

Report to District Development Control Committee



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Date of meeting: 11 April 2012

Subject: Planning Application EPF/2300/11 – Brookside Garage, Gravel Lane, Chigwell IG7 6DQ – Erection of replacement workshop and resurfacing existing yard.

**Officer contact for further information: Nigel Richardson Ext 4110
Committee Secretary: S Hill Ext 4249**

Recommendation(s):

That the Committee considers the recommendation of the Area Plans Sub Committee South at its meeting on 29 February 2012 to grant planning permission subject to the following suggested conditions:

(1) The development hereby permitted must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this notice.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

(2) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no further buildings or extensions to existing buildings shall be erected (other than those expressly authorised by this permission).

Reason: To safeguard the openness of this part of the Metropolitan Green Belt.

(3) Within three months of the new building being erected, the existing workshop (shown cross-hatched on drawing no. JTS/7419/02) shall be demolished.

Reason: To safeguard the openness of this part of the Metropolitan Green Belt.

(4) The maintenance and repair of vehicles, including works associated with undertaking MOT's, shall not be undertaken in the open yard areas of the site as indicated as diagonally hatched on drawing no. JTS/7419/03.

Reason: The application has been submitted on this basis. The condition is in the interest of safeguarding the open character of this part of the Metropolitan Green Belt as well as the amenities of residents living in the vicinity of the site.

Report

1. (Director of Planning and Economic Development) The planning application was reported to Area Plans Sub-Committee South with an officer recommendation to refuse planning permission. The original report to Committee is attached. The site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt but operates as an existing commercial business which has a certificate of lawful development granted in 2006 for continued use as motor vehicle storage, recovery and repairs. The planning application is to replace an existing workshop building with a larger building on the site and slightly extend the existing hard surfacing area into that part of the site created by the building to be removed. Officers considered that the larger building would be too excessive in scale and therefore it amounts to inappropriate development in the Green Belt which no very special circumstances would outweigh this harm.
2. The main issue for the Committee was that the new building would be well screened from public vantage points, including the road, and therefore despite almost doubling in size, it would not be conspicuous from the Green Belt or visually harmful to the street scene. They further concluded that the additional MOT facility in the workshop would benefit the local rural economy, which after all, was an existing protected employment facility that has existed since the late 1960's.
3. There was some debate of the requirement of conditions necessary to make the development acceptable and overcome potential harm to local amenity. As officers considered the proposal was contrary to Green Belt policy, the committee recommended that the officers report to this DDCC meeting should include suggested conditions to be attached to a planning permission should the application be granted. Four necessary and relevant conditions are included in the recommendation. The Officers report (appended) to Area Plans Sub-Committee South stated that a Flood Risk Assessment will be required by condition, should permission be granted. However, it is now concluded that the building and site area does not hit the required threshold.
4. This is a balanced case because on the one hand, Policy E4A of the Local Plan seeks to protect sites in employment use and the larger building is needed for an MOT station in addition to the existing car storage and repair use of which a significant percentage is taking place in the open yard. On the other hand, it is a larger workshop, doubling the size of the one it is replacing in this rural location and therefore by definition is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Conclusion

5. Should the Committee be persuaded by the Area Committees recommendation to grant planning permission, it is recommended that this be subject to the suggested 4 conditions. The applicant states that the existing workshop will be demolished once the new one is built. He has a lot of equipment stored in the existing workshop which needs to be relocated into the new building and therefore needs a 3 month overlap in the recommended third condition. In respect of the suggested fourth condition, the new workshop has been partly submitted on the basis that a larger one is needed to overcome a significant percentage of repair and servicing work taking place in the rear yard area. A condition restricting no work in the open yard area will justify the larger building in Green Belt and amenity terms.

