

Report to District Development Control Committee



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Date of meeting: 15 February 2012

Subject: Planning Application EPF/2126/11 – Billie Jeans, 26 High Street, Epping, CM16 4AE – Demolition of existing bar and replacement with a mixed use development, comprising retail/food and drink use (Classes A1 and A3) at ground floor level and 12 residential units at first and second floors together with 16 parking spaces, access and landscaping.

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Committee Secretary: S Hill Ext 4249

Recommendation(s):

To consider an application referred to this committee by the Area Plans Subcommittee East at its meeting on 11 January 2012 with a recommendation to REFUSE Planning Permission on the grounds that the proposal, because of its mass and cramped appearance, would be too overbearing and dominant to the detriment of the street scene.

Report

1. (Director of Planning and Economic Development) The planning application was reported to Area Plans Sub-Committee East with an officer recommendation to grant planning permission, subject to a number of planning conditions and a legal agreement requiring the applicant pay to Essex County Council an education contribution of £11,944 (report appended). The Committee refused to grant planning permission, however, four Members voted that the application be referred to this committee for a decision.

Additional Summary of Reps

2. A late representation was verbally reported at the meeting from:

43 HIGH STREET, EPPING – No objection. Since trading as Billie Jeans, there have been numerous fights late at night, even recently in my front garden opposite the site. It is noisy, the music heard from my back bedroom. The building is an eye-sore and a disgusting pink. Cannot park our car on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays as all clientele of Billie Jeans use the spaces.

Since the meeting, two further representations have been received from:

69 HEMNALL STREET – Should compare proposal with building there now without current façade, surprised building not listed as consideration be given to architectural and heritage value of the building, vehicles reversing into the site from narrow Half Moon Lane is unsatisfactory and add to traffic movement, parking will be added to considerably and will not be reduced in the area as spaces on site will be for residents and visitors, proposal of too great a mass, too high and too close at the front, not an area for governments high density

development in urban areas, too many dwellings, overlooking from balconies, if consent granted then all valued buildings in Epping be checked for protection, set an unsatisfactory precedence for even half its scale and number. Limitations on internal works when last refurbished implying building is protected in some way.

12 THEYDON PLACE – The old pub was an attractive building still evident from the rear façade, proposal unsuitable because it will destroy the original parts of the building, is too large for the area, cause problems for pedestrian users of Half Moon Lane and too high density.

Planning Issues

3. The main issue for the Committee was the position and the size of the new building in respect of its visual appearance on the street scene.
4. There was no specific objection raised to the principle of the mixed development in this town centre location, nor to its parking provision, highway safety or to its specific design. It was stated that the proposed A1 and/or A3 use would be less disruptive and noisy than the current A4 use and whilst there was some dismay at the loss of this former pub building, there were still other pubs serving the town centre, including the Duke of Wellington on the adjacent site. The tidying up of the front of the site, including the provision of a pavement was also welcomed.
5. The Committee, whilst acknowledging that the proposal would make the best use of land in a sustainable location such as this, considered that it would be too large and cramped for this site. In this location, it would be too excessive in size and given its forward projection beyond the existing building and height relative to neighbouring buildings in this prominent location, harm the appearance of the street scene.
6. Officers stated that the new building would come forward of the present one and would be higher, but there is relief in the appearance of the new building that breaks up its bulk to create a suitable design and appearance in a street scene of varying building scale and styles. The new building would be more prominent and greater in size across three floors of accommodation, but there is sufficient separation distance from neighbouring buildings, open areas to provide adequate off-street parking, access for deliveries at the rear and the retention of protected trees.
7. In respect of the late representations, the proposal will not be as noisy and residents parking will be freed up by the removal of the current evening club and bar use. The building is not locally nor statutory listed and a review of local listing was carried out in recent years when this would have been part of that assessment. Half Moon Lane does not have a pavement and is a traditional narrow lane which will be retained in this way. There are no highway objections and good visibility for both pedestrians and future users of the proposed parking spaces. There is no evidence of internal works being protected or that they were requested by the Council as part of the refurbishment works and in fact is more likely to be a result of building regulation requirements.

Conclusion

8. Should the Committee be persuaded by the Area Committee's recommendation to refuse planning permission because of its mass and cramped appearance and therefore be too overbearing and dominant to the detriment of the street

scene, then it should be supported by reference to relevant policies of the Adopted Local Plan, namely policies DBE1 and CP3(v).

9. Alternatively, should the Committee agree with the merits of the proposed development, then it is recommended that it be subject to the suggested conditions and legal agreement requirement in the appended officers report.