

Report Item No: 1

APPLICATION No:	EPF/0362/07
SITE ADDRESS:	Villa Nursery Reeves Lane Roydon Essex CM19 5LE
PARISH:	Roydon
WARD:	Broadley Common, Epping Upland and Nazeing
APPLICANT:	Messrs V,F & M Gibilaro
DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:	Change of use of horticultural site to a mixed use of horticulture and packing and distribution use. (Revised application)
RECOMMENDED DECISION:	Grant Permission (With Conditions)

CONDITIONS

- 1 The packing and distribution hereby approved shall only take place between the hours of 0700 and 1730 Monday to Friday and 0700 -1400 on Weekends and Public/Bank Holidays.
- 2 The packing and distribution hereby approved shall be limited to handling of fresh horticultural food produce and shall not include the handling of any other goods or foodstuffs.
- 3 Sufficient space shall be set aside and identified on the site for the access and parking of staff vehicles and all heavy goods vehicles in accordance with a plan submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority within 3 months of the date of this decision.
- 4 The percentage turnover at this site represented by fresh salad crops originating from outside the UK shall not exceed 35% per annum.
- 5 Heavy Goods Vehicle movements to and from the site shall only take place between the hours of 0730 and 2100 Monday to Friday and between 0730 and 1600 on weekends and public/bank holidays.
- 6 Within 3 months of the date of this permission a scheme for the routing of Heavy Goods Vehicles to and from the site shall be submitted to and agreed by the Local Planning Authority. The routing shall avoid use of Reeves Lane to the north of the application site. All HGV's using the site thereafter shall adhere to the agreed routing.

Description of Proposal:

Change of use of a horticultural site to a mixed use of horticulture and packing and distribution. This is a retrospective application and has been submitted following negotiation with the planning officer following the refusal of consent for this use in July 2005.

Description of Site:

The application site is an established nursery site on the east side of Reeves Lane bounded by glasshouses to the west and east, with open fields to the north. The site is identified as an E13A (Glasshouses) Area in the adopted Local Plan, and the whole site is within the Green Belt, with the northern section being in the Nazeing Conservation Area. The site also encompasses Merryweather Nursery, which is owned by the applicant, and the two nurseries have been merged.

Relevant History:

Numerous applications including:

Villa Nursery

EPF/962/94 - Erection of Glasshouses and new access - Refused

Merryweather Nursery

EPF/1633/98 - Packing Sheds - Approved

EPF/1849/01 - Raising of land with topsoil - Approved

EPF/1970/02 - Outline application for new glasshouses - Approved

EPF/612/03 - Extensions to packing sheds and a CHP Plant –Approved

Of most relevance is the application EPF/785/05 for change of use to a mixed use of horticulture and packing and distribution, which was recommended for approval by officers but was refused at committee by Members for the following reason:

“The traffic generated by the use would lead to conditions prejudicial to the safe and free flow of traffic on roads in the locality contrary to policy T1 of the Epping Forest District Local Plan, adopted January 1998.”

Following this refusal the possibility of issuing an enforcement notice against the use was considered and advice was sought from Essex County Highways with regard to the reason for refusal. The Highway Authority had not raised any objection to the application and now advised that “there is no evidence to support the reason given and would therefore not be able to provide evidence in any appeal which may result”.

On this basis officers suggested that the applicants submit a revised application with additional information and controls on traffic movements to try and overcome the committee’s concerns regarding impact on highway safety.

A revised application was submitted in May 2006 but was withdrawn before determination following a request for additional traffic movement and lorry routing information.

Officers however held off issuing an enforcement notice on the basis that a revised application would be forthcoming.

Policies Applied:

Local Plan and Local Plan Alterations:

GB2A Green Belt restraint
GB8A change of use and adaptation.
E13B protection of glasshouse areas
CP1, CP2, CP8 relating to sustainability
ST1, ST2, ST4 sustainable transport and Highway safety.

Issues and Consideration:

The main issues remain as before: whether the proposal is appropriate development within the Green Belt, traffic implications, effect on amenity of neighbouring properties, sustainability issues and effect on the conservation area.

1. Green Belt

The site has a large packing shed in the middle of the site, accessed by a rough track from Reeves Lane. This shed contains a cold store and packing facilities for use with the on-site growing activities. The applicant has stated that this use generated around 2 light goods vehicle (LGV) and 3 Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) movements per day. There is no restriction of the hours of work at the site at present.

