

Comments for Planning Application UTT/21/2509/OP

Application Summary

Application Number: UTT/21/2509/OP

Address: Land South Of (East Of Griffin Place) Radwinter Road Swards End Essex

Proposal: Outline application for the erection of up to 233 residential dwellings including affordable housing, with public open space, landscaping, sustainable drainage system (SuDS) and associated works, with vehicular access point from Radwinter Road. All matters reserved except for means of access

Case Officer: Henrietta Ashun

Customer Details

Name: Mrs Mary Sandles

Address: 28 The Dreys, Saffron Walden, Essex CB10 2LL

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: There are many reasons why this development is unsustainable and unsuitable.

Transport : An appendix called Cotswold Transport Planning, discusses bus stops and distances from the houses to them, and states that people would not be deterred from travelling by bus, and also it has been suggested that the County Council seek developer contributions towards bus service provision through Section 106 and then use these to deliver holistic improvements to the bus service to run. In fact, Saffron Walden does not have a good record on developer contributions being taken up for the benefit of the community. Is it true that the existence of a bus stop translates into people getting on buses and not using their car? 3.5 of the plan states that the objectives are to increase the role of walking and cycling and public transport which minimises reliance on and discourages unnecessary use of private motorised vehicles. Who actually uses a bus to go to the supermarket when they need the boot of their car to bring back a full trolley of food and household items? Where will the people work who will come and live in these houses? Probably not in Saffron Walden or locally. Employers have been lost in Saffron Walden, and there has not been a growth in businesses to encourage a need to live in Saffron Walden. Most will probably not be going somewhere even on the bus network and with the probability of two working adults, both will use their cars, so that could be two cars per household traversing the town adding to congestion. For people who want to commute to London or Cambridge by train, there will be without a doubt a car journey involved across town to the station and they will not entirely rely on or wait for an improved bus service. With children not being able to use the local schools due to a shortage of places I suspect extra journeys will be involved for a school run. These houses will not be cheap, and buyers will also be able to afford to run cars and continue to live their lives

conveniently (without recourse to a bus) . Who will wait for a bus in all weathers with a limited timetable of the bus company serving the area? A great idea on paper and therefore this really serves just as a tick box for sustainability, for making traffic issues seemingly go away, when in practice, unfortunately, the mere existence of a bus stop does not. For example, in Swards End very few people use the buses that comes through, mainly children to get to the County High School. I don't know anyone who actually uses a bus to 'pop' into town, to go to the station, or to go for an appointment, because the service is inadequate, and so we all resort to our cars. The roads in and out of town at the beginning and end of the school day become clogged and imagine how much worse this will become with extra family housing.

If the unnecessary use of private motorised vehicles is really such an aim, then better not build additional houses where such transport will inevitably be required.

It appears that a traffic survey has been conducted, but this cannot possibly demonstrate that the extra traffic will have a negligible effect on the roads. There will be an additional volume of traffic generated from servicing the new houses, such as home delivery vans and all the other additional vehicles on the road to and from the proposed new site. There are drivers who use the narrow Cole End Lane, from Thaxted Road through Swards End to Radwinter Road and then down the hill to Saffron Walden, and in reverse, as a rat run in a bid to avoid circumnavigating other roads. Traffic will increase making the rural nature of the village more like the town, in terms of frequency, noise, pollution and speed. Whichever way you look at it, additional road use all around the development is of real concern because it is not in a sustainable location.

Flooding:

As a resident of Swards End we have no choice but to drive down the Radwinter Road which is a steep and winding hill to access the facilities of Saffron Walden, and after heavy rains there is flooding, the water runs like a stream down the hill, which I believe was at one time a river bed. It is shady on the bends, and surface water which accumulates in winter because it cannot drain away, often freezes and can stay frozen for a good part of the day, and there are times when black ice is an issue particularly at the bottom towards Tesco, and there have been accidents. Just how effective will the proposed 'sustainable drainage system' be? If water seepage from the higher land onto the road cannot be controlled now, and there has already been a new development near to Tesco, there will be potentially more run off after the fields that absorb most of the rainwater are built on. The consequence of building on this land is of serious concern to us all and another reason to reject this application.

Type of build:

There is a vision statement, but I haven't come across architect's plans for the housing envisaged here. Is it going to be more of the same, or ready to cope with 21st century issues, such as energy and water supplies? Will grey water be re-cycled to use less of the precious drinking water available to communities in East Anglia, already among the driest regions in the UK? Will any thought be given to using solar energy in the new houses? We need to think about these issues and not give in to what developers want to do.

Choice of site and town:

The boundary between the town of Saffron Walden and the rural village of Swards End will be blurred with this development. The existing fields are buffers between the two and should remain as agricultural land.

As referred to above, employment opportunities are not rapidly increasing in the locality demanding housing in support, and so people attracted by new housing will need to travel outside the area. There is no rationale to further expand the town of Saffron Walden with its limited infrastructure, such as schools, and doctors and dentists. It is simply a gift to developers, the existence of fields in our rural agricultural community is an easy land grab - with no demonstration of local need for 233 houses. How many more ancient fields will be lined up for development? Building on the proposed site will have a negative effect on the lives of existing residents in Saffron Walden and Swards End, and the benefit will be to the developers.

This application should be rejected.