

Report Item No: 1

APPLICATION No:	EPF/1164/06
SITE ADDRESS:	Ashlyns Organic Farm Shop Ashlyns Lane Bobbingworth Ongar Essex CM5 0ND
PARISH:	Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers
APPLICANT:	W W J Collins
DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:	Traditional style extension to provide additional shop floor space and storage. (Revised application)
RECOMMENDED DECISION:	GRANT

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 Materials to be used for the external finishes of the proposed extension, shall match those of the existing building.

Description of Proposal:

Consent is being sought for the erection of an extension to the existing farm shop including an area for ancillary storage space.

The extension would be located to the rear of the existing building (north facing flank), with a floor space area of 56m². The extension would consist of two parts, the larger projecting 6.5m and extending to within 500mm of the existing ridge at a height of 7m, while the smaller part would appear as a lean to attached to the west flank of the larger part. The overall width of the extension would be 9m.

Description of Site:

The site consists of the shop, an adjacent cart lodge, and agricultural barn situated off the north side of the A414 in North weald, approximately 450m east of the Talbot roundabout. A large area of open farmland is situated to the north which is used as an 'open farm' area. The whole site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt.

Relevant History:

AGR/EPF/1639/99 - Agricultural determination for Farm Shop - Permission not required

EPF/302/04 - Construction of two agricultural buildings – Approved

EPF/1312/05 – Continued use as farm shop for sale of general produce – Approved with conditions

EPF/1320/05 – Retrospective application for enclosure and change of use of a cart lodge building for use as an educational building/school excursion meeting room

EPF/374/06 – Extension to provide additional shop floor space and a timber decking area to the rear for use by customers – Withdrawn due to Officer concerns regarding size.

Policies Applied:

Structure Plan

C2 - Development in the Green Belt

T3 – Traffic

Local Plan and Local Plan Alterations

GB2A – Development in the Green Belt

DBE4 – design of new buildings within the Green Belt

DBE9 – Amenity Considerations

ST6 – Vehicle Parking

Issues and Considerations:

The main issues here relate to whether the proposal is appropriate development in the Green Belt, the design of the additions and how it would affect the surrounding area, in particularly in terms of traffic movements.

Green Belt

This application is a revised submission after the original proposal was considered to be excessive in size and was subsequently withdrawn. Pre application advice was given in May 2006 to the effect that the revised proposal would meet the requirements of Local Plan Policy GB9 (Extensions to Non-residential buildings in the Green Belt) in that the building to be extended had existing use rights and the proposed extension was not excessive in size. This planning application was subsequently made on 2 June 2006, however, the Local Plan Alterations, adopted on 10 July 2006, deleted Policy GB9 from the Local Plan and therefore this extension is now not explicitly identified as an acceptable form of development in the Green Belt.

The lawful use of the building to be extended is as a farm shop that is permitted to sell general produce. This is by virtue of planning permission EPF/1312/05 granted in October 2005. The extension is required to meet the growing demand for a wider range of farm products and the increasing amount of home produced meat being sold through the shop. A particular need that it would meet is that for further freezer space. The proposal would not generate a need for additional staff.

Looking at the extension itself, this represents a 43% increase in the floorspace of the existing unit and is not considered to be disproportionate in relation to the bulk of the existing building. The existing building reads as a single entity and the addition will be located to the rear with a height some 500mm lower than the existing ridge. The curtilage of the site remains the same and the proposal is not considered to materially detract from the openness of the Green Belt.

However, it is a fact that Policy GB9 has recently been deleted from the Local Plan during the course of considering this application and as a consequence the proposed development is inappropriate in the Green Belt. The proposal therefore needs to be supported by very special circumstances. The above assessment of the impact of the proposal on the Green Belt shows that the harm to it is limited while the extension would aid a thriving local business. Government guidance on development in the countryside in the form of PPS7 advises Planning Authorities that they should support a wide range of economic activity in rural areas provided such activity does not conflict with other planning policies.

The impact of the shop as it currently operates on the Green Belt has previously been considered under application EPF/1312/05 when it was decided the use was not harmful and planning permission granted. Furthermore, the organic shop has grown in popularity over the last few years and the extension is supported by the Parish Council who feel that the business is an asset to the district.

Accordingly, members may feel then that planning permission could be granted in this particular case despite the deletion of Policy GB9 during the course of considering this application.

Design

In terms of size, the extension is a sizeable wing onto the rear of the building however it is not felt to dominate the existing building and is aesthetically similar to its bulk and character. Being located to the rear reduces its impact when viewed from the road and relates to other existing buildings on the site.

Effect on the Surrounding Area and Vehicle Movements

There would be no effect in terms of amenity on neighbouring properties given the degree of separation involved. No additional staff would be required. The applicant argues that there would be no additional traffic movements as the business is already up and running, however if more produce is to be sold on the premises it would not be unreasonable to expect some increase in deliveries. However, given the size of the extension any additional traffic in and out of the site would be limited. Whilst the extension may result in an increase in customers, the site is located just off the A414 and has a forecourt that could accommodate at least 20 to 30 vehicles. The levels of traffic generation from this proposal are not considered to be materially detrimental to the amenities of the surrounding area.

Conclusion:

Whilst not explicitly classified as an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt, this proposal is not considered to result in undue harm to its objectives. Given the nature of the existing building and the character of the site, the proposal is considered acceptable and is recommended for approval.

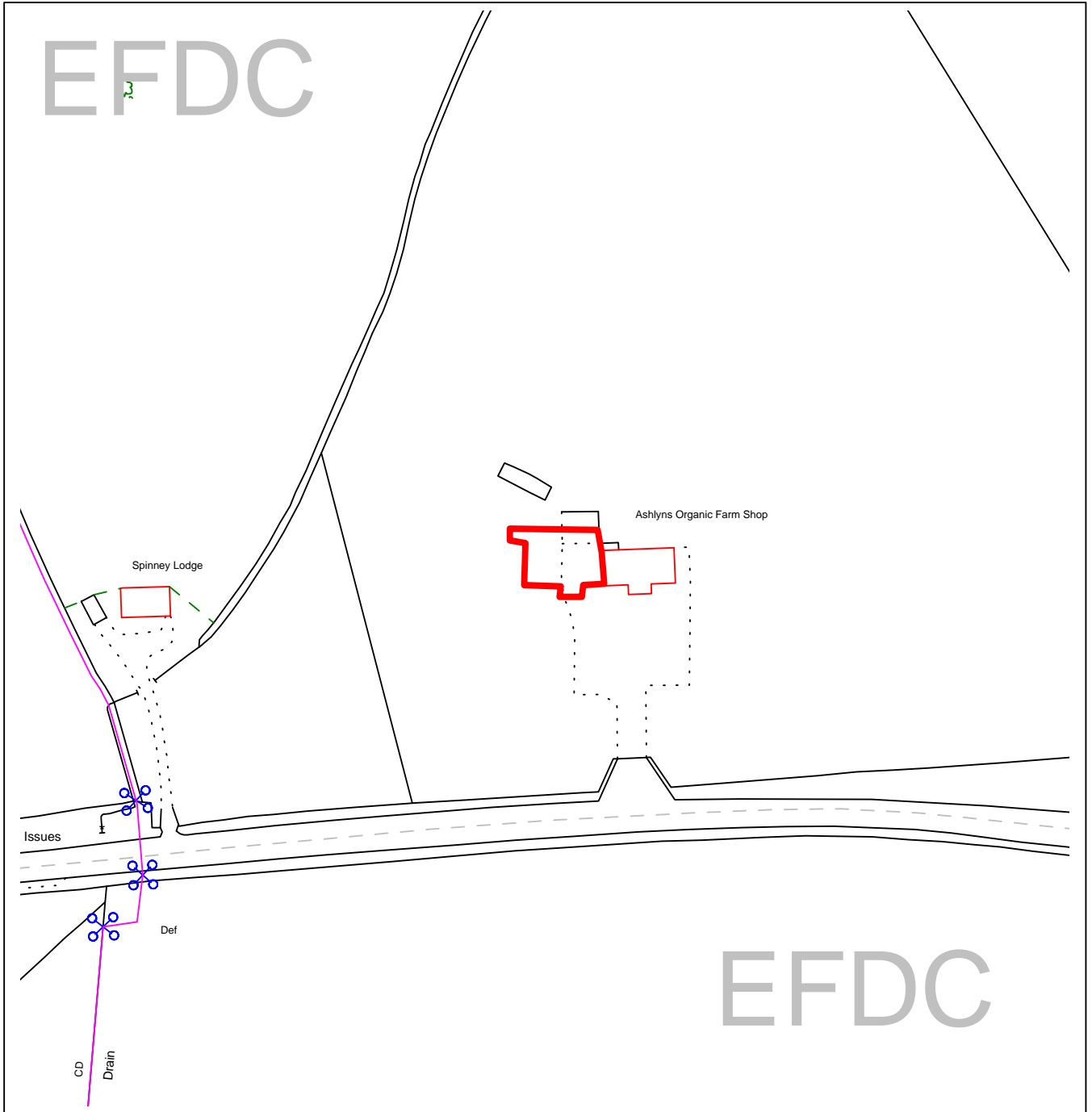
SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS:

MORETON, BOBBINGWORTH & THE LAVERS PARISH COUNCIL – Support – This Organic Farm Shop is an asset in the district.



