

Original report to Planning Subcommittee D

APPLICATION No:	EPF/2208/05
SITE ADDRESS:	The Coach House Wyldwoods Woodgreen Road Waltham Abbey Essex EN9 3SB
PARISH:	Waltham Abbey
APPLICANT:	Beverley Curtis
DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:	Demolition of existing 'Coach House' and erection of new dwelling in same footprint.
RECOMMENDED DECISION:	REFUSE

CONDITIONS:

- 1 The site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The proposal represents inappropriate development and is therefore at odds with Government advice, Policies GB2 and GB8 of the adopted Local Plan and Policies RE2 of the adopted Replacement Structure Plan for Essex and Southend on Sea because the use of the building for residential purposes cannot be accomplished without major or complete reconstruction.
- 2 The proposed reinstatement of the northern access does not provide adequate sight lines, its use would therefore prejudice highway safety contrary to Policy T17 of the adopted Local Plan and policy T8 of the adopted replacement structure plan for Essex and Southend on Sea.

Description of Proposal:

Consent is being sought for the demolition of the existing 'Coach House' and erection of a new dwelling in the same footprint. The 'Coach House' is an outbuilding within the grounds of the property known as Wyldwoods. The principle behind this application is that approval was granted for the conversion of the Coach House in 2003 however since that application was approved it has come to light that the building could not be converted and would need to be replaced as economically and practically underpinning the building would result in disproportionately high costs.

The north access is proposed to be reinstated to serve the new dwelling. The design would match that of the previously approved.

Description of Site:

Three storey detached house dating from the 1840's on an extensive plot within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The site is bounded by the M25 to the north, which is on an embankment at this point. There is a two storey coach house 30m to the north of the main house, which forms the subject of this application. The ground falls away to the west, and there is extensive foliage on the site, consisting of mature trees and shrubs.

Relevant History:

EPF/1168/03 – Conversion of existing coach house to two bedroomed house - Approved
EPF/1031/04 – Continued use of north entrance to site after reinstatement of clear sight lines and entrance improvements and removing condition 7 of EPF/1168/03 – Refused
EPF/1669/04 - Continued use of north entrance to site after reinstatement of clear sight lines and entrance improvements and removing condition 7 of EPF/1168/03 (resubmission) – Refused

Policies Applied:

Structure Plan

C2 – Development in the Green Belt
RE2 – Re-use of rural buildings
T8 – Rural Transport

Local Plan

DBE1, DBE2, DBE4, DBE9, DBE10 – Residential Development Policies
GB2, GB8 – Green Belt Policies
T17 – Highway safety

Issues and Considerations:

The main issue here relates to whether or not the demolition of a non-dwellinghouse in the Green Belt could be replaced with a dwelling along with the use of a substandard access to serve this building.

Introduction

The history here is that the consent was granted for the conversion of the building as it was considered to comply with Policy GB8 of the adopted Local Plan, as it did not constitute major or complete reconstruction. Furthermore, although as part of that application it was proposed to re-instate the northern access to serve the property, this access was considered to be substandard, so the approval included a condition to close this access off and improve and share the southern access with the main dwelling.

Two applications were subsequently received, proposing to use the northern access. They were both refused on the grounds that the access does not provide adequate sightlines that in turn prejudiced highway safety.

Green Belt

In order to allow the change of use of a building in the Green Belt Policy GB8 of the Local Plan states amongst other things that the building is:

- (a) Of permanent and substantial construction
- (b) Capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction
- (c) In keeping with its surroundings by way of form, bulk and general design.

The crux of the application here, is (b) as shown above. As mentioned above, although approval was granted for conversion of this building it has come to light that the building is not capable of being converted without major reconstruction and large financial implications. Therefore the demolition of this building to be replaced with a new dwelling is the only viable option.

However Policy GB8 clearly states that buildings capable of conversion without major or **complete** reconstruction, amongst other things, would be allowed.

This application fails to comply with one of the fundamental aims of the policy and is therefore contrary to it. Whilst the applicant put forward the argument that a replacement would look no different than the approved conversion, to approve this would set a dangerous precedent, opening the floodgates for similar applications in the future. The applicant puts forward personal reasons to why this could be approved but these circumstances are not considered very special to overcome the aims of the policy.

Highway Safety

There are currently two access to the site from Woodgreen Road. The northern access is currently unused and sub standard in terms of sight lines and highway safety. It is about 1m lower than the existing road level. Part of the approved application in 2003 centred on highways issues and it was considered that this access be permanently closed.

