essential and the proposal has been designed to ensure all parking spaces can be safely accessed and egressed in full compliance with minimum space standards and emergency and refuse vehicles can safely enter and exit the site. In fact, the vehicular entrance arrangements were recently updated following a robust highways safety audit to ensure that both pedestrian and vehicular access is of the highest standards with visibility levels maximised.

Conclusion

We consider that our proposal complies with national and local planning policies in full and we kindly ask Members to support our scheme tonight which will provide 6no. high quality family units for the benefit of the borough. Thank you.

Statement from Mr S

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address you today.

This development has been a long time in the making. My friend, xxx The applicant, a devoted community and charitable champion, has invested significant time, effort, and resources to bring us to this stage. Today, we stand here with the hope that this application will be approved by my esteemed friends in this room.

At every step of this process, the applicant and the planning team have collaborated exceptionally well with council officers. I want to extend my sincere gratitude to them for their guidance and support in bringing this project to fruition. This proposed development is a modest yet meaningful initiative that will deliver high-quality, affordable housing—something critically needed in our community, especially in the current housing climate.

It's worth noting that this project reflects the generosity and vision of xxxx. He has gone above and beyond to ensure this development addresses the housing needs of the community while maintaining high standards of design and quality. This is more than just a housing project; it's a contribution to the well-being and future of local residents.

Importantly, this development is on private land and does not encroach on any green spaces, making it a sustainable and conscientious initiative. It's a point of pride for all involved that this project represents a fantastic opportunity to meet local housing needs without compromising the environment.

I know that council officers, alongside many others, recognize the value of this development. With your support today, we can move forward in creating a beautiful space that serves the community and helps address the urgent need for affordable housing.

Thank you, and we encourage you to approve this application to make this vision a reality.

Statement from Mr C

It is pleasing to note that the recommendation of the Planning Officer is for approval; this recommendation supports the fact that the spurious objections are largely baseless and in all cases unsubstantiated.

I want to reiterate that the area of land under discussion is private property; the plot is a fenced and gated residential garden for the sole use of the owners of property at 14 Creekview Road and not (never has been) 'open green space'. There is no public access or right of way, and the area is maintained at personal time and cost to the owner - just as any rear garden would be. As such, because this is private property, neither the local residents nor the local Town Council contribute to any form of maintenance as you might otherwise expect had it actually been public space to keep tidy and safe on a dense residential development such as South Woodham Ferrers.

This garden has until now been a welcome asset for a family living at 14 Creekview Road; whilst children grew up and played there the garden has always been maintained and made safe for their sole benefit, not to enhance any neighbouring property's outlook or value. It is with some regret that going forward, I will no longer have the time, resources, or desire to continue to maintain the space which is a considerable overhead. The ideal solution is to develop the space so that other families can benefit from new housing in an ideal location close to schools, the country park and town centre amenities. The Planning Inspectorate's recommendation to approve supports this plan.

In the event that the scheme does not go ahead, then, as previously advised, the boundary fencing will be upgraded to ensure better security and privacy, whilst the recreational (man made) pond will be removed / filled in to improve safety ie to negate the danger of accident / a trespasser falling in whilst this is left unmaintained and unmonitored. In essence, the space would be closed and left fallow / unattended for the foreseeable years to come.

Finally, thank you to the local Planning Inspectorate for their advice and feedback on this application as we worked with them to ensure that all policy and planning criteria has been met to their satisfaction.

Question from Mrs A

Why are Covenants put into place by Councils if they are not going to be adhered to / upheld? Why bother with them if they are going to be ignored.

IF, this application was to be approved, then I assume from this day forth "covenants" will be scraped completely by CCC on all properties that have a covenant on them. If you choose to ignore / discard a covenant on one property then you can no longer insist that they are adhered to on another property OR any future projects.

Chelmsford City Council ; OUR CHELMSFORD, OUR PLAN dated 6th December 2023.