Epping Forest District Council

Area Planning Sub-Committee C



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Agenda Item Number:	1
Application Number:	EPF/1164/06
Site Name:	Ashlyns Organic Farm Shop, Ashlyns Lane, Bobbingworth.
Scale of Plot:	1:1250

Report Item No: 2

APPLICATION No:	EPF/1740/05
SITE ADDRESS:	Land at Station Approach High Street Ongar Essex CM5 9BN
PARISH:	Ongar
APPLICANT:	Epping and Ongar Railway Holdings Ltd
DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:	Outline application for residential development. (Revised application)
RECOMMENDED DECISION:	Deemed permission refused

The Sub-Committee are not determining this planning application, because the applicant has lodged an appeal with the Secretary of State. This is because as a local planning authority, the council have not made a decision on this planning application in the statutory time period and the applicant is entitled to make an application against non-determination of this planning application. Officers need to report to the Secretary of State what the Council's resolution would have been if the appeal had not been lodged. The report below explains the Planning Officers case and that they would have been minded to **REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION** for the following two reasons:

- 1 Insufficient information has been submitted to satisfy the Local Planning Authority that all future operational needs of rail-based operations on the branch line between Epping - North Weald - Ongar could be met by residual land and therefore future rail operations may be prejudiced by the proposals, thus contrary to policy ST8 of the adopted Local Plan Alterations (2006).
- 2 The proposed residential development is in a non-sustainable location in relation to secondary school infrastructure and will result in increase car-borne journeys contrary to policy CS5 of the Essex and Southend-On-Sea Replacement Structure Plan and policy CP9 and I1A of the adopted Local Plan Alterations (2006).

Description of Proposal:

Outline application for residential development with all detailed matters reserved, except for means of access into and out of the site. The access will be as existing from the current station access towards the north-east corner of the site off the High Street.

Description of Site:

Former railway sidings goods yard, south of the railway station and rail line. The development site area measures 0.8 hectares and is set back behind a fenced off parcel of land that front directly onto the High Street. The rest of the site immediately west leading up to and beyond Cripsey Brook is not proposed for development but is in the applicant's ownership. The site is on the edge of a built up residential area to the north, beyond the station, and there is ribbon development following the road to the south. South and west of the application site is open countryside part of the Metropolitan Green Belt. There is a level change partly along the southern portion of the site marked by an embankment.

The application site is generally unused and free of buildings. The railway line is being run as a leisure line mainly at weekends.

Relevant History:

EPF/878/04 – Outline application for residential development (retirement homes) including details of means access – Refused 1/3/05. Three reasons:

1. Lack of affordable housing
2. Prejudicial to future rail operations of Epping – Ongar rail line
3. Insufficient clarity that the development will not extend into the Green Belt or the flood plain.

The above planning application was considered alongside a separate planning application for residential development of 54 houses at North Weald Station. This application, EPF/877/04, was also refused planning permission.

Policies Applied:

Policies of Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan:

CS2 (Protecting the Natural and Built Environment)
CS1, CS4 and CS5 (Sustainable Development and Transport)
C2 (Metropolitan Green Belt)
BE1 (Urban Intensification)
BE5 (Planning Obligations)
H2 - H5 (Housing)
T1, T4 and T5 (Transport)

Policies of the Local Plan, including Local Plan Alterations Adopted July 2006:

CP1 (Achieving sustainable development objectives),
CP2 (Protecting the rural and built environment),
CP3 (New Development),
CP7 (Urban form and quality),
CP9 (Sustainable Transport),
GB7A (Conspicuous urban development impacting on the Green Belt)
H2A (Previously developed land)
H5A, H6A and H7A (Affordable Housing provision)
NC4 (Protection of Established Habitats)
HC12 (Setting of Listed Building)
U2A (Development in Flood Risk Areas)
U2B (Flood Risk Assessment Zones)
ST1 and 2 (Location and Accessibility of development)
ST4 (Road Safety)
I1A (Planning Obligations)

ST8 (Epping to Ongar Line): In full this reads as follows:

Proposals that would prevent the reinstatement and future operation of the branch line between Epping – North Weald – Chipping Ongar will be refused. In the event of the track and other infrastructure being dismantled, the council will support interim public access to the route for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.

Issues and Considerations:

The main issue in this case is whether the applicant has made a convincing case to justify that this is surplus railway land and therefore is the proposed residential development on this site contrary to policy ST8 of the Local Plan.

Background

The previous planning application proposed the same in principal outline residential development of the site. However, at that time, because of the planning obligation involved Planning Officers considered that scheme was acceptable and recommended grant of planning permission, together with the planning application at North Weald. As both applications would have been dealt with by two different Area Plans Sub-Committees, they were reported together to District Development Committee particularly since the planning benefits of that proposal benefited both areas and formed part of the very special circumstances justifying development of Green Belt land in North Weald. That committee however, refused the applications. In respect of the Ongar application, this was because of lack of affordable housing, lack of clarification over whether the development included land in the green belt and flood plain and for the third reason, which was:-

“Insufficient information has been submitted to satisfy the Local Planning Authority that all future operational needs of rail-based operations on the Epping-Ongar rail line could be met by residual land, and therefore future rail operations may be prejudiced by the proposals, contrary to Policy T2 of the adopted Local Plan.”

Those planning applications, if they had been approved, would by virtue of the planning obligation gift the railway to Essex County Council to secure and maintain the line and stations and to enable them to operate a heritage line from Ongar to just short of Epping Station. By bringing the line into public ownership via Essex County Council it was hoped that the long-term target to connect the line back to the Epping Station, whilst subject to considerable investment would have been achieved. Alternatively it could have secured a commercial service and/or remain as a tourist heritage line.

This Proposed Development

The applicants are Epping Ongar Railway Holdings Ltd, who made the previous refused planning application. They own the railway line, track and stations from Ongar to just short of Epping station, the latter of course remains part of the London Underground.

The current planning application no longer provides residential in outline form for retirement homes, but is general residential with 30% to be affordable housing, which they state can be achieved through a Section 106 Agreement. They have confirmed that none of the site for the development includes Green Belt land and this is agreed by Officers. This is also clarification that none of the development site is in the lower flood plain area below the embankment, which runs along part of the southern portion of the site. The Environment Agency confirmed on the previous refused planning application that they had no objections to raise, subject to the imposition of planning conditions, including no buildings or raising of ground levels within the area of land liable

to flood. It is considered that these two previous reasons for refusal have been overcome on this planning application.

The main issue therefore remains the loss of the railway land to non-railway development.

The previous planning applications had the support of Essex County Council because they would take ownership and ensure there was security that the railway line would be put back into public ownership and would have secured the whole of the line up to Epping.

There is a major difference between this and the previous application because the County Council on the current planning application are no longer being offered the line and there is no application for development at North Weald. The assessment of the outline residential development on the application site is therefore not part of an overall proposal to secure the future of the railway line.

However, the handing over of the railway to a public body would have ensured that this transport corridor would have been safeguarded and therefore satisfy a prime aim of the former policy T2 and the recently adopted ST8. As this is not the case here, the applicants argue that only the railway line and stations need to be safeguarded and there is sufficient land retained with the station at Ongar for any future railway use of the line. In fact they have in recent weeks lodged a separate planning application to extend a hardstanding area along the side of the railway line, up to the bridge over the brook on the western extremity of the site and provide 70+ parking spaces, and without encroaching onto the application site. This would be used to provide enough customer/ visitor parking for the use of the line as a heritage tourist line, which they intend to expand in 2007 by adding further rail movement on the track. There are also existing hardsurfaces in front of the station building where further 10 or so spaces can be provided. The applicants initially stated they could provide 100 spaces, but this would seem unlikely, particularly given their recent submission.

Planning Officers have sought the views of Government Offices as to whether they consider the land is surplus to need for the railway. East of England Development Agency (EEDA) state that this falls outside their statutory notification, and as their principal role concerns improving the regions economic performance and regeneration, they had no specific comments to make.

East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) commented that the council should not be supportive if the proposal would prevent the reuse of the rail line which would not be consistent with the Regional Spatial Strategy. In particular, the council should be satisfied that this application does now provide sufficient scope for any operational needs of a reinstated line.

Officers conclude on this matter that the applicant has not demonstrated that the future use of the rail line would be secured with the loss of this land. Moreover, the applicants submission is light in detail and merely states that 100 cars can be parked at Ongar without the need for the land which forms the application site. However, whether it be for a leisure line or a passenger line, the land associated with the station will be restricted to the current track and narrow land immediately north that currently contains a arched shape engine shed. The previous planning applications relied upon some workshop and storage use at North Weald but this is no longer part of this submission. As such, these facilities may well be required at Ongar and the loss of this land to residential development will compromise the space and land availability to carry out such operations.

Officers therefore conclude that the future use of the branch line could be at serious risk if the planning application is granted and the land severed from the railway, it is therefore, considered contrary to policy ST8.

Other Matters

Highway officers have raised no objection to the means of access to the site through the current High Street station access road/forecourt. It is considered that the road has the capacity to cater for any increase in traffic generated by the development and that any future residents have access to local shops, schools and services by more sustainable means of transport other than by car.

The County Council Education Officer considers that a developer contribution would be required in the region of £31,200 as calculated using September 2005 cost and will need to be index linked from this date. In some aspects the principle of residential development is acceptable because of its ease and proximity for residents to walk to town centre to the south and there is a limited but regular bus service from the High Street. However, the site is remote from secondary schools and the proposal is likely to result in additional costs to Essex County Council in terms of school transport. In this respect therefore it is a non-sustainable location, purely in relation to secondary school infrastructure in the area. For this reason in respect of education, it will fail to promote sustainable means of transport and rely on parents driving their children by car to either the nearest secondary schools in Brentwood or Epping, about 8 miles away. It will therefore be contrary to policies CS5 of the Structure Plan and CP9 of the Local Plan.

The impact of the proposed development upon the residential amenities of the residents living within the local area have been considered, but the access point is into a High Street where there is already traffic movement throughout the day and the activity associated with it will not add significantly to this. The houses in Bowes Drive are north of the rail line and the station and the visual impact of housing on this site will not be material to justify a refusal. A layout design would also safeguard against harm to the living conditions of residents to the south in Frank Bretton House elderly persons home south of the site. It will therefore not be contrary to policies DBE1, 2 and 9 of the Local Plan.