This application shows that the northern access is proposed to be used. Two applications have been submitted proposing to reinstate this access for use and both times have been refused. This proposal does not differ from the previously refused and therefore the Highways Authority still maintain their objection, citing inadequate sight lines as sight lines of 120m, 2m back from the carriage way cannot be achieved. This therefore is contrary to policies T8 of the structure plan and T17 of the adopted local plan.

Amenity

These issues were looked at in the 2003 conversion application and were considered acceptable.

Conclusion:

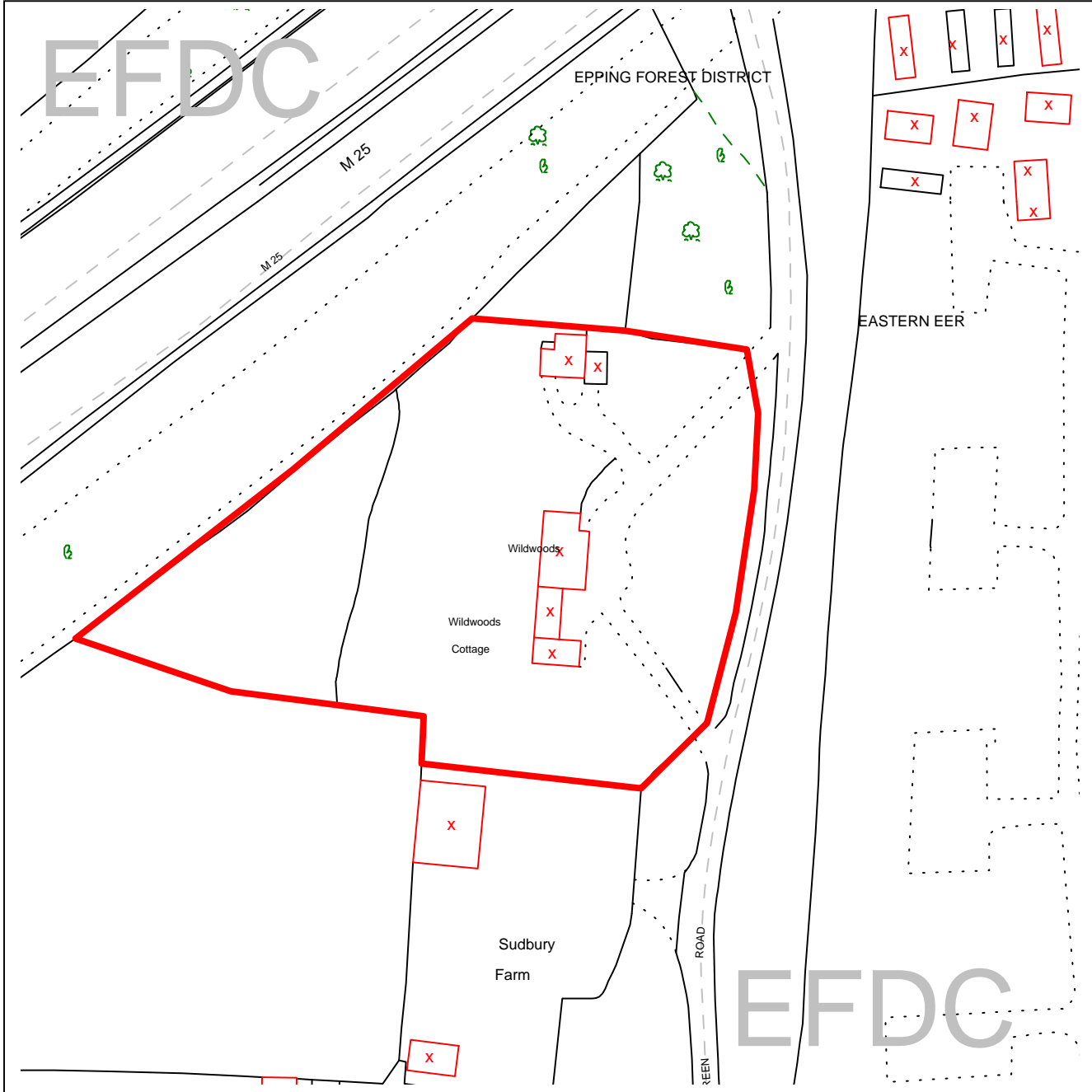
The application is contrary to Structure plan policy RE2 and GB8 of the adopted plan regarding the re-use of buildings and Structure plan T8 and local plan policy T17.

Summary of Representations:

Waltham Abbey Parish Council – No objections.



Epping Forest District Council



Agenda Item Number: 5

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Site Name: The Coach House, Wyldwoods, Woodgreen Road, Waltham Abbey

Scale of Plot: 1:1,1250

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