

Report Item No: 1

APPLICATION No:	EPF/0899/12
SITE ADDRESS:	The Scout Association Gilwell Park London E4 7QW
PARISH:	Waltham Abbey
WARD:	Waltham Abbey High Beach
APPLICANT:	The Scout Association
DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:	Residential building (International Staff Lodge) which includes social and service spaces and demolition of two maintenance buildings.
RECOMMENDED DECISION:	Grant Permission (With Conditions)

Click on the link below to view related plans and documents for this case:

http://planpub.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/AniteIM.websearch/ExternalEntryPoint.aspx?SEARCH_TYPE=1&DOC_CLASS_CODE=PL&FOLDER1_REF=537370

CONDITIONS

- 1 The development hereby permitted must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this notice.
- 2 The development hereby permitted will be completed strictly in accordance with the approved drawings nos: FO-001, FO-002 ex, FO-002 pro, FO-100, HO -001, A3-101, A3-102, TCP_01, TPP_01.
- 3 Materials to be used for the external finishes of the proposed development, shall be as detailed on the submitted plans and particulars, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- 4 No development shall take place, including site clearance or other preparatory work, until full details of both hard and soft landscape works (including tree planting and works to the proposed mound) and implementation programme (linked to the development schedule) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These works shall be carried out as approved. The hard landscaping details shall include, as appropriate, and in addition to details of existing features to be retained: proposed finished levels or contours; means of enclosure; car parking layouts; other minor artefacts and structures, including signs and lighting and functional services above and below ground. The details of soft landscape works shall include plans for planting or establishment by any means and full written specifications and schedules of plants, including species, plant sizes and proposed numbers /densities where appropriate (including planting details included at section 5.3 of the submitted Ecological Survey). If within a period of five years from the date of the planting or establishment of any tree, or shrub or plant, that tree, shrub, or plant or any replacement is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies or becomes seriously damaged or defective another tree or shrub, or plant of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place, unless the

Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.

- 5 No development, including works of demolition or site clearance, shall take place until a Tree Protection Plan, Arboricultural Method Statement and site monitoring schedule in accordance with BS 5837:2012 (Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations) has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority and approved in writing. The development shall be carried out only in accordance with the approved documents unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.
- 6 No development shall take place until details of foul and surface water disposal have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be implemented in accordance with such agreed details.
- 7 Prior to commencement of development details of bird and bat boxes shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. The proposed boxes shall be installed on trees within the site prior to the site clearance.
- 8 No development shall take place until details of further bat and reptile survey works, as stated in para.5.1. of the Ecological Scoping Survey Report by Greenlink Ecology Ltd, accompanying this application, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. If these surveys reveal that these protected species are likely to be affected, then before the development proposal commences on site, appropriate mitigation proposed shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, including any timetable for mitigation to be carried out.

Reason: To minimise the impact on biodiversity at and within the vicinity of the proposed building.

This application is before this Committee since it is an application contrary to the provisions of an approved Development Plan, and is recommended for approval (Pursuant to The Constitution, Part Three: Planning Directorate – Delegation of Council function, Schedule 1, Appendix A.(a)) and;

Since it is an application for major commercial development (e.g. developments of significant scale and/or wide concern) and is recommended for approval (Pursuant to The Constitution, Part Three: Planning Directorate – Delegation of Council function, Schedule 1, Appendix A.(c)).

Description of Site:

Gilwell Park Scout Association Headquarters covers a relatively large site area and is within the boundaries of the Metropolitan Green Belt. The wider site contains a large number of preserved trees. The wider site also includes a wide array of buildings which are in various uses associated with the use of the site as a scouting recreational facility. The focal building, The White House, is a listed building. The site is accessed off Daws Hill.

The site of the proposed building works is accessed along a tree lined drive which has buildings on either side (Wilson Way). This site is irregular shaped and contains two existing structures and is used as a maintenance yard. A maintenance building faces Wilson Way; this is an elongated structure which is generally low set. The site also contains a small, open sided, corrugated storage building. There are no preserved trees within the maintenance yard and it is covered in a loose stoned hardstanding. A grassed bund exists to the south west of the yard.

Description of Proposal:

The applicant seeks planning consent to construct a large accommodation building for volunteers with the Scout Association within the maintenance yard. The existing buildings in the yard area would be demolished and the yard's current use for maintenance purposes discontinued. The building would be part single part two storey with both sections joined by a single storey link.