The current changes have come about as a result of European Fruit and Vegetable Regime, where various growers have formed a Producers Organisation to plan and concentrate supply of produce in an environmentally-sound way. This use sees a HGV leaving Villa Nursery in the afternoon and visiting Four Acres Nursery and Broadley Nursery to pick up vegetables before returning to Villa Nursery for packing and storage. The produce is then distributed to Harlow and Kent by two HGV's at 7am and 9am the next morning. Some of the produce is also sent to the London Wholesale Market by HGV at 11pm each evening. This is a seven-day a week operation, although the packing is carried out between 0700-1730 Monday to Friday and 0700-1400 on weekends. The lorries are packed with the goods during the working hours laid out above. During the winter months the local produce is replaced by imported produce from Spain, although this amounts to no more than 30% of the annual produce. This seasonal change does not result in any increase in daily vehicle movements. Therefore the use of the site has changed as a result of the importing and distribution of produce from the other nurseries, although it should be noted that the previous use allowed storage and distribution of produce grown on the site.

Ten more staff have been employed on the site, and the year round use allows a level of staff stability absent from the old system of growing seasons. The reuse of existing buildings within the Green Belt can be appropriate where the new use does not result in a materially greater impact than the present use on the Green Belt and the use and associated traffic generation would not have a significant impact on the character or amenities of the countryside. (Policy GB8A of the Local Plan and Alterations)

2. Traffic Issues

The traffic impact of the proposal was the only reason for refusal of the last application and this was the view of Members and not supported by Essex County Highways. There has been no amendment to the application other than a suggestion by the applicant's agent that the conditions suggested previously by officers could be tightened slightly to further restrict HGV movements.

As before the development will be serviced by an existing access, and Highways have again raised no objection due to the minimal increased use. Whilst the track itself is dilapidated it only

serves the nurseries along the track, and the associated residences. Therefore it is unlikely that any disturbance will be caused to neighbours not connected with the nurseries from this track. It is acknowledged that the lorries will then join the local highway network, as highlighted by the Parish Council. However, since the access is very close to the junction of Reeves Lane and Hamlet Hill, lorries can avoid Reeves Lane to the north where it narrows and this can be restricted by a lorry routing condition. The markets are in Harlow, London and Kent and the majority of vehicles will use the M11 to gain access to the non local sites. This, combined with the lack of highway objections, means any refusal on Highway grounds could not be sustained.

The majority of the staff are transported to the site by minibus, as was the case with the previous use. There will be parking of lorries on the site, but this would have occurred with the previous nursery use in any event, and parking will largely be screened by the existing and proposed glasshouses.

Since the previous refusal by Members on highway grounds the issue of the impact on the highway network has been further considered and the applicant has suggested stronger conditions than previously put forward by officers that would prevent HGV movements between 21.00 and 07.30 hours and require a specific route for HGVs to be adhered to. This amounts to a reduction in hours as the current lorry movements includes a 7am and an 11pm movement.

3. Sustainability

In sustainability terms it is considered that it makes sense logically to make the best use of the existing packing facility at this site to serve the needs of other local nurseries, reducing the need for additional buildings and facilities in the Green Belt.

4. Employment

The site employs about 10 people and the use, including packing of products grown in Spain during the winter months, allows for continuity of employment throughout the year rather than on a seasonal basis. This is considered to provide a benefit to workers in the District. The Local Plan Alterations adopted last year emphasise the importance of the Glasshouse industry and suggests that although new packhouses are inappropriate in the Green Belt the need to secure the viability of a nursery or group of nurseries may amount to very special circumstances. In this instance no new buildings are proposed, just more efficient use of an existing building which meets the modern requirements set out by the supermarkets.

5. Amenity

There are no residential properties within 160m of the site that are not connected with the nurseries and it is considered that there is no appreciable increase in disturbance.

6. Conservation Area

The site is within the Conservation Area. The Council's Conservation Officer has raised no objections, as the development has no greater impact on its character and appearance than the lawful use.

Conclusion

As previously, the application is considered to be in accordance with the policies of the adopted Local Plan. The conditions now proposed will prevent an escalation of use of the site and provide restrictions on hours of use that will protect the amenity of residents in the local area. The provision of a lorry routing scheme to ensure that HGVs entering and leaving the site do not use

Reeves Lane north to Epping Road is seen as a way of further reducing the traffic impact of the use. The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions.

