



THAME
Town Council

Town Hall, High Street, Thame, OX9 3DP
W: www.thametowncouncil.gov.uk
E: info@thametowncouncil.gov.uk
Tel: 01844 212833
Jayne Cole, Town Clerk & RFO

GM/LF

Ms Tracy Smith
Planning Department
South Oxfordshire District Council
135 Eastern Avenue
Milton Park
Milton
OX14 4SB

10 July 2020

Dear Ms Smith

Planning Application No: P20/S0928/FUL Land at The Elms OX9 2DN

Thank you for inviting the Town Council to comment on the amendments and additional information received regarding the above planning application. The Town Council is submitting this further response in the belief that the present inability to provide physical copies of planning applications at a named place, and with a duty planning officer to help with their interpretation risks preventing proper engagement in the planning process by many members of our local community. The Town Council wishes to make it clear that it does not hold the District Council or its staff in any way accountable for these current working arrangements.

Thame Town Council continues to **object** to this application, on the following grounds. Details of our objections on Thame Neighbourhood Plan policy grounds, and other matters, are given in our letter in response to the application as originally submitted, dated 10 June 2020.

- The draft S106 proposes an inadequate sum for Elms Park improvements, given that it has dropped the commitment for Rectory Homes to remove and relocate the twin-court Multi Use Games Area (MUGA);
- The purpose of the Residents Centre has still not been adequately explained;
- Comparison with an appealed C2 residential care home scheme at Lower Shiplake, South Oxfordshire, are not relevant.
- In spite of some amendments, the objections of Thames Valley Police on the grounds of a failure to design out crime and design in community safety remain valid.

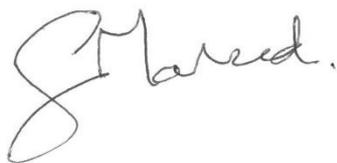
1. **Draft S106 Agreement.** Within the extant permission's S106 agreement is a commitment by the developer to move the existing MUGA further from the western boundary of Elms Park. The applicant has alongside this proposal submitted an outline application that seeks the relocation and / or replacement of the MUGA. The sum proposed within the draft S106 is, however, wholly insufficient to fund the removal and reprovision of the MUGA, and also provide for the other improvements necessary within Elms Park. The Town Council therefore assumes that the applicant is content with the current location of the MUGA.

2. **Residents Centre.** The benefit of the Residents Centre continues to be exaggerated. The applicant has submitted an Operational Strategy. Within this document the applicant again explains:
 - (a) that 24 hour emergency call will be operated through an off-site provider. Such a facility can be sought from a choice of provider and is not dependent on specialist housing;
 - (b) that it will be extremely rare for a carer to need to stay overnight, in spite of the provision of staff sleeping quarters. This means that 24 hour care will never be available to the majority of the residents, atypical of a care environment;
 - (c) that all care provision will be managed and coordinated from within the Residents Centre, as though it can operate in a bubble. This overlooks the proximity of Thame's High Street, which is host to a choice of specialist health providers, such as dentists, physiotherapists, chiropodists, and chiropractors. There will be ready competition and residents cannot realistically be forced to use on-site provision. Similarly, the Centre's restaurant and bar facility will also be in competition with the choice on Thame's High Street.

3. **Lower Shiplake.** Great comparison is made between the facilities proposed at The Elms and those at the appealed, Lower Shiplake C2 residential care unit scheme. The sites are incomparable. Lower Shiplake is a land-locked site, bordered by a narrow, single carriageway "A" class road that lacks paving, on the very edge of a village that lacks most basic facilities. The Lower Shiplake site has no footpaths connecting it to the rest of the village. It is, therefore, isolated for both the fit and the less able, and must be self-contained in terms of its offer. No nearby alternatives exist, particularly for care facilities, that will be accessible via non-motorised transport.

Please do not hesitate in contact us, should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely



Graeme Markland
Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer