

# **Report to District Development Control Committee**

**Date of meeting: 6<sup>th</sup> October 2009**



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

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**Subject: Planning Application EPF/1071/09– Garden Centre, 212 Manor Road, Chigwell – Redevelopment of land formerly in use as a garden centre to provide 21 flats, 80% of which will be affordable housing (revised application)**

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Committee Secretary: S Hill Ext 4249**

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## **Recommendation:**

That the Committee considers the recommendation of the Area Plans Sub-Committee South, on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2009, to grant planning permission subject to conditions.

## **Report Detail**

This application has been referred by the Area Plans Sub Committee South with a recommendation for approval. The report to the Sub-Committee (attached as Appendix 1) carried a recommendation from Officers to refuse planning permission and the planning merits of the case are attached.

## **Planning Issues**

The debate at the Sub-Committee meeting centred mainly on the merits of the proposed level of affordable housing on this site, which the Sub-Committee consider provides very special circumstances for allowing an inappropriate development within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The Sub-Committee consider that this site is suitable for an affordable housing development. They noted that the site is Previously Developed Land and also that it has appeared untidy in the past, having had several buildings erected on its associated with the garden centre use. Furthermore, the Sub-Committee felt that the site was a sustainable location for an affordable housing development, being located in close proximity to an underground station and bus routes.

Officers agree with the Sub-Committee that the site is in a sustainable location and a development may be acceptable where it is of an acceptable design and has demonstrated a case for very special circumstances for allowing a development within the Green Belt. Notwithstanding this, Officers had several concerns with the proposed scheme. In particular, the design and density of the scheme are considered to be unsatisfactory, no justification has been provided for the affordable housing provision, the development would result in the loss of an existing employment site, the provision of storage for refuse is considered to be unsatisfactory and the development does not comply with the Council's sustainability policies. Fundamentally, Officers consider that the applicant has failed to

demonstrate a case for very special circumstances to justify the proposed development within the Green Belt.

## **Conclusion**

Should the Committee recommend that granting of planning permission, the application will need to be referred to the Government Office for the East of England as a departure from the Local Plan. The recommendation to grant planning permission should be subject to conditions requiring:

- The use of suitable external materials;
- Highway matters including details of the site access, the discharge of water from the site, the provision of the car parking;
- The submission of further information relating to tree protection and site landscaping;
- Construction matters including a restriction to working hours and the provision of wheel washing facilities;
- The submission of further information relating to site levels; and
- Further information/mitigation relating to contaminated land issues; and
- Further detail relating to the storage of refuse facilities.

It is further recommended that any grant of planning permission should be subject to a legal agreement to secure planning obligations, within 9 months of the date of a resolution, which may include:

- The amount, tenure and occupancy of the affordable housing;
- Highway Improvements (Works and/or financial contributions);
- Education Provision (financial contribution and/or other); and
- Community benefits (financial contribution and/or other).