The development would also be visible from the Green Belt, which adjoins the site to the west. There would definitely be a visual change to the appearance of the site as viewed from public vantage points from the south. However, it will be seen against the backdrop of the station, railway buildings and housing beyond, despite being on higher ground than the footpath running near the brook. This is very much dependant on the height and scale of the development including any vegetation screening that may limit its impact upon the visual amenities of the green belt. Given this is railway related land and that buildings associated with the railway, including railway train and stock could be located on the site, it is, on balance, considered that residential development would not appear excessively conspicuous when viewed from the Green Belt.

Ongar station is a listed building, but the setting of the station and its platform would not be materially harmed should the site be developed for residential purposes given the appearance of the site and the presence of the hardstanding forecourt separating the two sites.

Finally, there have been previous reports of slow worm existence close to the track. Whilst this would not in itself stop the development going ahead, should the appeal be successful, then a suitably qualified herpetologist will be required to survey the area prior to any commencement of development.

Summary

In summary, a sufficiently robust case has not been made to convince the Local Planning Authority that development of the application site will not harm the future operation of the branch line furthermore, the Council considers the application land is not, therefore, surplus to the running of the railway.

It also considers the educational needs of the future residents have not been met by the proposal and will result in more private car trips to the nearest secondary school. If an appeal had not been

lodged against non-determination of this planning application, the proposal would have been recommended for Refusal. Should the applicant confirm by way of a drawn up legal agreement, checked and agreed by the council's solicitor, that they would agree to pay the educational contribution prior to a Public Inquiry, then this second reason could be withdrawn.

Members of the Committee must be clear that the purpose of Policy ST8 is to retain the line and to leave options for sustainable transport open for the future. It is not the purpose of the policy to prevent development of land, which, if the applicant can adequately demonstrate, is unlikely to be needed for any future rail operations.

Taking into account the strong objection from the Ongar Railway Preservation Society and those objections raised by the Town Council officers have conclude that a case has not be proven and the application is therefore recommended for refusal.

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS:

TOWN COUNCIL – Members were pleased to note that the applicant had now incorporated previous comments in respect of development on green belt land and in the absence of affordable housing into amended application. However it was felt that overall the application carried insufficient detail and required clarification in respect of the height of the proposed development, access whether this would be for both the residential development and the railway, details of the development in respect of the area shown on the plans as hatching. The Council would not support any proposal, which allowed the grassed area between the station and the High Street to be lost.

TOWN COUNCIL (2nd Letter) – Do not wish to see development which would prohibit the return of public transport amenities associated with the railway route between Epping and Ongar. The application is contrary to policy ST8 which states that the development would not be permitted that would prevent the reinstatement and future operation of the branch line between Epping, North Weald and Ongar.

3 BOWES DRIVE – Object. Poor regard for local residents, shy do we need more housing?

8 BANSONS WAY – Object, attract more off street parking in our road, sewer outfall is in the application site which will affect our former Great Eastern Railway cottages which were built to attract rail workers to Ongar prior to the First World War, land fill on site contains asbestos, rare fauna and flora exists over the area, future of the railway corridor is not known and provides essential parking for the potential users and cannot be provided elsewhere, a direct link to Stratford for the 2012 Olympics and study of new rail route from Chelmsford into Stansted Airport. Application should be refused and no development take place until these issues have been resolved; land at toe of embankment is in the flood plain; attract more car traffic along High Road in an area where public transport is abysmal.

25 BOWES DRIVE – Added traffic adding to congestion, pressure for parking in the village, harm to local environment building on this land, overlooking resulting in loss of privacy.

ONGAR RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY – Contrary to policies T1 and T2 and emerging ST8. Will prejudice the retention and the upgrading of the branch line contrary to T1. There is no guarantee that the long term rail operations would not be prejudiced given the lack of detail in the scheme particularly in relation to mitigation and commencement works, contrary to T2(i). It is also likely that this would prejudice future public access to the railway contrary to policy T2 (iii). The land should be reserved for strategic transport/railway heritage use. Insufficient detail of access to the site, not provide sufficient parking and access for the public using the railway, housing may prejudice the future use of the railway because of noise complaints from future occupants, insufficient detail of drainage and brook should not be polluted, land needed to maximise parking required for a leisure and/or commuter line, insufficient detail how the continued use of the railway will be safeguarded, full assessment of the land requirement of the railway is needed before planning is granted so that the railway operation is not compromised, lack of highway details

regarding reverse curves and sight lines, no commitment of the applicant to return some or all the development revenues to the future operation of the railway.

18 SEVERNS FIELD, EPPING – Object. The applicants acquired the site in 1998 on condition that a commuter service would be reinstated on the line between Epping and Ongar; this was to happen before October 2000. The applicant made statements that they had no interest in property development and never apply for residential planning. They have not run a commuter service and made a planning application, exact opposite what they said they would do. It would add to transport problems but prevent in perpetuity the line being reopened with proper parking and ancillary facilities. It is contrary to policies T1, T2 and emerging ST8. Other comments as made by Ongar Railway Preservation Society.

21 BOWES DRIVE – Will preclude a major portion of the land being available for railway operations by removing essential car parking/ public accessibility. Conflicts with Local Plan policies to enhance local transport infrastructure, increase stress levels on local roads, need to preserve the railway as a public service line. Current owners have already added engine sheds and ancillary buildings in close proximity to our houses in Bowes Drive and the application site could provide these facilities away from our properties as well as any additional track layout to permit movement of the required rolling stock and sidings to form a shunting yard, especially as we are suffering from the recent introduction of steam driven engines. Inadequate details of residential.

45 MAYFLOWER WAY – A new medical centre would be preferable than this proposed residential development as it is in the centre of town with plenty of space for parking and not the subject of flooding.

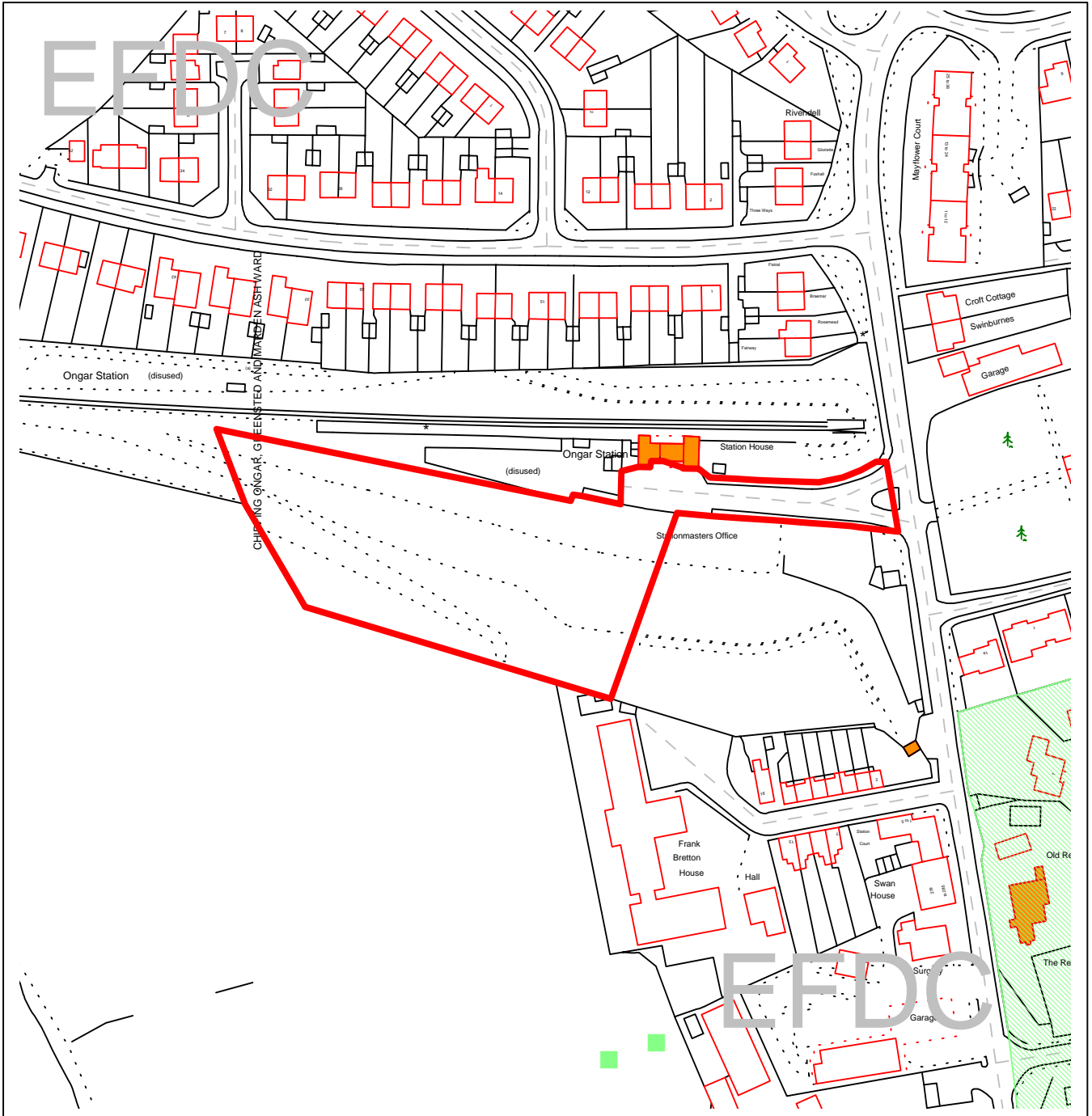
WINGFIELD STATION, ALFRETON, DERBYSHIRE – National need for covered accommodation for railway rolling stock as much of which is meant to be preserved is dumped in the open air, particularly with electric railway.

HAWTHORN HOUSE, HIGHWOOD, CHELMSFORD – Object as the land should be retained for railway related use in line with your Local Plan.