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS:

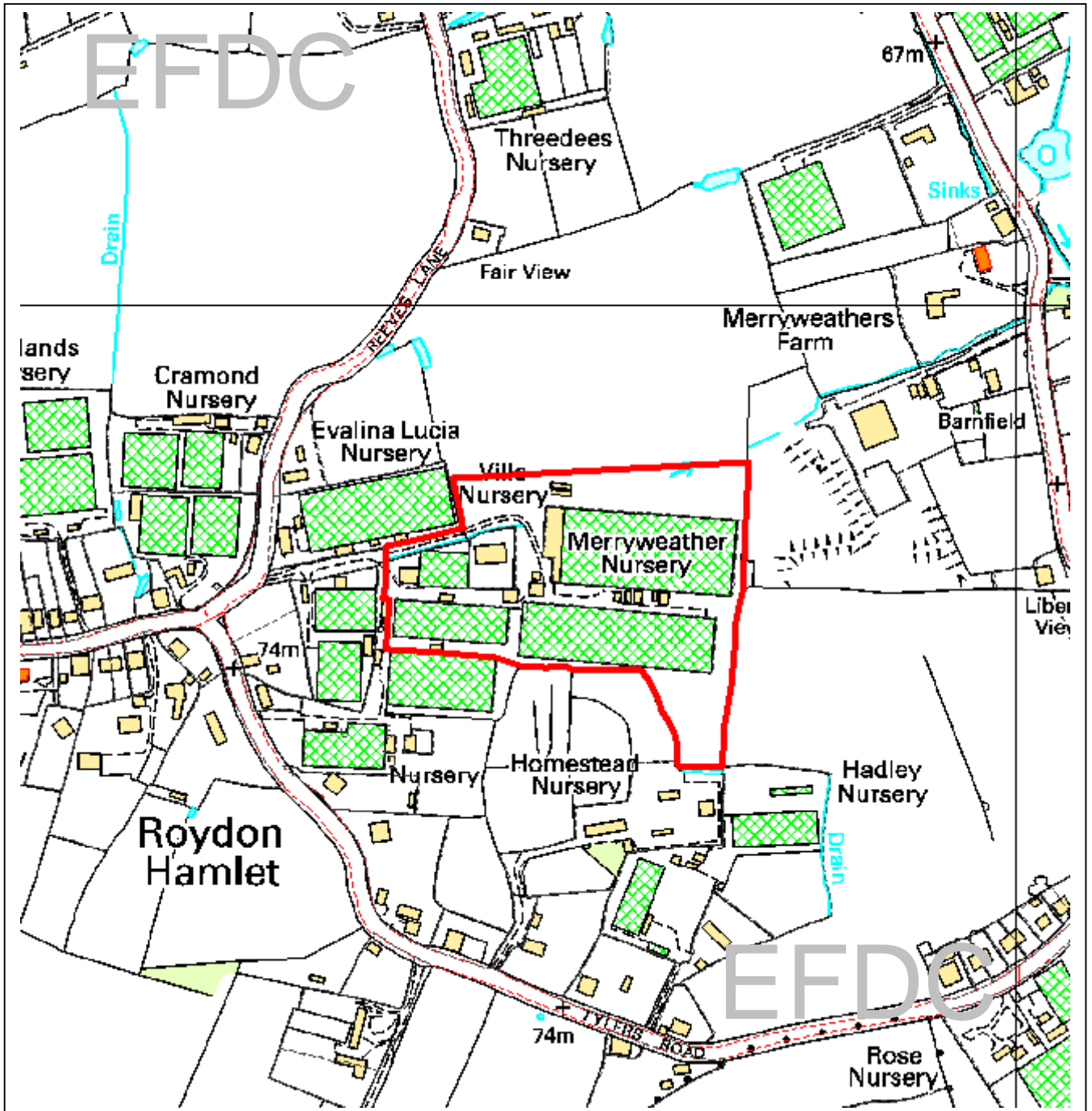
PARISH COUNCIL – Objection. Reeves Lane is a very narrow country lane and it is unsuitable for HGV's. Lorry routing needs to be agreed at the application stage - lorries are travelling to and from the nursery via Epping Road rather than Tylers Road.

DOBBS WEIR RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION – Concerned. The roads leading to Reeves Lane are narrow and are already experiencing far heavier traffic than they were designed for. There is poor access at both ends of Reeves Lane for large vehicles and of course we are concerned that this could add to the already unacceptable amount of heavy traffic on Dobbs Weir Road as this would no doubt be the chosen route of vehicles from the A10.