Reminder of some comments from this document ;

Our greener and safer place will reduce energy and waste, protect the environment, and ensure safe and green public spaces. In July 2019, we declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency, and local action is underway to protect and grow green spaces and tackle habitat loss.

Protecting and enhancing wildlife, habitats and landscapes and connecting people with the built and natural environment.

Protect, expand and improve the quality and accessibility of green spaces, improving habitat and increasing biodiversity.

Promoting physical and mental wellbeing.

How can CCC put this in print for all to see .. "habitat loss" / "protect and enhance wildlife" / "natural environment" / "increase biodiversity" .. and then even consider to continue to entertain this application ??

Are CCC really going to destroy all that they are promoting??? ... all that they say they are trying to save?? !!

How can CCC boast wanting to promote "physical and mental wellbeing" for all when the wellbeing of the residents opposed to this constantly have this hanging over their heads??

We have been fighting one application or another for a number of years now ... 26 years in fact !! Every other application has been rejected.

This application seems to be making a complete and utter mockery of Our Chelmsford, Our Plan and therefore CCC should reject this and all future applications once and for all.

The mental wellbeing of the opposed residents will then truly be taken into consideration by CCC.

Title register EX399816 states ;

That the Transferees and their successors in title would not erect or cause to be erected on the land hereby transferred or any part thereof any building dwelling house garage greenhouse or any other building whatsoever but will keep the land hereby transferred as garden pond and open space.

The above Title Register statement which is in print for all to see should be upheld as a binding document. A statement that led the residents surrounding the pond when purchasing their properties, giving them assurance and piece of mind, that the written word was / still is ... standing.

Question from Mr A

Despite minimal changes to the application can the Council explain why the Officers have recommended approval . What has changed significantly to warrant a ' change of heart ' despite numerous rejected applications since 1998 by this Council , SWF Town Council and the Planning Inspectorate ?

How will approval NOT have a drastic effect on the current wildlife in and around the pond area and the wellbeing of those people whose properties surround this proposed development ?

Finally , the proposed houses are completely out of character with others on the Estate and will destroy a valuable Community Asset .

Will 4 new properties really have an effect on the Council's building targets ?

I would strongly object to the amendments that have been added and see no reason why this should alter my objection .

The reasons are as follows :

Is a playground really necessary when a large recent Community Play Area currently exists across the road ?

Who will maintain / monitor such a facility , particularly when it is proposed to be put close to a pond ?

Appears to be added to make the application seem more attractive !

The disturbance / reduction of the pond will surely have a devastating impact on the wildlife , flora & fauna and trees / shrubs that have developed over the years . I believe the City Council policy is to promote ' Green spaces ' and encourage biodiversity . To preserve not destroy

Finally , according to historic documents/ maps / plans , this area was designated as a Community Amenity and was never meant to be developed (ref. Covenants) . Previous applications have been rejected and still we are faced with applications with minor adjustments. This has been going on for very many years !!

Not only will this development be completely out of place to the existing housing stock, it will create many issues / problems for the existing residents and potential new ones. This application must be rejected as others have been beforehand

Statement from Mr D

As a resident of SWF for over 18 years I have watched as the town has slowly grown. I use the word slowly purposefully here as the town is also sadly dying. In short it is in desperate need of new homes for either sale or rent. New homes and development are the life blood of all communities, they bring new jobs, and new families to the town and in turn the economic benefits you'd expect to see from their participation into our community. As a parent of three children whom have grown up in the town it's been a my great sadness to see them have to leave due to the lack of new homes for purchase or rental. It's for this reason that I am in favour of this development. I wish it every success and hope to see more such developments within our community so that it can thrive and prosper once again. SWF is a great place to live, and deserves to be shared with others.