Epping Forest District Council

Area Planning Sub-Committee C



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Agenda Item Number:	2
Application Number:	EPF/1740/05
Site Name:	Land at Station Approach, High Street Ongar.
Scale of Plot:	1:2000

Report Item No: 3

APPLICATION No:	EPF/1387/06
SITE ADDRESS:	Ongar And District Sports Club Love Lane Ongar Essex CM5 9BL
PARISH:	Ongar
APPLICANT:	Ongar Sports and Social Club
DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:	Extension to provide shower facilities to existing club.
RECOMMENDED DECISION:	GRANT

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 Materials to be used for the external finishes of the proposed extension, shall match those of the existing building.

Description of Proposal:

This application is for a single storey flat-roofed extension to provide shower facilities. The extension is to be approximately 10 metres wide by 2.5 metres deep.

Description of Site:

The site comprises a sports club located east of Love Lane and to the south of Onslow Gardens. Most of the surrounding area comprises playing fields, however there are sporadic buildings on the site. The main clubhouse and surrounding buildings are of differing size, but the clubhouse is the largest building. A public footpath runs to the north of the main building and is directly to the south of the properties in Onslow Gardens.

Relevant History:

The site has been subject to various applications, the most relevant are below:

EPF/921/76 – Erection of an extension to pavilion - Granted permission on 4/10/76.

EPF/1210/78 – Single storey extension to provide additional changing rooms and toilets - Granted permission on 26/10/78.

EPF/1647/87 – Extension - Granted permission on 15/1/88.

EPF/636/91 – Changing room extension - Granted permission on 18/8/91.

Policies Applied:

Countryside Policy from the Essex and Southend on Sea Replacement Structure Plan:-

C2 – Development within the Metropolitan Green Belt.

Green Belt, Recreation Sport & Tourism and Design Policies from Epping Forest District Council's Replacement Local Plan:-

GB2A – Development within the Green Belt.

RST1 – Additional sporting facilities

DBE1 – Design of new buildings

DBE2 – Effect of new buildings on surroundings.

DBE4 – New buildings in the Green Belt.

DBE9 – Amenity considerations.

Issues and Considerations:

The main issues with this application relate to the appropriateness of the extension in the context of the green belt, its design and appearance and whether or not any neighbours would be unduly affected.

Green Belt

Green Belt Policies permit development for the purposes of outdoor participatory sport and associated small scale buildings, and the development of additional sports facilities is promoted within RST1 providing the character of the surrounding area is not adversely affected.

Although the clubhouse has been extended before (and could not be described as a small-scale building) the site is positioned on the edge of the green belt boundary, and the location of the extension such that it will not be a prominent or excessively visible feature in the surrounding area. The overall size of this extension is limited in comparison with the existing building, and on the whole the proposal will not harm the objectives of the Green Belt.

Design

Visually the extension replicates an existing flat-roofed extension onto which it will adjoin. The aesthetics are somewhat plain and the concerns raised by the Town Council are understood, but the fact remains that this is a small addition in comparison to the existing building and is visually similar to the existing building, which is also visible from the footpath. On this basis it is considered that were a refusal made on design grounds it would be very difficult to defend on appeal.

The concerns regarding the provision of a flat roof are again understood, but the extension is to attach to a large expanse of existing flat roof, which also houses a smaller shower area (to be removed as part of the proposals). On the whole therefore, there are no issues that arise that would warrant a refusal.

Impact on neighbours

The location of the site in relation to surroundings means that the erection of this extension will not unduly affect the provision of light to any neighbour. The nearest properties to the site are in Onslow Gardens, the other side of the footpath.

Conclusion

On the basis of the above the application is considered to be acceptable and is recommended for approval.

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS:

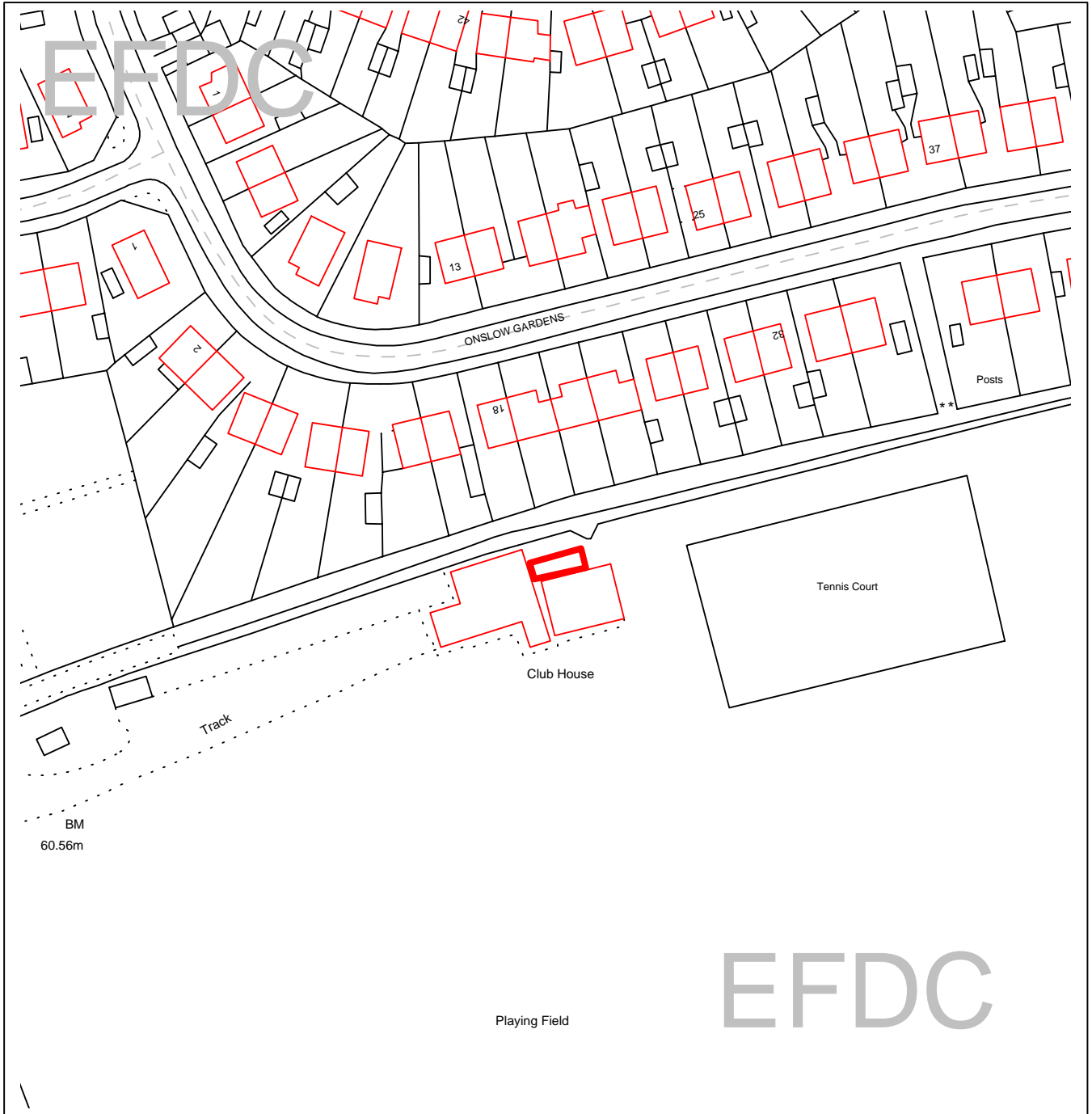
TOWN COUNCIL – Object. The proposal would be detrimental to the street-scene and adjacent footpath amenity. The Council also commented that the site proposed for the development was not the most appropriate place for showers. The flat roof proposed could encourage anti-social behaviour.

20 ONSLOW GARDENS – We are nearest neighbour to the extension and are most likely to be affected. We do not object in principle but have the following concerns. 1) Boundary of building is much nearer ours and roof level would be higher nearer our property reducing feeling of open space. 2) Footpath will feel more enclosed. 3) Potential of increased noise/nuisance while showers are in use. 4) Design of roof would invite climbing access that gives view of the back of our property and garden. This is currently not an uncommon occurrence when events are held at the club and the new design has the potential to worsen this issue. 5) External lighting on the building shines onto the back of our property at night and similar lighting on new structure would worsen the situation, as it is much closer. I can appreciate the need for these showers however I feel that with a bit more thought and better planning they could be better suited within the existing building thus avoiding additional disruption to those neighbouring the club.



Epping Forest District Council

Area Planning Sub-Committee C



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Agenda Item Number:	3
Application Number:	EPF/1387/06
Site Name:	Ongar And District Sports Club, Love Lane, Ongar.
Scale of Plot:	1:1250

Report Item No: 4

APPLICATION No:	EPF/1206/06
SITE ADDRESS:	Stapleford Airfield Ongar Road Stapleford Abbots Epping Essex
PARISH:	Stapleford Abbots
APPLICANT:	Hearts and Essex Aeroclub Ltd
DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:	Replace existing store building with accommodation block.
RECOMMENDED DECISION:	GRANT

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 Details of the types and colours of the external finishes shall be submitted for approval by the Local Planning Authority in writing prior to the commencement of the development, and the development shall be implemented in accordance with such approved details.
- 3 The proposed extension shall only be used as ancillary accommodation for the existing airfield pilot training use and shall not be occupied as a unit separately from this use.
- 4 Prior to commencement of development, including demolition or site clearance works, a phased contaminated land investigation shall be undertaken to assess the presence of contaminants at the site in accordance with an agreed protocol as below. Should any contaminants be found in unacceptable concentrations, appropriate remediation works shall be carried out and a scheme for any necessary maintenance works adopted.

Prior to carrying out a phase 1 preliminary investigation, a protocol for the investigation shall be agreed in writing with the LPA and the completed phase 1 investigation shall be submitted to the LPA upon completion for approval.