The two storey element would measure approximately 28.0m wide by 12.0m deep with an eaves height of 5.0m and a ridge height of 8.6m. The single storey building would measure approximately 16.0m wide and would have a depth of 13.0m and a ridge height of 3.3m. Both sections would be joined by a single storey link 10.m x 9.0m with a ridge height of 2.9m.

The two storey section would be used as an accommodation unit with bedrooms over two floors. The single storey element would contain a "social" section housing a kitchen/dining area and T.V. room etc. The proposal suggests a mix of external materials in the proposed finish.

Relevant History:

There is an extensive history to the site the most relevant and recent being;

EPF/1000/01 - Outline application for replacing existing facilities with new and provision of new residential and ablution facilities. Grant permission (with conditions) - 07/11/2001.

EPF/1383/01 - Erection of replacement ablution block. Grant permission - 30/11/2001.

RES/EPF/0271/02 - Approval of details of residential blocks following outline permission EPF/1000/1. Grant permission – 27/07/12.

EPF/1475/07 - New single storey building to form dormitories for 60 people and meeting and ancillary areas. (Alterations to building approved in 2002). Grant permission with conditions - 09/10/2007.

EPF/0852/08 - Construction of a single storey accommodation lodge, providing overnight accommodation for 50 people in two self contained wings with a central communal facility and ancillary services. Grant permission with conditions – 19/06/08.

EPF/1284/10 - New ablution block for main camp site and extension/improvement of the existing car park area at main entrance to the site. Grant permission with conditions - 23/09/2010.

Policies Applied:

GB2A – Development in the Green Belt

GB7A – Conspicuous Development

NC3 – Replacement of Lost Habitat

NC4 – Protection of Established Habitat

HC12 – Setting of a Listed Building

DBE1 – Design of New Buildings

DBE2 – Effect on Neighbouring Properties

DBE4 – Design in the Green Belt

DBE9 – Loss of Amenity

U2A – Development in Flood Risk Areas

U3B – Sustainable Drainage Systems

CP1 – Achieving Sustainable Development Objectives

CP2 – Protecting the Quality of the Rural and Built Environment

CP3 – New Development

CP4 – Energy Conservation

CP5 – Sustainable Building

LL2 – Inappropriate Rural Development

LL10 – Adequate provision for Landscape Retention

LL11 – Landscaping Schemes
ST1 – Location of Development
ST2 – Accessibility of Development
ST4 – Road Safety
ST6 – Vehicle Parking
RST1 – Recreational, Sporting and Tourist Facilities

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been adopted as national policy since March 2012. Paragraph 214 states that due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the framework. The above policies are broadly consistent with the NPPF and should therefore be given appropriate weight.

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS:

1 neighbour consulted and site notice displayed – No replies received.

WALTHAM ABBEY TOWN COUNCIL: No Objection.

Issues and Considerations:

The main issues to consider is the site's location within the Metropolitan Green Belt and issues with regards to design, amenity, land drainage, highways, ecology and landscaping. The comments of consultees and national and local planning policy are other material considerations.

Green Belt Considerations

The site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt and both national and local policy outlines appropriate forms of development in such areas. This includes small scale buildings necessary for outdoor recreation. The use of the wider site is for outdoor recreation; however the proposed building could not be considered small scale. It is therefore considered that the use is technically inappropriate in a Green Belt location and therefore the applicant must demonstrate very special circumstances. This point is recognised by the applicant and a number of special circumstances have been put forward.

The applicant firstly states that there is a need to improve and upgrade the facilities on the site in order to increase the amount of volunteers that can use the site. The use of the site is laudable and offers an outlet for the recreational needs of local schools and youth organisations. The site generally makes a positive contribution to the community it serves. There is nothing to suggest that this application is not borne out of genuine need to improve the operations of the site. Gilwell Park, although containing quite a number of buildings, does keep a large tract of the Green Belt in open recreational use. It is therefore considered that the general principle of this development amounts to very special circumstances warranting a justifiable deviation from Green Belt policy.

