

***Report to the District Development
Management Committee***



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Report Reference: EPF/1139/17

Date of meeting: 10 July 2017

Address: Site of proposed new Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre, Ninefields, Waltham Abbey, EN9 3EH.

Subject: Reserved matters application for appearance, layout, scale, massing, materials, external works, and landscaping of the leisure centre site only on approved outline consent EPF/2207/16 (Outline application for Health Centre building; 60 Independent Living Older Persons Apartments Building; Leisure Centre and Swimming Pool Building; Open Space; Ancillary development including three vehicular accesses off Hillhouse, car parking, and SUDs Infrastructure and demolition of Ninefields Community Centre Building).

Responsible Officer: Graham Courtney (01992 564228).

Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendation:

(1) That planning application EPF/1139/17 at Ninefields in Waltham Abbey be granted permission, subject to the following conditions:

- 1. The development hereby permitted will be completed strictly in accordance with the approved drawings numbers:
P4560-110 Rev: B;
P4560-1200 Rev: B;
P4560-1210 Rev: B;
P4560-1211 Rev: B;
P4560-1212;
P4560-1350 Rev: A; and
P4560-1400.**
- 2. No construction works above ground level shall take place until documentary and photographic details of the types and colours of the external finishes have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, in writing. The development shall be implemented in accordance with such approved details.**
- 3. Prior to the first use of the development hereby approved, full details of both hard and soft landscape works (including tree planting) and implementation programme (linked to the development schedule) shall be 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. 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.

4. The parking area shown on the approved plan shall be provided prior to the first use of the development and shall be retained free of obstruction for the parking of staff and visitors vehicles.

Report:

1. This application is put straight to the District Development Management Committee since it is a “major application” for development, where the Council is the landowner, (*Pursuant to The Constitution, Part Two, Article 10(c)*).

Planning Issues:

2. The application is the first Phase of reserved matters consent following the approval of Outline consent reference EPF/2207/16, which related to an *outline application with all matters reserved except access for the erection of a Health Centre building; 60 Independent Living Older Persons Apartments Building (Use Class C2 - with a minimum of 6 hours care to be provided per week for each apartment) with a minimum of 40% affordable; Leisure Centre and Swimming Pool Building (to include Fitness Suite and Community Hall); Open Space including a mini soccer grass pitch for use by under 7/8 year olds and footpaths; and ancillary development including three vehicular accesses off Hillhouse, car parking, and SUDs Infrastructure and demolition of Ninefields Community Centre Building*. This phase of the reserved matters application relates solely to the site of the new leisure centre and is not seeking reserved matters consent for any other parts of the wider application site.

Description of Site

3. The wider application site is a 3.73 hectare area of land currently consisting of open space, a car park area and Ninefield Community Centre. The site is located to the southwest of Hillhouse within the Ninefields Estate and bordered to the south by a brook and a public footpath. To the immediate north, west and south of the site are residential dwellings. To the east of the site, on the opposite side of Hillhouse, are residential dwellings, Hillhouse Primary School, Hazelwood Childrens Nursery and Tallis House (nursing home). To the east of the community centre is a small shopping parade laid out within a pedestrianised square with residential flats on the first floor. Beyond these properties are further open spaces, including school playing fields.
4. The application site specifically related to this reserved matters application consists of the south eastern parcel of land that currently contains the vacant

community centre, the immediately surrounding area of open space, and the adjacent car park area.

5. The site is not located within the Metropolitan Green Belt, or a conservation area or any other designated land.

Description of Proposal

6. The first phase of reserved matters consent is being sought with regards to appearance, layout, scale, massing, materials, external works, and landscaping of the leisure centre site only following the approved outline consent EPF/2207/16, which related to the erection of a Health Centre building; 60 Independent Living Older Persons Apartments Building; Leisure Centre and Swimming Pool Building; Open Space; Ancillary development including three vehicular accesses off Hillhouse, car parking, and SUDs Infrastructure and demolition of Ninefields Community Centre Building.

7. The proposed leisure centre building would be situated within the south eastern corner of the wider application site in accordance with condition 10 of EPF/2207/16. This coincides with the indicative plans submitted with the original outline consent.

8. The proposed leisure centre building would contain a swimming pool, a fitness suite, dance studio, group cycle room (with associated changing rooms, viewing area, plant room, etc.), reception area, café, community room and a staff room. It would be served by a 98 space car park situated to the north and west of the new centre that would be accessed from Hillhouse. Pedestrian access to the proposed new leisure centre would be from the eastern elevation that opens onto the existing square that is in part enclosed by existing retail units. This would replace the existing, now vacant, community centre that previously bounded the square.