Should a phase 2 main site investigation and risk assessment be necessary, a protocol for this investigation shall be submitted to and approved by the LPA before commencing the study and the completed phase 2 investigation with remediation proposals shall be submitted to and approved by the LPA prior to any remediation works being carried out.

Following remediation, a completion report and any necessary maintenance programme shall be submitted to the LPA for approval prior to first occupation of the completed development.

Description of Proposal:

Replacement of existing store with an accommodation block with 14 bedrooms. The existing building measures 13.7m x 25m by 3.6m, and the replacement measures 11.6m x 25m by 5.1m high. The building will be used for accommodation of students who are learning to fly at the airfield.

Description of Site:

A long established airfield to the south of the A113 road from Abridge to Passingford Bridge. There are a number of hangars and ancillary airfield buildings along the northern boundary of the site, and a partially hardened runway orientated south west to north east. The whole site is within the Green Belt.

Relevant History:

Numerous, none relevant to this application

Polices Applied:

Structure Plan
C2 Development in the Green Belt

Local Plan
GB2A Green Belt Policy
DBE 1 & 2 Design in the Green Belt
CP3 Sustainable new development

Issues and Considerations:

The main issues are whether the proposed accommodation is appropriate development within the Green Belt, and if not whether there are any very special circumstances which would overcome the inappropriateness, design, highway issues and sustainability.

Green Belt

The proposal does not accord with any of the criteria within policy GB2A, and is therefore, by definition, inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Therefore the issue is if there are very special circumstances which would overcome the harm to the Green Belt.

The site has been used for aviation activities since the mid 1930's and this use is considered to be appropriate to the aviation use of the airfield. In the local plan alterations recently adopted there was no policy change regarding the status of the airfield, but it does contain a paragraph regarding the use of the airfield. This states (Chapter 17, para 17.40a) "the airfield is primarily used for leisure purposes...has a variety of users including air ambulance and a number of air related and other businesses. It is also used for training pilots, but its main use is probably still for recreational purposes. The Council supports the continued use of Stapleford Airfield, but this has to be within the context of its location within the Green belt."

The proposed building will replace an existing building of very similar dimensions and will remain a single storey building. It will be sited to the west of a series of large hangar buildings, and to the east of a single storey building and a two storey house, which is already used for student accommodation. Therefore it will form part of the existing built up area on the northern boundary of the airfield site, and have a minimal further impact on the openness of the Green Belt in this location.

The applicant has argued this is a use, which directly relates to the use of the airfield, as pilot training is already provided (since 1969) on the site and some of the students using the facilities on the site are being accommodated at other locations throughout the district. Many of the students who use the facilities are training for a career in commercial aviation and pay for the cost of their course themselves, and accommodation costs on a course, which may last up to a year, represent a large percentage of the cost. This facility will enable costs to be brought down, as well as eliminating travel costs.

Lambourne Parish Council have objected to the scheme on the grounds that this is an inappropriate change of use of the Green Belt, over commercialisation of the airfield, removal of storage space and increased noise pollution from air traffic.

It is the case that as this is an aviation related use on an airfield that this is not an inappropriate use in this area of the Green Belt. Whilst it is the case that the airfield is described in chapter 17 of the Local Plan Alterations as primarily for leisure use, it is also acknowledged that it is also used for air related businesses, and the scheme related to an existing and long established business use of the site; there is no further commercialisation of the site as a result of this scheme.

The storage space issue is not critical due to the limited size of the existing building, which is relatively small and restricted for large scale storage. The Council is also concerned that the use of the accommodation by students will increase the number of flights from the airfield, however it is the case that increased use will be made of the on site simulators, which can be used up to 11pm at night, unlike actual night flying which is restricted at the site, and the aim of the simulators is to reduce the number of actual training flights that need to be made. It is also the case that the number of students will not increase over the number currently using the facilities.

Highways

There are no adverse highway implications as a result of this scheme, as the site is already used as an airfield. There is sufficient parking already on the site to accommodate the vehicle traffic.

Design

The building has been designed to integrate with the other building on the airfield and will not cause any harm to the Green Belt with its simple design.

Sustainability

The scheme will see a reduction in the number of vehicle movements to and from the site as students will be able to stay on the site and will not need to commute from off site accommodation, resulting in a more sustainable use of the site.

Conclusion

It is considered that this scheme, whilst amounting to inappropriate development within the Green Belt, has demonstrated a set of circumstances that are considered to overcome any identified harm to the Green Belt in this location.

The proposed building is of a similar size and scale to the existing building , its location is within the existing built up portion of the airfield and therefore causes little harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

The proposed use of the building is ancillary to an important function of the existing airfield, that of aviation training, and no specific harm has been identified by the proposed use to the Green Belt in this location. The building is of an acceptable design and the scheme will reduce the overall amount of vehicles transiting to and from the site which is a clear benefit to both the Green Belt and the local area.

As such it is considered that for all the above factors the proposal can be seen to provide special circumstances and can in this instance be recommended for approval.

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS:

LAMBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL - Object, this is an inappropriate change of use in the Green Belt, the accommodation would cause over commercialisation of what is accepted as a recreational airfield (ref EFDC Local Plan alterations – Pre Enquiry Changes, Dec 2005, page 20(representation number 003020R – policy para: 17.40a), conversion would remove valuable storage space which is presently very limited, increase in air traffic following time spent in simulator would lead to more unacceptable noise pollution. Should permission be granted would expect new use to be validated on a regular basis.

STAPLEFORD ABBOTTS PARSISH COUNCIL – No objection

Report Item No: 5

APPLICATION No:	EPF/1243/06
SITE ADDRESS:	Stapleford Airfield Ongar Road Stapleford Abbots Epping Essex
PARISH:	Stapleford Abbots
APPLICANT:	Herts and Essex Aeroclub Ltd
DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:	Replace existing hangar and store with wider hangar.
RECOMMENDED DECISION:	GRANT

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 Details of the types and colours of the external finishes shall be submitted for approval by the Local Planning Authority in writing prior to the commencement of the development, and the development shall be implemented in accordance with such approved details.
- 3 Prior to commencement of development, including demolition or site clearance works, a phased contaminated land investigation shall be undertaken to assess the presence of contaminants at the site in accordance with an agreed protocol as below. Should any contaminants be found in unacceptable concentrations, appropriate remediation works shall be carried out and a scheme for any necessary maintenance works adopted.

Prior to carrying out a phase 1 preliminary investigation, a protocol for the investigation shall be agreed in writing with the LPA and the completed phase 1 investigation shall be submitted to the LPA upon completion for approval.

Should a phase 2 main site investigation and risk assessment be necessary, a protocol for this investigation shall be submitted to and approved by the LPA before commencing the study and the completed phase 2 investigation with remediation proposals shall be submitted to and approved by the LPA prior to any remediation works being carried out.

Following remediation, a completion report and any necessary maintenance programme shall be submitted to the LPA for approval prior to first occupation of the completed development.
- 4 The hangar hereby approved shall be used solely for the hangarage and maintenance of Aircraft based on Stapleford Airfield and for no other use.

Description of Proposal:

Replacement of existing hangar and store with larger hangar. The existing building measures 31m x 31m by 10m high, and the replacement measures 36m x 36m by 10m high. The existing store that will be removed measures 5.2m x 15m by 3.8m high. The building will be used for hangarage and maintenance of aircraft based at the site.

Description of Site:

A long established airfield to the south of the A113 road from Abridge to Passingford Bridge. There are a number of hangars and ancillary airfield buildings along the northern boundary of the site, and a partially hardened runway orientated south west to north east. The whole site is within the Green Belt.

Relevant History:

Numerous, none relevant to this application

Polices Applied:

Structure Plan
C2 Development in the Green Belt

Local Plan
GB2A Green Belt Policy
DBE 1 & 2 Design in the Green Belt

Issues and Considerations:

The main issues are design and whether the proposed new hangar and store is appropriate development within the Green Belt, and if not whether there are any very special circumstances which would overcome inappropriateness.

Green Belt

The proposal does not accord with any of the criteria within policy GB2A, and is therefore, by definition, inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Therefore the issue is if there are very special circumstances which would overcome the harm to the Green Belt.

The site has been used for aviation activities since the mid 1930's and this proposal is clearly relevant to the aviation use of the airfield. In the local plan alterations recently adopted there was no policy change regarding the status of the airfield, but it does contain a paragraph regarding the use of the airfield. This states (Chapter 17, para 17.40a) "the airfield is primarily used for leisure purposes...has a variety of users including air ambulance and a number of air related and other businesses. It is also used for training pilots, but its main use is probably still for recreational purposes. The Council supports the continued use of Stapleford Airfield, but this has to be within the context of its location within the Green belt."

The proposed building will replace an existing building of slightly smaller dimensions, and will not be any higher than the building it replaces. The existing building was erected in 1943 and is beginning to show its age.

The development will be sited on the western edge of the western hangar complex and thus the building will form part of the existing built up area on the northern boundary of the airfield site. Due to this siting, and being the same height as the original building it is considered that it will have minimal further impact on the openness of the Green Belt in this location.

The applicant has argued this is a use which directly relates to the use of the airfield, as the hangar will be used for aircraft maintenance. This is an ongoing need and will provide better working conditions for the maintenance and technical staff as the building will be fully insulated, unlike the current building, which will contribute to providing a more sustainable form of building. In addition latest Government policy, as implemented through the Civil Aviation Authority, will soon require all aircraft above a certain weight to be stored in a locked and alarmed hangar. The current hangar door is too low to allow some of the current aircraft using the airfield to use the existing facility.

The proposal will not see any increase in the number of aircraft on the site, nor any increase in the size of the existing aircraft. Many of the existing aircraft (largely in connection with the Air Ambulance use) are too large for the existing hangar and will have to be hangared in the near future.

