

Report to District Development Control Committee

Date of meeting: 8th June 2010



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Subject: Planning Application EPF/2361/09 – Redevelopment of land formerly in use as a garden centre to provide 21 flats 80% of which will be affordable housing. (Revised application)

**Officer contact for further information: K Smith
Committee Secretary: S Hill Ext 4249**

Recommendation:

That the Committee considers the recommendation of the Area Plans Sub-Committee South, on 26 May 2010, to grant planning permission.

Report Detail

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

Planning Issues

2. The debate at the Sub-Committee meeting centred mainly on the merits of the proposed level of affordable housing on this site in relation to the need for such housing within the District. The Sub-Committee felt that the site is in a sustainable location for an affordable housing development, being located in close proximity to an underground station and bus routes. Having regard to the pressing need to provide affordable housing in the District and the highly sustainable location of this site Members consider that this amounts to 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 it, associated with the garden centre use.

3. Officers agree with the Sub-Committee that the site is in a sustainable location and a residential development may be acceptable where it is of an acceptable design and the applicant has demonstrated a case for very special circumstances for allowing such development within the Green Belt. Notwithstanding this, Officers had several concerns the proposed scheme. In particular, the design and density of the scheme are considered to be unsatisfactory. Officers consider that the applicant has failed to demonstrate a case for very special circumstances which is capable of outweighing this harm to visual amenity and the harm caused by

reason of inappropriateness, to justify the acceptance of the proposed development within the Green Belt.

Conclusion

4. Should the Committee recommend the 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 commencement of the development within five years;
- 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;
- Further information/mitigation relating to contaminated land issues;
- Further detail relating to facilities for refuse storage;
- Details of external lighting within the development (e.g. at car park entrance) and the restriction of additional lighting without planning permission;
- Details of boundary treatments;
- The removal of excavated material from the site; and
- The use of obscure/fixed closed glazing in accordance with the approved plans.

5. 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 should secure the following matters:

- The development is not to be commenced until the access road (which is subject to approval under planning application EPF/1399/09 relating to the adjacent site) has been constructed to an agreed standard;
- The amount, tenure, delivery and occupancy of the affordable housing;
- Provision of a financial contribution towards street lighting improvements within the vicinity of the site and the provision of public transport vouchers to the future occupants of the dwellings;
- Provision of a financial contribution towards school places within the local area; and
- Provision of a financial contribution towards the re-opening of a Post Office facility in Manor Road.