Item 7 – 21/01545/OUT– Land North of Warren House, Roxwell Road, Writtle, Chelmsford, Essex

Question from Mr S

In 2016 a Statement of Common Ground was signed by yourselves, by Essex County Council, by the developer. This included the commitment to provide traffic mitigation measures "through the village" of Writtle. This planning application does not include any such measures. It considers measures on Lordship Road only as far as the Writtle Surgery. the report of the Planning Officer acknowledges that "the development will result in additional private motor vehicles on the existing highway network". the impact of such additional traffic does not end at the Writtle Surgery but extends through the village, along Ongar Road, across the Green and beyond. Each are already used as "rat runs" to access A414 and A12. Why has your commitment not been honoured? The effect upon the environment of Writtle will be immensely detrimental.

Statement from Mr S

On behalf of the applicant, thank you for the opportunity for the three of us to address the committee this evening.

My name is xxx and I am the agent for the application and the planning consultant for the scheme. The site has a long planning history that stretches back more than ten years, starting with representations made at the beginning of the process to create the current local plan, resulting in the allocation of the site as a residential-led mixed-use scheme through Strategic Growth Site Policy 2. A masterplan was approved in early 2021 and the scheme presented to you this evening was submitted as an application for outline planning permission soon after. As you have already heard from our case officer, the application is in accordance with the allocation in the local plan and I thought it would be useful to highlight some areas where the proposal has expanded on what was secured by the masterplan document.

The application includes a detailed element for the first phase of just over 300 new homes in the south eastern corner, closest to the city centre, and leaves the balance to be addressed through the reserved matters at a later date. This secures the infrastructure needed for access to the site, including improved connections to Writtle and the city centre, and footbridge links to Avon Road and Trent Road so that residents have access to the nearby shops and school as soon as they move in. The neighbourhood centre, primary school, playing fields and healthcare centre will follow soon after and triggers in the Section 106 Agreement will ensure that they are delivered in a timely manner so that the existing infrastructure is not stretched by extra demand from the new residents.

We have also worked with the council to revise the provision of play areas. The masterplan envisaged pieces of equipment dotted throughout the site but we have changed to two large play areas to serve all age groups, with one alongside the sports pitches and the other created by expanding the existing provision behind Avon Road so that it is ready for the first occupation of the new homes. Access will be from the northern footbridge link and it will, of course, also serve the existing community.

The overall scheme also includes the full 5% provision of self-build and custom build homes, 35% affordable housing, the planting of three trees for every new home and a site for travelling showpersons. Provision is secured by the outline planning permission and after construction works begin on the first phase, we will return to this committee with the submission of the reserved matters for the community facilities, further infrastructure and more phases of new homes, filling in the details secured by the outline planning permission.

Statement from Mr D

My name is xxx and I am a Director of transport and mobility planning at SLR. We have been working closely with the city council and the highways team at Essex County Council for a number of years to ensure that the impact of the new homes on the road network in Writtle and Chelmsford is successfully mitigated and that walking, cycling and buses are available as alternative travel options..

The proposed scheme is supported by the county council and this includes the detailed designs for the two roundabouts which will be added to Roxwell Road, the two footbridge links to Avon Road and improvement works on Roxwell Road/Rainsford Road at the junctions with Chignal Road and Park Avenue and on Lordship Road. To encourage residents to walk or cycle to nearby destinations, the scheme also includes improvements to Lawford Lane, Fox Burrows Lane for access to Writtle and through Admirals Park to the city centre and Hylands School. The Section 106 Agreement attached to the outline planning permission will also secure funding for two bus services to the site and travel planning for more than 1000 homes in the Chignal Estate so that existing residents can also take advantage of the active travel options created by the scheme.

Also to be approved tonight is the access to the travelling showpersons site in the south western corner. We have designed the junction in the optimum location to accommodate the unique requirements of the very long and heavy vehicles that they use, including sweeping corners so that vehicles can turn in and out without manoeuvring on to the “wrong” side of the road and long sight splays to reflect that the vehicles will be moving slowly. The application is supported by technical drawings to show that the turning movements can be made safely and the design has the support of the highways team at Essex County Council. I must highlight that the splay looking west requires that trees within the public highway on the northern side of Roxwell Road to be felled to achieve the visibility of oncoming traffic. Their loss will be mitigated by the creation of a new woodland edge to the travelling showpersons site that is intended to hide it from view, with landscaping to be one of the reserved matters pursuant to the outline planning permission when a detailed design is submitted in the future.

