

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: District Development Control Committee **Date:** 27 July 2005

Place: Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 8.30 - 9.40 pm

Members Present: Mrs A Grigg (Chairman), Mrs M Boatman (Vice-Chairman), Mrs D Borton, M Colling, A Lee, F Maclaine, L Martin, Mrs P Richardson, Ms S Stavrou, K Wright, Mrs M McEwen, D Stallan and J M Whitehouse

Other

Councillors: Mrs D Collins, R Glozier, A Green, J Knapman, Mrs S Perry, Mrs P K Rush, B Scrutton and C Whitbread

Apologies: Mrs R Gadsby

Officers Present: B Land (Assistant Head of Planning and Economic Development), T Carne (Public Relations and Marketing Officer) and S G Hill (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

7. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed the members of the public to the meeting and introduced the Committee and Officers present. The Chairman also outlined the procedure for speakers addressing the Committee.

8. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5 July 2005 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

9. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

The Committee was advised that Councillor Mrs M McEwen was substituting for Councillor Mrs P Smith, Councillor D Stallan was substituting for Councillor B Sandler and Councillor J Whitehouse was substituting for Councillor D Kelly at the meeting.

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(a) Pursuant to the code of member conduct, Councillor D Stallan declared a personal interest in agenda item 6 (St Johns School, Tower Road, Epping – Planning application EPF/1400/04 for a new secondary school and residential development) by virtue (i) his son was due to attend the school in September 2005; and (ii) that he was a governor of a feeder school (St Andrews Primary School), the Head Teacher of which had expressed support for the scheme. The Councillor indicated that he had not been involved in the decision of the school to support the scheme. The Councillor had therefore determined his interests were not prejudicial and indicated that he would remain in the meeting during the consideration and voting on that item.

(b) Pursuant to the code of member conduct, Councillor J M Whitehouse declared a personal interest in agenda item 6 (St Johns School, Tower Road, Epping – Planning application EPF/1400/04 for a new secondary school and residential development) by virtue of being an Epping Town Councillor. The Councillor had therefore determined his interest was not prejudicial and indicated that he would remain in the meeting during the consideration and voting on that item.

11. ST JOHNS SCHOOL, EPPING - PLANNING APPLICATION FOR NEW SECONDARY SCHOOL AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT (EPF/1400/04)

The committee gave consideration to an outline application for:

- (i) the erection of a new, 6 Form Entry, secondary school on land comprising the western side of the St Johns School playing fields, Epping.
- (ii) residential development largely located on the site of the existing school buildings
- (iii) an area of open amenity space between the new school and the new housing to provide a landscaped link between Lower Bury Lane and the Swaines Open Space, to be transferred to the District Council to ensure public access.

Application Background

The committee received a presentation of officers giving the background to the application which included those matters of Essex Replacement Structure Plan and Adopted Local Plan policy which were considered to be applicable. These were:

Essex Replacement Structure Plan:

- CS1 – encouraging a range of facilities to support urban areas,
- CS2 – safeguard and enhance the character of urban and rural environments,
- C1 – no alterations to the boundaries of the green belt,
- C2 – limited, appropriate development within the green belt,
- NR1 – conserving the landscape of rural areas.

Adopted Local Plan:

- GB2 – limited, appropriate development with the green belt,
- H4-6 and Supplementary Planning Guidance – the provision and extent of ‘affordable housing’,
- DBE1 & 2 – design of new development and impact upon surrounding areas,
- DBE7 – provision of open space within new residential development,
- LL2 – protect the landscape from inappropriate development, and
- T17 – traffic implications.

It was considered by officers that the major issues raised by the application were:

- (i) the development of a new school in the Green Belt;
- (ii) the development of housing to replace the existing school buildings;
- (iii) the development of housing in the Green Belt;
- (iv) the provision of affordable housing;
- (v) the traffic implications; and
- (vi) the impact upon surrounding residents.

The Committee were reminded that the Council had received a large number of individual letters of objection to the proposals together with representation from the Town Council, residents of Lindsey Street and adjacent roads, the Conservators of Epping, St John's Development Consultation Group, the Campaign to Protect Rural Essex, the Epping Society, and the Friends of Epping Forest. Individual letters of support had been received from nearby residents and the six Head Teachers of the local Primary Schools in the vicinity.

Progress since the last meeting

At the last meeting of the Committee on 7 July 2005, The Planning Officers had been requested to seek further negotiations with the applicants to:

- (i) seek improvements to the traffic/highway related plans; and
- (ii) seek a better package of proposals on use of green belt land and affordable housing percentage.

Officers had subsequently held a meeting with the applicants who had made the following revisions to the scheme:

- (i) the extent of the housing had been reduced by 0.33 of a hectare to 3.67 hectares with a consequent increase in the area of public open space to be provided to 1.77 hectares;
- (ii) the affordable housing had remained at 10% but the applicants had agreed to provide a sum of £100,000 to the District Council to be used for financing affordable housing provision elsewhere in the district; and
- (iii) a revision had been made to the traffic related elements by providing a drop-off point within the site as part of the overall access/car park management strategy.

Extent of Housing

The planning officer commented that the applicants had made revision to the area of the proposed housing by reducing it to an area that equated to the current footprint of the school development.

Affordable Housing

The planning officer stated that the Head of Housing Services had commented that he would have still wished a higher percentage of affordable housing on the site but that the proposal of the applicants was preferable to no affordable housing at all. The offer of £100,000 by the applicants equated to the build costs of about three houses. In the event of the permission being granted however, this sum would be used to secure the future of another affordable housing scheme within the district which might otherwise be threatened by under funding from the Housing Corporation.