Relevant History

9. EPF/2207/16 - Outline application with all matters reserved except access for the erection of a Health Centre building; 60 Independent Living Older Persons Apartments Building (Use Class C2 - with a minimum of 6 hours care to be provided per week for each apartment) with a minimum of 40% affordable; Leisure Centre and Swimming Pool Building (to include Fitness Suite and Community Hall); Open Space including a mini soccer grass pitch for use by under 7/8 year olds and footpaths; and ancillary development including three vehicular accesses off Hillhouse, car parking, and SUDs Infrastructure and demolition of Ninefields Community Centre Building - approved/conditions (subject to a legal agreement) 24/03/17

Policies Applied:

Epping Forest Local Plan and Alterations (1998/2006)

10. CP1 – Achieving sustainable development objectives
CP2 – Protecting the quality of the rural and built environment
CP3 – New development
CP5 – Sustainable building
CP6 – Achieving sustainable urban development patterns
CP8 – Sustainable economic development
CP9 – Sustainable transport
NC4 – Protection of established habitat

- RP3 – Water quality
- RP4 – Contaminated land
- RP5A – Adverse environmental impacts
- H2A – Previously developed land
- RST1 – Recreational, sporting and tourist facilities
- RST3 – Loss or diversion of rights of way
- RST14 – Playing fields
- RST22 – Potentially intrusive activities
- CF12 – Retention of community facilities
- U2A – Development in flood risk areas
- U2B – Flood risk assessment zones
- U3A – Catchment effects
- DBE1 – Design of new buildings
- DBE2 – Effect on neighbouring properties
- DBE3 – Design in urban areas
- DBE6 – Car parking in new development
- DBE9 – Loss of amenity
- LL5 – Protection of urban open spaces
- LL6 – Partial development of urban open spaces
- LL10 – Provision for landscape retention
- LL11 – Landscaping schemes
- U2A – Development in flood risk areas
- U3B – Sustainable drainage systems
- ST1 – Location of development
- ST2 – Accessibility of development
- ST4 – Road safety
- ST6 – Vehicle parking

11. The above policies form part of the Council's 1998 Local Plan. Following the publication of the NPPF, policies from this plan (which was adopted pre-2004) are to be afforded due weight where they are consistent with the Framework. The above policies are broadly consistent with the NPPF and therefore are afforded full weight.

Epping Forest Draft Local Plan Consultation Document (2016)

12. The Epping Forest District Draft Local Plan is the emerging Local Plan and contains a number of relevant policies. At the current time only limited material weight can be applied to the Draft Local Plan, however the Draft Plan and evidence base should be considered as a material consideration in planning decisions. The relevant policies within the Draft Local Plan are:

- SP1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- SP6 – The natural environment, landscape character and green infrastructure
- E1 – Employment sites
- T1 – Sustainable transport choices
- DM1 – Habitat protection and improving biodiversity
- DM2 – Landscape character and ancient landscapes
- DM9 – High quality design
- DM11 – Waste recycling facilities on new development
- DM15 – Managing and reducing flood risk
- DM18 – On site management of waste water and water supply
- DM21 – Local environment impacts, pollution and land contamination

13. The wider site is listed in 'Draft Policy P3 Waltham Abbey', which forms part of the Epping Forest District Draft Local Plan Consultation October 2016, as site SR-

0385 for approximately 60 homes. At the current time only limited material weight can be applied to the Draft Local Plan, however the Draft Plan and evidence base should be considered as a material consideration in planning decisions. The site has been through the sifting process for suitable sustainable sites and has made the current Draft Local Plan that is currently out to consultation to which this proposal in principle is in accordance with.

Consultation Carried Out and Summary of Representations Received:

14. 324 neighbouring residents were consulted and Site Notices were displayed.
15. TOWN COUNCIL – No objection.
16. 3 CHEQUERS WALK – Object as this would have an impact on parking on the surrounding roads to the south and due to the loss of green space.
17. 9 HOWSE ROAD – Comment about possible vehicle access from Shernbroke Road and question what road improvements will be undertaken as without such improvements the development will detrimentally impact on traffic.
18. 75 MASON WAY – Comment that vehicle access should be provided from the south as this development would greatly exacerbate parking problems around Maynard Court and Shernbroke Road.
19. 46 CULLINGS COURT – Object as this would have a detrimental impact on residential amenities and the surrounding area.

Issues and Considerations:

20. This application is for reserved matters consent regarding appearance, layout, scale, massing, materials, external works, and landscaping for the leisure centre element of the wider development scheme. The principle of the development has been agreed by outline consent reference EPF/2207/16, and since this application is the first phase of reserved matters and relates to just the leisure centre element of the scheme, the only considerations are regarding the design and impact that would result from the Leisure Centre and Swimming Pool element of the scheme.

Design

21. The proposed new leisure centre building would provide a swimming pool (with associated changing rooms, viewing area, plant room, etc.), reception area, cafe and community room on the ground floor and a fitness suite, dance studio, group cycle room, associated changing rooms and a staff room on the first floor.