Part of the building would be two-storey and would thus have the potential to harm the open character of the Green Belt. However the wider site is well screened by trees and vegetation and this would to some degree reduce impact. The maintenance yard is also relatively well screened and is part demarcated by a grassed bund to the south east. The plans include details to amend the bund to form a mound which would provide a further screen and this can be secured as part of the landscaping conditions which would be attached to any approved scheme. The single storey building would not appear particularly prominent from the surrounding countryside. The proposed design would not appear out of place in a Green Belt setting and is generally consistent with other buildings at the site. Therefore impact on the open character of the Green Belt would be to an acceptable level.

Design/Listed Building

The proposed building would be split over two levels which would reduce its bulk and scale somewhat. The use of differing materials, particularly at first and second floor level of the two storey building, would further reduce impact and provide some interest to the exterior finish. The use of appropriate materials for the external finish can be agreed by condition. The structure has very much been designed for its intended purposes and as such would appear suitable in design terms within the confines of an outdoor recreation site which receives relatively high numbers of visitors to accommodate. The building's purposes are functional, yet an attempt has been made to provide a good quality design in order to meet this functional need. It is therefore considered the design is acceptable. The proposed building is well separated from the listed building and would have no impact on its setting.

Amenity

The site is long established for use as a recreational facility, it covers a wide area, and as such there would be no impact on amenity.

Highways

Essex County Council Highways Section has no objection to the proposed development and it is not contrary to adopted local transport policies.

Land Drainage

The site is partly within the Epping Forest flood risk assessment zone and is of a size to avoid generating additional surface run off. The applicant is proposing to deal with surface water run off by sustainable drainage systems. Further details of this are required and this can be agreed by condition.

Sustainable Building

A number of sustainable construction methods are proposed including solar panels. The Local Planning Authority aims to promote such practices and as such this characteristic of the development is acceptable.

Tree Issues

An extensive survey and TPO was made at Gilwell in 2006. The Trees section of the Council are aware of the long term plans to develop in this area and consequently no TPO'd trees will be affected by this proposal. The submitted tree report clearly demonstrates that the proposal could be implemented without a detrimental effect on trees (given suitable protection) and there are no objections subject to conditions ensuring tree protection and further details of a landscaping scheme, including works to the bund.

Ecology Considerations

A full ecological survey of the site was carried out by Greenlink Ecology Limited on 29/03/12. The survey did identify evidence and/or potential for legally protected species to be present at parts of the site. Including bats, reptiles and breeding birds which could be impacted upon by the proposed works, if present. The recommendation was therefore for more survey work to be carried out for bats and reptiles to determine the requirement for mitigation measures in relation to these species. Mitigation measures are proposed with regards to the loss of the potential bird breeding habitat and enhancement measures are also proposed through new planting of native and non native species. The Countryside section of the Council therefore recommends that the application is

refused until further survey work has been carried out. Natural England have advised that if protected species are using the site then more survey work is likely to be necessary or that appropriate mitigation should be secured by condition.

The loss of the bird breeding habitat can be secured by advising the applicant that the proposed works should be carried out outside the bird breeding season (March – August). If this is not possible an experienced Ecological Clerk of Works should be consulted prior to the commencement of the works. The habitat enhancement can be secured as part of the landscaping condition which will be attached to any agreed scheme.

There is at least the potential for both reptiles and bats to be present at the site although this was not readily apparent during the site survey work. Both native reptiles and bats enjoy special protection under wildlife legislation and it is an offence to recklessly endanger or kill such species. However it is considered that the issue can be dealt with by suitable conditions and informatives. Bat boxes could be agreed by condition both on the proposed building and/or within the site on suitable trees. An informative can be attached to the planning permission advising the applicant of their duty to show care and consideration to all protected species which may be present at the site, during the construction phase of the development. The applicant has carried out the appropriate survey work and is aware of its findings and due diligence should be present when the site clearance work is carried out.

Conclusion:

The proposed development represents a proposal which is inappropriate in Green Belt terms. However the case for very special circumstances has been made and accepted. There are a number of merits with regards to the proposal, chiefly the benefits that the use of the site bring to the local community. There is some concern about the potential presence of protected species at the site but this can be mitigated by appropriate conditions and informatives. Therefore it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in planning terms and is recommended for approval with conditions.

N.B: An Area Plans West Committee approval will require the application to be heard before District Development Control Committee and subsequently the National Planning Casework Unit owing to the size of the proposal and the fact that it is classed as inappropriate Green Belt development.