Design

The building has been designed to integrate with the other building on the airfield and will not cause any harm to the Green Belt with its simple and functional design.

Conclusion

It is the case that this scheme, whilst inappropriate development within the Green Belt, has demonstrated very special circumstances; in that it is similar in size and scale to the existing building, its location is within the existing built up portion of the airfield and causes no harm to the openness of the Green Belt, its use is appropriate for the existing airfield and no harm is caused by the proposed use to the Green Belt in this location. The building is of an acceptable design. Therefore despite some local concerns that have been dealt with above this proposal is recommended for approval.

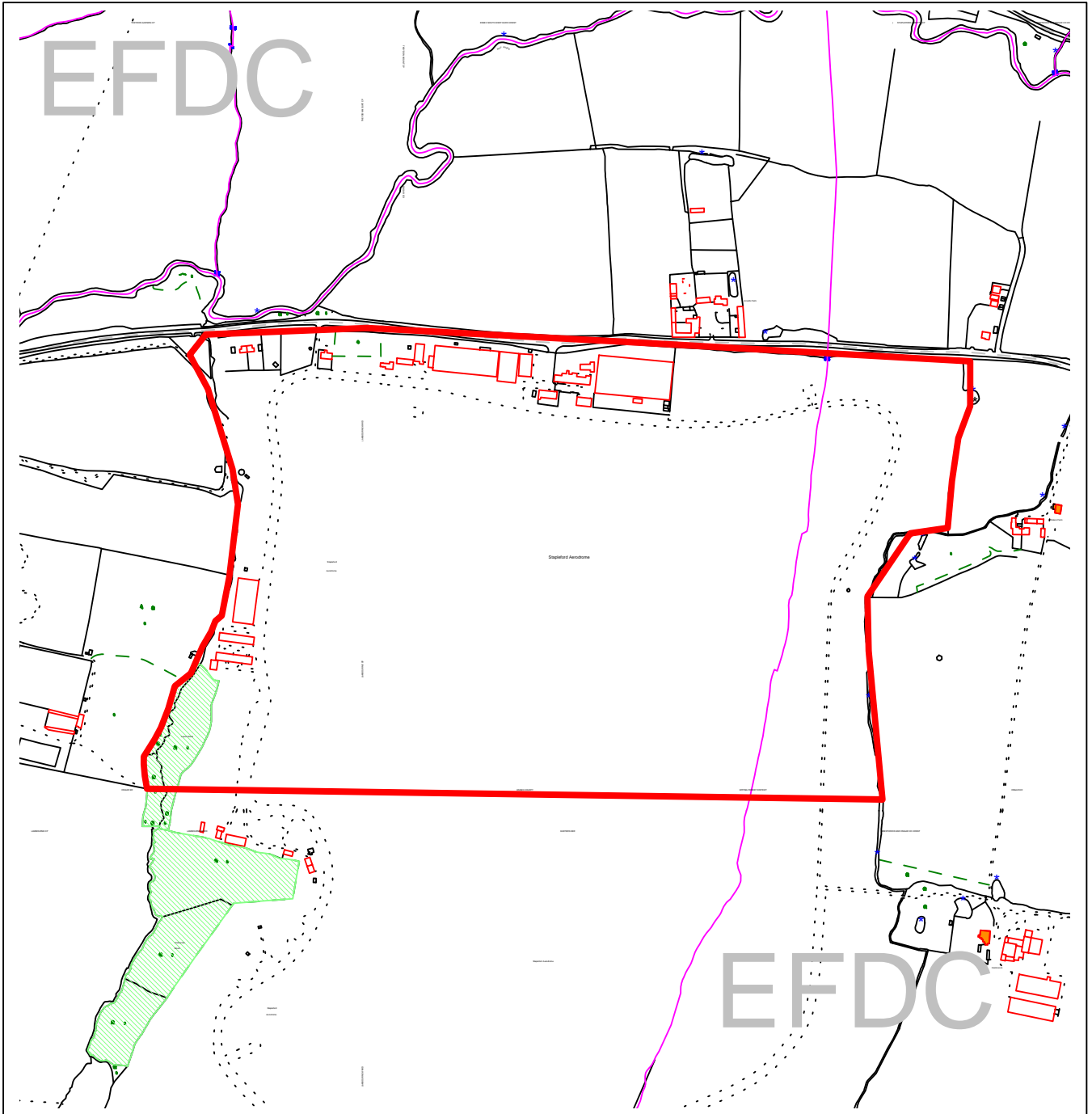
SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS:

STAPLEFORD ABBOTTS PARISH COUNCIL – No objection, 2 observations – 1. Is this to accommodate larger aircraft? 2. We believe the existing hangar is fabricated with asbestos.



Epping Forest District Council

Area Planning Sub-Committee C



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Agenda Item Numbers:	4 & 5
Application Number:	EPF/1206/06 & EPF/1243/06
Site Name:	Stapleford Airfield, Ongar Road, Stapleford Abbots.
Scale of Plot:	1:7500

Report Item No: 6

APPLICATION No:	EPF/1374/06
SITE ADDRESS:	High House Farm Stapleford Road Stapleford Abbots Essex
PARISH:	Stapleford Abbots
APPLICANT:	Five Star Properties
DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:	Outline application for the demolition of agricultural /industrial complex and the erection of 6 new dwellings and 1 replacement dwelling. (Revised application)
RECOMMENDED DECISION:	GRANT

CONDITIONS:

- 1 Application for the approval of details reserved by this permission must be made not later than the expiration of three years from the date of this notice. The development hereby permitted must be begun not later than the expiration of two years from the date of the final approval of the details reserved by this permission or, in the case of approval on different dates, the final approval of the last matter approved.
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall only be carried out in accordance with detailed plans and particulars, which shall have previously been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall show the siting, design, landscaping and external appearance of the building(s) thereto.
- 3 The final layout of the proposed development shall adhere to the principles of the illustrative layout plan (ama dwg. ref 02.159/5) as submitted with this outline application.
- 4 Details of the types and colours of the external finishes shall be submitted for approval by the Local Planning Authority in writing prior to the commencement of the development, and the development shall be implemented in accordance with such approved details.
- 5 Prior to the commencement of development details of screen walls, fences or such similar structures shall be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and shall be erected before the occupation of any of the dwellings hereby approved and maintained in the agreed positions.
- 6 Before the commencement of the development, or of any works on the site and concurrently with the detailed design plans, a full tree and site survey shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority. The submitted details shall include, as appropriate, the following information at a legible scale:

- (a) Reference number, species, location, girth or stem diameter and accurately planned crown spread, of all trees with a stem diameter with 100mm or greater on or adjacent to the site; and
- (b) An assessment of their condition and value;
- (c) Details of existing levels, including contours where appropriate, and any proposed changes of level across the site;
- (d) Location, spread and other relevant details of relevant hedgerows, hedges and other significant areas of vegetation;
- (e) Location and dimensions of existing watercourses, drainage channels and other aquatic features with water, invert and bank levels as appropriate;
- (f) Trees, or other features to be removed which shall be clearly and separately identified on the plans.
- (g) Existing boundary treatments and forms of enclosure;
- (h) Existing structures, services and other artefacts, including hard surfaces;
- (i) Indication of land use, roads or other means of access, structures and natural features on land adjoining the development site; and
- (j) Route of existing footpaths and public rights of way on and adjoining the site.

7 Before any works commence on site, and concurrently with the detailed design plans, an Ecological Survey of the site, or any part thereof identified by the Local Planning Authority, shall be carried out and submitted to the Local Planning Authority with an assessment of the impact of the proposed development and any appropriate measures of alleviation. Development shall be undertaken only in accordance with the agreed measures.

8 The fencing, or other protection which is part of the approved Statement shall not be moved or removed, temporarily or otherwise, until all works, including external works have been completed and all equipment, machinery and surplus materials removed from the site.

The Arboricultural Method Statement shall indicate the specification and timetable of any tree works, which shall be in accordance with the British Standard Recommendations for Tree Works (BS.3998: 1989).

The Arboricultural Method Statement shall include a scheme for the inspection and supervision of the tree protection measures. The scheme shall be appropriate to the scale and duration of the works and may include details of personnel induction and awareness of arboricultural matters; identification of individual responsibilities and key personnel; a statement of delegated powers; frequency, dates and times of inspections and reporting, and procedures for dealing with variations and incidents. The scheme of inspection and supervision shall be administered by a suitable person, approved by the local planning authority but instructed by the applicant.

9 No tree, shrub, or hedge which are shown as being retained on the approved plans shall be cut down, uprooted, wilfully damaged or destroyed, cut back in any way or removed other than in accordance with the approved plans and particulars, without the written approval of the Local Planning Authority. All tree works approved shall be carried out in accordance with British Standard Recommendations for Tree Work (B.S.3998: 1989).

If any tree shown to be retained in accordance with the approved plans and particulars is removed, uprooted or destroyed, or dies, or becomes severely damaged or diseased within 3 years of the completion of the development, another tree, shrub, or hedge shall be planted at the same place, and that tree, shrub, or hedge shall be of such size, specification, and species, and should be planted at

such time as may be specified in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

If within a period of five years from the date of planting any replacement tree is removed, uprooted or destroyed, or dies or becomes seriously damaged or defective another tree 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.

10 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) have been submitted to an approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and these works shall be carried out as approved. These 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 vehicle artefacts and structures, including signs and lighting and functional services above and below ground. 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. 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.

11 No development shall take place, including site clearance or other preparatory work, until all details relevant to the implementation of hard and soft landscape works and tree planting, hereafter called the Landscape Method Statement, have been submitted to the LPA, and the development shall not commence until the Landscape Method Statement has been approved by the LPA in writing. All landscape works shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details, unless the LPA has given its prior written consent to any variation.