22. The bulk and layout of the proposed new leisure building has been designed in order to reduce its impact on the site and its surroundings whilst ensuring that the leisure centre remains visible and adds interest to the surrounding locality. The building would feature a sloping grass roof to act as an attractive feature that would suit the wider recreation ground site and would make use of single storey glazing to the north to provide a link between the leisure centre and the wider site (including the proposed new car park) and provide passive surveillance to these areas.

23. The eastern elevation, which contains the public entrance to the building, would be largely glazed to allow for views into the building and to ensure an active

frontage is provided onto the existing square. The first floor would overhang the entrance and would be finished in a contemporary metal cladding material to differentiate it from the brick palette on the ground floor.

24. The use of quality materials would be required in order to ensure that the new leisure building enhances the area and to help create more of a sense of place. To ensure this, a planning condition requiring the detail of the external materials is required for later approval.

25. As a statutory consultee, Sport England have raised no objection to the proposed development, however have provided a list of comments/advice as a non-statutory consultee with regards to the design and layout of the proposed leisure building. Whilst this list contains a few negatives/suggestions it does not appear that there are any significant shortcomings in the size, design and layout of the proposed buildings. These negatives largely consist of minor detailing such as some of the doors being inward rather than outward opening, the size of some of the storage rooms/offices (which are larger than expected), and the location of the toilets in the main changing area. Nonetheless many of the negative points are stated as being "a local management call".

26. Overall the comments from Sport England appear to be positive and praise many aspects of the design including, but not limited to:

- *The glazing on the north side of the pool is positive to provide natural light to the space and a connection from outside to in;*
- *The view from the entrance to the reception desk is positive and will make it easy for staff to supervise the area and users to understand user flow;*
- *Views in to the pool from this area is a positive;*
- *At 15x10 this is a positive learner pool solution offering flexible programming opportunities, particularly around learn to swim; and*
- *The inclusion of dedicated dry change to serve the health and fitness offer is positive.*

Impact on Amenities

27. Indicative layouts and massing assessments were provided with the original outline application and the parameter plans within the originally submitted Design and Access Statement indicated that the building height of the proposed leisure centre building would reach a 12m maximum height. The location of the leisure centre building would accord with the original submission (and condition 10 of EPF/2207/16) and would reach a maximum height of 8.5m, which is significantly below the original suggestion within the outline consent.

28. The wider application site is surrounded by residential dwellings however the neighbours closest to the proposed leisure centre building are those located in Maynard Court to the south along with the residential flats above the courtyard shops.

29. The proposed leisure centre would be located a minimum of 15m from the properties in Maynard Court. At its closest point the leisure centre would be 6m from the nearest residential flat above the courtyard shops, however this property does not have any flank windows directly facing the proposed building and therefore the leisure centre would not result in any excessive loss of amenity to the residents of these flats.

Highways/Parking

30. The only aspect of the development that was dealt with at Outline stage was access and as such this has already been agreed.

31. Comments from a neighbouring resident suggest that vehicular access should be provided to the site from the south, however the outline consent, where access was a matter being determined, did not propose any such access and it is not considered that the provision of any such vehicle access would be necessary or justified.

32. The proposed development would be served by a 98 space car park (which includes 9 accessible (disabled) parking bays). This level of car parking has been calculated through the upscaling of the existing facilities that would be closed and currently operates with their current parking provisions (stated as being 69 spaces). Furthermore the location of the proposed new leisure centre is in a very sustainable location in the centre of a housing estate with access also to public transport. The parking provision is acceptable.

33. Essex County Council Highways have been consulted on the proposal and have responded as follows:

“From a highway and transportation perspective the Highway Authority has no comments to make on this proposal as it is not contrary to the Highway Authority’s Development Management Policies, adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in February 2011, and policies ST4 & ST6 of the Local Plan.”

Flooding

34. The majority of the application site is located within an Environment Agency Flood Zone 2. The leisure centre would be classified as a ‘less vulnerable use’.

35. The Environment Agency have been consulted on the application and have responded as follows:

“We have no comments to make in regards to this application. However, we do ask to be consulted with future reserved matters applications for the other sections of the wider development site.”

Trees and Landscaping

36. There are few existing trees within the area of the application site and the proposed development of the leisure centre would not necessitate much in the way of new landscaping. Due to this there has been no objections raised by the Tree & Landscape Officer.

37. Nonetheless the proposed car park would provide some small landscaped areas that would need to be agreed, along with the necessary hard landscaping on the site. This matter can be adequately dealt with by way of a condition.

Conclusion:

38. The proposed Leisure Centre/Swimming Pool is an appropriately designed

and laid out building that would meet the needs of the local community whilst retaining and enhancing the character and appearance of the area. The proposed development would not cause any undue detrimental impact on the amenities of surrounding residents and would be served by adequate off-street parking provision.

39. There have been no objections raised to the proposed details of this development from any statutory consultees and therefore, subject to conditions, the application complies with the relevant Local Plan policies and government guidance and is recommended for approval.