Should you wish to discuss the contents of this report item please use the following contact details by 2pm on the day of the meeting at the latest:

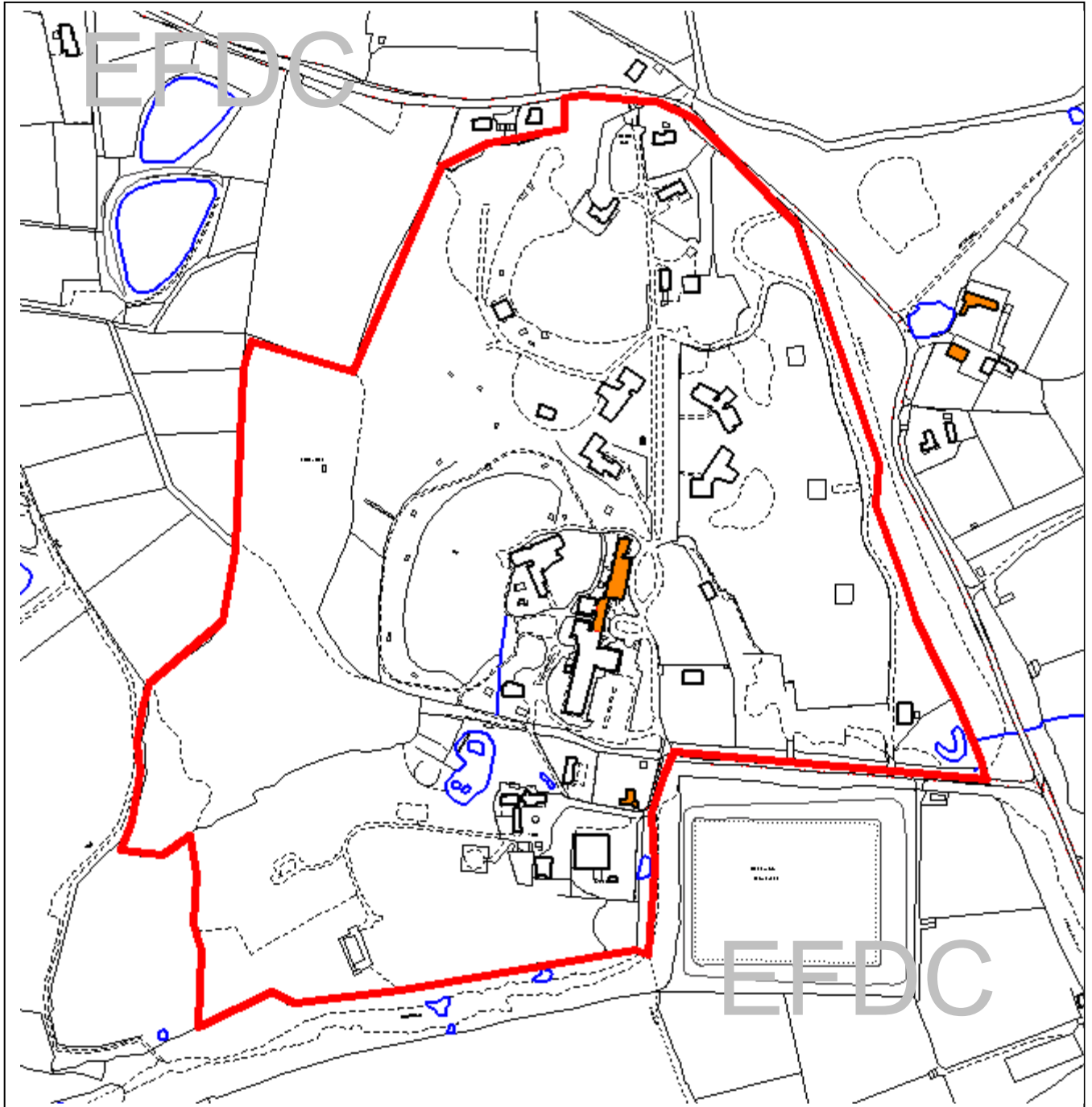
***Planning Application Case Officer: Dominic Duffin
Direct Line Telephone Number: 01992 56433***

or if no direct contact can be made please email: contactplanning@eppingforestdc.gov.uk



Epping Forest District Council

Area Planning Sub-Committee West



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Scale of Plot:	1/5000