The Landscape Method Statement shall include as appropriate, protection of the planting areas, where appropriate by fencing, during construction; preparation of the whole planting environment, particularly to provide adequate drainage; and the provision which is to be made for weed control, plant handling and protection, watering, mulching, and the staking, tying and protection of trees. The Landscape Method Statement shall also normally include provision for maintenance for the period of establishment, including weeding, watering and formative pruning, and the removal of stakes and ties. Provision shall be made for replacement of any plant, including replacements, that are removed, are uprooted, or which die or fail to thrive, for a period of five years from their planting, in the first available season and at the same place, with an equivalent plant, unless the LPA has given its prior written consent to any variation.

All hard and soft landscape works shall be completed prior to the occupation or use of any part of the development, unless the LPA has given its prior written consent to a programme of implementation. The hard and soft landscape works, including tree planting, shall be carried out strictly in accordance with any approved timetable.

The Landscape Method Statement shall state the provision, which is to be made for supervision of the full programme of works, including site preparation, planting, subsequent management and replacement of failed plants.

- 12 Before the occupation or use of any phase or part of the development, whichever is the soonest, a Landscape Management Plan (LMP) shall be submitted to and approved by the LPA.

The LMP shall contain a statement of the long-term aims and objectives covering all elements of the implementation of the agreed landscape scheme and full details of all management and establishment operations over a five-year period, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the LPA. It shall also include details of the relevant management, and supervisory responsibilities.

The LMP shall also include provision for a review to be undertaken before the end of the five-year period. A revised LMP shall be submitted for the agreement of the LPA before five years has expired. The revised details shall make similar provisions for the long-term maintenance and management of the landscape scheme. The revised scheme shall also make provision for revision and updating.

The provisions of the LMP, and subsequent revisions shall be adhered to and any variation shall have been agreed beforehand in writing by the LPA. No trees, shrubs, hedges or other plants shall be removed for the duration of the Landscape Management Scheme or its revisions, without the prior written approval of the LPA. Any trees, shrubs, hedges or other plants being so removed shall be replaced in the first available planting season by an equivalent replacement or replacements to the satisfaction of the LPA. Management of the landscape scheme in accordance with the LMP or their agreed revisions shall not cease before the duration of the use of the development unless agreed in writing by the LPA.

- 13 Prior to commencement of development, including demolition or site clearance works, a phased contaminated land investigation shall be undertaken to assess the presence of contaminants at the site in accordance with an agreed protocol as below. Should any contaminants be found in unacceptable concentrations, appropriate remediation works shall be carried out and a scheme for any necessary maintenance works adopted.

Prior to carrying out a phase 1 preliminary investigation, a protocol for the investigation shall be agreed in writing with the LPA and the completed phase 1 investigation shall be submitted to the LPA upon completion for approval.

Should a phase 2 main site investigation and risk assessment be necessary, a protocol for this investigation shall be submitted to and approved by the LPA before commencing the study and the completed phase 2 investigation with remediation proposals shall be submitted to and approved by the LPA prior to any remediation works being carried out.

Following remediation, a completion report and any necessary maintenance programme shall be submitted to the LPA for approval prior to first occupation of the completed development.

- 14 A flood risk assessment shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of development. The assessment shall include calculations of increased run-off and associated volume of storm detention using Windes or other similar programme. The approved measures shall be undertaken prior to the first occupation of the building hereby approved and shall be adequately maintained.

- 15 Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 1995 as amended (or any other order revoking, further amending or re-enacting that order) no development generally permitted by virtue of Part 1, Classes A, B and E shall be undertaken without the prior written permission of the Local Planning Authority.
- 16 Details of sustainable buildings construction, drainage, water storage/recycling and energy efficient services shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before work commences on site. The details as agreed shall be carried out thereafter.
- 17 This permission is subject to a unilateral undertaking, which has been submitted by the applicant as part of this planning application, and no development shall take place until measures to enable the provision of an affordable housing contribution, improvements to Footpaths and landscaping of the site area including that marked blue on drawing no. 02.159/04, provision of a Parish Room building and associated car parking area and village green, necessitated by this development are secured with the local planning authority.
- 18 Before work commences on the site, details of existing and proposed site levels shall be submitted and agreed in writing by the Local Planning authority. The details as agreed shall be carried out thereafter and include removal from the site of all existing hardstanding areas associated with the current former agricultural buildings on the site, as shown on drawing no. 02.159/7, and re-grading of that part of the site used formerly for unauthorised tipping. This work shall be carried out before first construction of the residential development hereby approved.

Reason: To repair and enhance the visual quality of the landscape.

Description of Proposal:

Demolition of former agricultural buildings and a house, to be replaced by seven dwellinghouses. The application is in outline form and the indicative plans show six of the houses grouped approximately 170 metres away from the road, with a seventh house replacing an existing one close to the road. The plans also show a small parish council building and car park area at the site entrance. All matters are reserved for subsequent approval, so the submitted layout and elevations are indicative at this stage.

Description of Site:

The application site consists of a grouping of derelict farm buildings, set back from the main road and a detached house, close to the road, of some 2048 square metres footprint. Access to these buildings is via a 40 metre roadway from Stapleford Road. The applicants ownership of the site extends beyond these buildings to include some 40 hectares of agricultural land, west of Stapleford Road and includes two public footpaths. The land falls north to south with the derelict farm buildings occupying the higher ground.

The whole site is in the Metropolitan Green Belt as is the surrounding area. The more built up area of Stapleford Abbots is to the south-east towards the junction with Bournebridge Lane. The village hall and primary school are 1.2 kms north on Stapleford Road.

Relevant History:

EPF/916/89 – Change of use to golf course – Granted subject to a legal agreement signed in 1994.

EPF/627/91 – Removal of some redundant agricultural buildings and change of use of remaining buildings to Class B1 (Business) – Appeal against non-determination, which was dismissed 6/2/92.

EPF/1000/96 – Change of use of land to leisure and Recreation Park – Refused 29/1/97.

EPF/571/99 – Renewal of Planning Permission EPF/916/89 for a golf course – Granted subject to a legal agreement, which was not renewed and the permission lapsed.

EPF/1688/99 – Outline application for residential development consisting of 22 houses with associated parking and open space – Appeal against non-determination but subsequently withdrawn.

EPF/26/01 – Outline application for demolition of farm buildings and farmhouse with redevelopment for housing including woodland planting, footpaths and village green – Refused 28/11/01.

EPF/422/02 – Outline application for demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment comprising 10 residential units – Refused 2/7/02.

EPF/1824/03 – Change of use of buildings to industrial units – Refused 18/11/03.

EPF/1075/05 – Outline application for the demolition of former agricultural buildings and a dwelling and the erection of 10 dwellings – Refused 15/2/06

Policies Applied:

Adopted Local Plan:

GB2A General restraint to development in the Green Belt, unless a Green belt defined appropriate use.

GB7A Conspicuous development from within the Green Belt

GB16 Affordable housing

CP2 Protecting the rural and built environment

CP3 & 4 Sustainable new development

E14 Impact of industrial and commercial activity on amenity of an area

H2A Previously developed land

DBE1 Buildings respect their setting, ensure buildings are appropriate in design and materials.

DBE4 New buildings in Green Belt respect landscape setting and are of local character, tradition and detailing.

LL2 Development in countryside to respect and enhance the character of the landscape.

T17 Highways Implications

Structure Plan:

C2 Development in the Green belt – general restraint as GB2.

CS1 Concentrate new housing development in existing urban areas.

CS2 Protecting the Natural and Built Environment,

CS4 Sustainable new development.

H2 Housing development – Sequential approach – Sporadic housing in the countryside will be resisted, should be well related to employment, shopping, education and other community facilities, easily accessible by a choice of means of transport.

National Policy:

Planning Policy Guidance 2 - Green Belt (PPG2)

Planning Policy Statement 7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (PPS7)

Issues and Considerations:

The main issue is whether this represents an appropriate development in Green Belt terms and if not, are there very special circumstances to outweigh the harm, by definition, the development would have on the Green Belt. Furthermore, if considered acceptable, would the resultant development harm the visual amenities of the surrounding countryside and is the location sustainable enough for housing of this scale in the relatively remote location.

1. Green Belt

Government advice in PPG2 and Local Plan policy GB2A sets out the narrow range of development appropriate in the Green Belt. Housing, unless for an agricultural, horticultural or forestry worker is clearly inappropriate development in the green belt by definition.

This is not the first time housing has been applied for on this site, but it is less than the previous applications, which have been submitted for 10 units. Just like the current buildings, the development will be on a remote location on top of a hill, visible from the road.

Officers have previously concluded that the number of houses proposed is excessive for this site and that the very special circumstances put forward by the applicant have not so far justified the development. In fact the last outline application proposed a tight concentration of 9 houses based on the council's adopted Essex Design Guide, which was considered to be totally out of character for this site and within the surrounding rural area. The indicative layout this time reduces the number of proposed houses by three and proposes a more spacious cluster of six dwellings set in a courtyard. The existing farmhouse close to the road will be demolished to be replaced by a new house.

The indicative plan and axonometric elevation, illustrates the design of the scheme based upon a manor house estate layout, with a large manor surrounded by smaller "farm-worker" type cottages and two converted barn-like structures. Should the principal of the development be accepted by the Committee, Officers consider that this approach would be the most appropriate design and pattern of layout so far proposed, given its rural setting. The size and position of the replacement house at the access road entrance may require more attention, but the principal of a barn type structure here would be acceptable. The visual impact of the built form of development will need a significant native landscaping and tree planting scheme to enhance its setting and it is considered that the buildings of a traditional character and vernacular in design could be seen as a visual improvement on the current larger eye-sore buildings and hardstanding area which blights the landscape. Despite this though, in principle the development of the site for residential purposes represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

2. Are There Very Special Circumstances?

The previous outline planning application for 10 houses in 2002 was recommended for refusal by Planning Officers. This Area Committee however, considered that there were very special circumstances in that instance overcoming the presumption against inappropriate development. It was therefore referred on to District Development Control Committee, with a recommendation for approval. In the event, however, it was refused in line with Officers recommendation because it was considered by Development Committee members to be inappropriate and harmful development in the Green Belt and the landscape. Members also considered that it would set a precedent for similar development in the green belt and that proposed affordable housing on this site was in an unsustainable location. The Essex Design Guide scheme for 10 houses in 2005 did not even achieve support by the Area Committee and was refused.