The application includes works to Lordship Road that will address safety concerns raised by Writtle Parish Council. These include widening the footway from the application site and past the bridge over the River Wid to the college, a new island at the college entrance to protect cars waiting to turn and a new traffic-light controlled crossing between the two halves of the campus. At the entrance to the village, bus stops will be added and a build-out will be installed outside the doctors surgery to

make it easier to pull out of their car park, plus funding for speed cameras is included in the Section 106 Agreement.

In short, we have worked hard to deliver transport improvements that will address the impact of cars from the new homes and will promote sustainable and active travel choices, encouraging future residents and existing residents of Writtle and the Chignal Estate to use the two new bus services or walk or cycle to the city centre, existing facilities and the new community facilities within the proposed scheme.

Statement from Mr F

My name is xxx and I am the Planning Manager at Crest Nicholson Eastern.

I would like to thank our case officer and the council's team, as well as the statutory consultees and Writtle Parish Council, for their help in the preparation of the scheme that is being presented to you tonight for approval.

Crest Nicholson are very much looking forward to delivering the development, that includes the 311 new homes that form part of this application. The designs of the houses draw on the architecture of Writtle with the use of render, tile hanging, Georgian architecture windows and chimneys to name but a few of the architectural details on offer.

Buildings akin to converted commercial premises are promoted, for example one such dwelling gives the appearance of a "converted pub".

The focus of the public realm includes a tree-lined main street that meanders through the site and forms the bus route and the creation of a small "village green". The back streets are more in keeping with the lanes that surround the historic centre of Writtle, whilst the outer edges deliver detached houses that face towards the parkland and strategic cycle routes that connect to future phases and the wider community.

The mix of accommodation, accessible and adaptable dwellings, garden sizes and car parking including the layout and appearance have been designed to reflect the character and appearance of Writtle, in accordance with the neighbourhood plan and the Writtle Design Guide.

In addition, we are committed to providing community facilities and they will be secured by the outline planning permission and accompanying Section 106 Agreement. The infrastructure in the first phase will support the later delivery of playing fields for football and cricket, plus a pavilion car park, land for a two form of entry primary school and co-located nursery, a neighbourhood centre with the ability to provide up to 2700m² of floorspace that will include shops, a healthcare centre and another nursery, the five plots for travelling showpersons and, enclosing the whole scheme, more than 20 hectares of public open space and landscaping.

Truly we are bringing forward a wholistic sustainable development that future residents and the nearby community can enjoy and therefore we encourage that the Committee agree with your officer's recommendation and resolve to approve the application.

Statement from Mr H

1. There should be a condition or agreement for financial contribution for a scheme to alleviate flooding on Lawford Lane near the junction with National Cycle Route 1. That route is part of the developer's proposed cyclist/pedestrian route to Hylands School. It is blocked by flooding on 2-3 days per month during rainy periods.
2. The Transport Assessment Addendum proposes the use of a 1.5m to 2m footway on the eastern side of Lordship Road for 2-way cycling. That width is inadequate and should be widened to generally at least 3m wide, with limited 2m minimum at pinch points. This Lordship Road cycle/footway improvement should be included in the Legal Obligations Head of Terms.

Statement from Mr A

In the agenda documents, the only modification (mitigation) of the Roxwell Road /Chignal Road junction that is mentioned, is the extension to the existing Left Turn lane.

Does this mean that other earlier ideas, - Removing the bus lay-by, Moving the bus stop to the other side of Roxwell Avenue, and Widening the Southern side of Roxwell Road to two lanes - have sensibly been withdrawn.