Traffic Related Elements

The planning officer commented that the applicants had now included a formal drop off and pick up point within the site which the applicants contended addressed the safety concerns. The applicants had agreed that a condition could be incorporated within any permission. Essex County Council Highways were not objecting to the scheme on safety grounds but maintained a policy objection as they did not encourage drop off points at schools as this encouraged parents to use vehicles to

bring children rather than walking to school. There was provision in the scheme to include a footpath to Epping Cemetery on Bury Lane although the implementation of this scheme would need the consent of the Conservators of Epping Forest as it crossed verge owned by them. No measure had been introduced to meet local concerns about rush hour traffic on the High Road/Bury Lane junction.

The Committee heard representations from an objector, representing the local residents objecting to the proposals, the Town Council and an agent for the applicant.

Town Councillor Dunseath expressed the concerns of Epping Town Council that they had not been consulted in a proper manner on the new proposals, that the Town Council had only just received details and they had not been able to convene a special meeting to consider them. The Councillor reiterated the Town Council's objections to the original scheme.

In response the Chairman apologised that the Town Council had only just received details of the proposals but stated that the convening of a special meeting of the District Development Control Committee had been requested at the last meeting and it had been felt that the matter should be dealt with prior to the holiday period to avoid criticism.

Members of the Committee then discussed the application. Members considered and rejected a proposal to seek 20% affordable housing on the site and that the contribution of £100,000 be taken into account.

During the debate members expressed varying views upon the revised application. In summary views expressed included:

- (i) That any increase in the affordable housing element would affect the overall size of the built development and extent within the Green Belt;
- (ii) That the need for a new school in Epping was not disputed;
- (iii) That some of the highways issues could not be resolved by the application;
- (iv) That the new proposals further restricting the built area, were more coherent and gave more community benefit;
- (v) That any agreed scheme would need to be a compromise solution;
- (vi) That any significant increase in the requirement for affordable housing would increase the requirement for capital funding from Essex County Council which, in turn may threaten the viability of the scheme.

The Committee, having debated the issues, considered a motion to grant permission for the scheme based upon the new proposals of the applicants together with associated conditions and an agreement under section 106 of the Town Country Planning Act 1990 to secure elements of the scheme. This was carried by the committee.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That outline planning permission EPF/1400/04 for the erection of a new six form entry secondary school; 3.67 hectares of residential development plus open amenity space on the site of St Johns School, Epping

be granted subject to conditions as attached at appendix 1 to these minutes and to a legal agreements under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure:

- (i) affordable housing as 10% of the total number of units as general needs housing for rent;
 - (ii) an affordable housing contribution of £100,000;
 - (iii) the provision with appropriate landscaping and footpaths of 1.77 hectares of open amenity space with subsequent transfer to the Council with an agreed commuted sum for future maintenance;
 - (iv) the stopping up of Lower Bury Lane and provision of a turning head and pedestrian/cycle access into the site. The breaking out, removal of highway rights and landscaping that part of Lower Bury Lane made redundant by the stopping up;
 - (v) traffic calming/ management measures in Lower Bury Lane between its junction with High Road and the proposed turning head;
 - (vi) the bringing up to current standards two bus stops in the vicinity with shelters, raised kerbs and telematics;
 - (vii) the provision of tactile paving at three specified road junctions in the vicinity;
 - (viii) a school travel plan;
 - (ix) a public transport promotion and marketing campaign for the occupiers of the new residential development; and
 - (x) a bellmouth priority junction in Bury Lane to provide direct access to the new school to include two kerbed radii and 120m x 4.5m x 120m visibility splays. Also to include yellow-backed side road ahead warning signs on both approaches, 'SLOW' markings before and after each warning sign and centre hazard lines to a minimum width of 150mm for a minimum distance of 100m either side of the new junction; and
- (2) That the application be referred to the Government Office for their consideration.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was noted that there was no further business to be considered at the meeting.

CHAIRMAN

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Appendix

Minutes of District Development Control Committee 27 July 2005

Conditions of Planning Permission EPF/1400/04 – St Johns School, Epping

1. Submission of details within 3 years and standard time limit for commencement.
2. Development to be carried out in accordance with detailed drawings to be submitted.
3. The extent of the elements of the development and the principles upon which the detailed drawings are to be based are those of the approved drawing numbered 5563/04B.
4. No commencement of the residential development shall take place until such time as two or more separate foot/cycle paths to the new school from Tower Road and Lower Swaines via the residential development site have been provided.
5. Foul and surface water drainage details to be agreed.
6. Surface water source control measures shall be carried out prior to occupation in accordance with details which shall have been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority before development commences.
7. The proposed access in Bury Lane shall be for vehicular use only (no pedestrians or cyclists). An access/car park management strategy shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority prior to first occupation of the school.
8. Prior to commencement of development, details of a drop-off/pick-up point within the school site shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority and its use shall be controlled as part of the access/car park management plan. The drop-off/pick-up point shall be constructed prior to first occupation of the school.
9. The internal layout of the residential development shall be designed in accordance with the highway requirements of the Essex Design Guide for Residential & Mixed Use Areas 1997.
10. Wheel washing equipment to be installed.
11. Retention of existing trees and shrubs.
12. Tree protection measures to be agreed and implemented.
13. Landscaping scheme to be agreed and implemented.
14. The parking facilities for the school shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority, shall include parking for the disabled and secure

cycle and motorcycle parking and shall be provided in accordance with the approved details prior to first occupation.

15. Materials of construction to be agreed.
16. Details of screen walls and fences to be agreed.
17. Construction work (which includes deliveries and other commercial vehicles to and from the site) shall only take place on site between the hours of 0730 to 1800 Monday to Friday & 0800 and 1300 Saturdays and not at all on Sundays and public holidays.
18. There shall be no external lighting of the school playing fields or hard courts without the prior approval of the local planning authority.