As stated above, the total number of houses in this submission has been reduced by three to seven and the layout and design of the development as illustrated has been improved to integrate more successfully into the local landscape. The applicant did propose a number of very special circumstances on the 2005 application, some of which are put forward in this proposal. These are as follows:

- Removal of 2,408 square metres of former agriculture buildings, which are in disrepair and visually harm the landscape. A further larger area of hardstanding will also be removed. There is a long history of unauthorised industrial uses and activities, which continue today on the site having taken place for about 18 years. Policy E4 of the Local Plan seeks removal of industrial and commercial activities, which have a serious adverse effect upon the amenities of the area. As some of the uses may have gained immunity from enforcement action, there may be environmental gain in removing the buildings and uses with replacement development less harmful on the environment and the landscape. An existing 1960's built farmhouse of little architectural merit and close to the road will also be removed. 6 of the 7 units will be more compact in area than the existing buildings and their footprint is indicated to be less at 1,200 square metres, a reduction of about 46%.
- Part of the site has a history of unauthorised tipping, which has altered the contours of the land rear of the current buildings. The applicant has stated that they will repair and re-grade the land to its natural level. This is particularly noticeable from the footpaths that cross the site.
- Improvements are proposed to existing footpath routes, which pass through the applicant's land and close to the development site. Also, a new footpath route through the applicants land to join with footpath 12 at Gutteridge Lane is proposed. Details of this will need to be finalised with the Right of Way Officer at Essex County Council, but this councils Countrycare Manager has indicated that it will be beneficial for the local community and walkers if the footpaths could be extended around part of the perimeter of the farm land close to existing hedges and ditches.
- The gifting of 1.5 hectares of the applicant's land to the Parish Council, located either side of Stapleford Road, as a possible village green. This is an option, which has been discussed with the Parish Council, and they have the option to commit to taking the land in the next 3 years.
- A financial contribution towards off-site affordable housing. Previous applications had offered 30% affordable housing on site, but this was not considered a suitable site because of its poor relation to the rest of the settlement and lack of support from the Parish Council, so that it would be contrary to Policy GB16 of the Local Plan. The applicant has offered a contribution to affordable housing needs in the area of £100,000.
- The erection of a Parish Room and car park for the local Parish Council. This is illustrated on the plans as a small meeting room.

The applicant has submitted a unilateral undertaking to secure the footpath improvements, option of land to be passed to the Parish Council for a possible village green, financial contribution to off-site affordable housing and the erection of the Parish Room and car park. It is also considered that the wider site area beyond the proposed houses be retained for agriculture and environmental and conservation benefits for the farmland to be secured through a long-term biodiversity enhancement plan. This would succeed in enhancing landscaping and the setting of the proposed dwellings

Officers consider that this package of benefits, plus the reduction in built floorspace and overall improvements to the landscape do represent the very special circumstances required to outweigh inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

3. Sustainability

The applicant admits that this is not a very sustainable development in terms of reducing the need to travel by car. It is also isolated in respect of local services, employment opportunities and public transport. There is a local primary school within walking distance and a bus service along this road (Stapleford Road) with links to Harlow and Romford, but it is only hourly. However, the traffic movement is likely to be less than currently experienced. The Parish meeting room is only to be used for small meetings and the commercial use of the ex-farm buildings, which currently has 8 individual business uses with attendant daily traffic movements, will be removed.

The applicant is willing to accept conditions in respect of sustainable construction, energy efficiency and conservation at the reserved matters stage, a requirement of Structure Plan policy EG4. The applicant has stated acceptance of building materials, which are supplied locally, and a grey water system and sustainable drainage. This would satisfy Policy CP4 of the Local Plan.

4. Highway Implications

The vehicle movements associated with the development are not considered to be significant and Highway Officers have raised no objection. The traffic levels into and out of the site are likely to be lower than that currently occurring. For this reason, the council Highway Officers do not require highway improvements.

5. Summary

The current appearance of the site visually harms the appearance of the countryside. The existing dilapidated buildings when viewed from Stapleford Road and particularly from Bournebridge Lane to the south and Hook Lane to the west, are noticeable eyesores on the higher ground, and are prominent from these public vantage points and from the footpaths that cross through the site.

Despite this not being a particular sustainable location for residential development, Officers consider that the proposal is the best opportunity to finally repair the appearance of the landscape. Supported by the package of benefits to be secured through a submitted legal agreement, the gains are considered to amount to very special circumstances, which would outweigh inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

The resultant development, the layout and number of which can be conditioned as shown on the indicative plans, would improve the openness and visual amenities of the Green Belt without harm being caused to the living conditions of the residents living in close proximity to the application site. In this instance the Parish Council support this proposal and consider the layout to be much better than the previous Essex Design Guide led scheme, which would have been out of place in this location.

The merits of this case are considered to be special and not at all typical of residential development proposals generally submitted in the Green Belt such that if planning permission is granted, it will not set a precedent for other similar development elsewhere in the Green Belt areas of the District.

The application, on balance, is therefore recommended for approval.

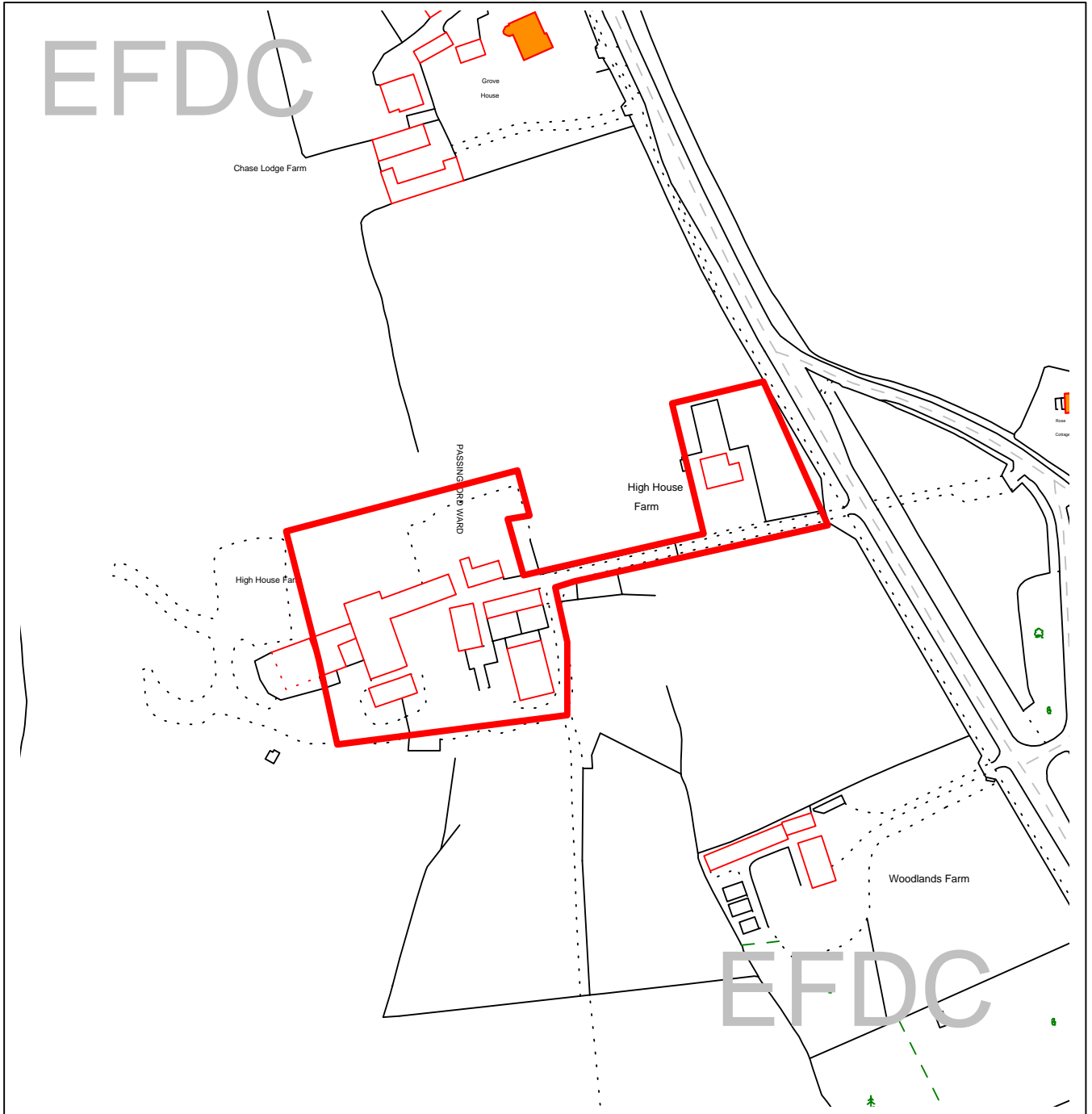
SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS:

PARISH COUNCIL – Point out that it is a beneficiary, inasmuch as a Parish Meeting Room is being offered as part of the Plan. However, the Parish Council has always supported the removal of the derelict farm buildings, and the building of appropriately designed houses. The remaining land being retained as farmland is exactly what the Parish Council has championed.



Epping Forest District Council

Area Planning Sub-Committee C



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Agenda Item Number:	6
Application Number:	EPF/1374/06
Site Name:	High House Farm, Stapleford Road, Stapleford Abbots
Scale of Plot:	1:2500