Epping Forest District Council

Area Planning Sub-Committee West



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Agenda Item Number:	1
Application Number:	EPF/0362/07
Site Name:	Villa Nursery, Reeves Lane, Roydon, CM19 5LE
Scale of Plot:	1/5000

Report Item No: 2

APPLICATION No:	EPF/0705/07
SITE ADDRESS:	Villa Nursery Reeves Lane Roydon Harlow Essex CM19 5LE
PARISH:	Roydon
WARD:	Broadley Common, Epping Upland and Nazeing
APPLICANT:	Mr & Mrs V & G Gibilaro
DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:	Change of use and conversion of domestic outbuilding to bungalow annexe including replacement of flat roof with pitched roof. For use of extended family of occupants of Villa Nursery.
RECOMMENDED DECISION:	Grant Permission (With Conditions)

CONDITIONS

- 1 The building the subject of this permission shall be used only as an annexe to the main dwelling known as The Villa, Villa Nursery and shall be occupied only by members of the extended family of the occupants of The Villa. The building shall not be sold or let as a separate dwelling unit.

Description of Proposal:

This application is for alterations and change of use of an existing outbuilding (originally an agricultural building) to a bungalow annexe for the use of the extended family of occupants of Villa Nursery. The proposals include alterations to the building that have been carried out, including the replacement of a flat roof with a tiled, pitched roof.

Description of Site:

The red lined site is tightly drawn around the building, which was originally an agricultural storage building. The building is located adjacent to the rear garden area of the existing dwelling at Villa Nursery, a working horticultural nursery with 2.5 hectares of glass. The building in question has already been altered and converted and now has the appearance of a small bungalow. Villa Nursery is accessed from Reeves Lane.

Relevant History:

None Relevant.

Policies Applied:

Local Plan and Local Plan Alterations.

GB2 Green Belt restraint.
GB8A, change of use
GB9A Residential conversions.
CP1, CP2, CP6 relating to sustainable development.
DBE8 Private amenity space,
ST1 location of development
ST2 Accessibility
ST4 Road safety
ST6 Vehicle parking.

Issues and Considerations:

The applicant claims that the building in question has been used as a domestic storage/garage building in connection with the house at the nursery for many years, however there is no independent evidence that this is the case, hence planning permission is required for the change of use to ancillary residential use. The main issues are therefore, Green Belt, sustainability, highway and parking issues and design and visual impact issues.

1. Green Belt.

The reuse of existing buildings in the Green Belt can be appropriate. The building appears on aerial photos and does appear to have been a substantial and permanent building before it was substantially altered. The building is surrounded by nursery development and in general form and bulk is not out of keeping with its surroundings. It relates well to the existing residential dwelling and is a logical location for an annexe. The use as an annexe should not result in significant additional traffic movements and the use will not have a detrimental impact on the character or amenity of the area. As such it is considered that the proposal is in accordance with policy GB8A of the adopted local plan.

We have no pictures of what the building was like before it was altered, but the pitched roof that the applicant says has been added is not excessively high and in this location has very little impact on openness.

2. Sustainability.

The site is not well located in relation to access to facilities such as shops, health facilities etc. Anyone living in the annexe will be heavily reliant on private motorised transport, however in this instance the application is specifically for the annexe to be occupied by elderly relatives of the occupants of the main dwelling, and is not intended as a new independent dwelling. The intention is to improve the living conditions of the residents, not to increase the number of residents. Additionally the reuse of an existing building is generally more sustainable than the erection of a new dwelling.

3. Highway and Parking Issues.

As has been explained the proposed use will not result in a significant increase in traffic movements and it is not therefore considered that there are highway issues. The County Council have raised no objection to the proposal. There is plenty of space within the nursery where cars can be parked.

4. Design and visual impact.

The alterations to the building are difficult to assess, as we have no record of what it was like previously. However the building that now exists is not out of place and is not visible from outside the nursery site. It is not therefore considered that it has an adverse impact on the character or amenity of the area.

Conclusion.

The building has no garden of its own and being surrounded by nursery activity would not be an appropriate location for a new dwelling independent of the nursery. However as an annexe to the existing agriculturally-tied dwelling that will enable the current nursery manager to live in the main house but still provide care for his elderly relatives, the use appears entirely appropriate. The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions restricting the occupation and preventing its sale or let as a separate dwelling.

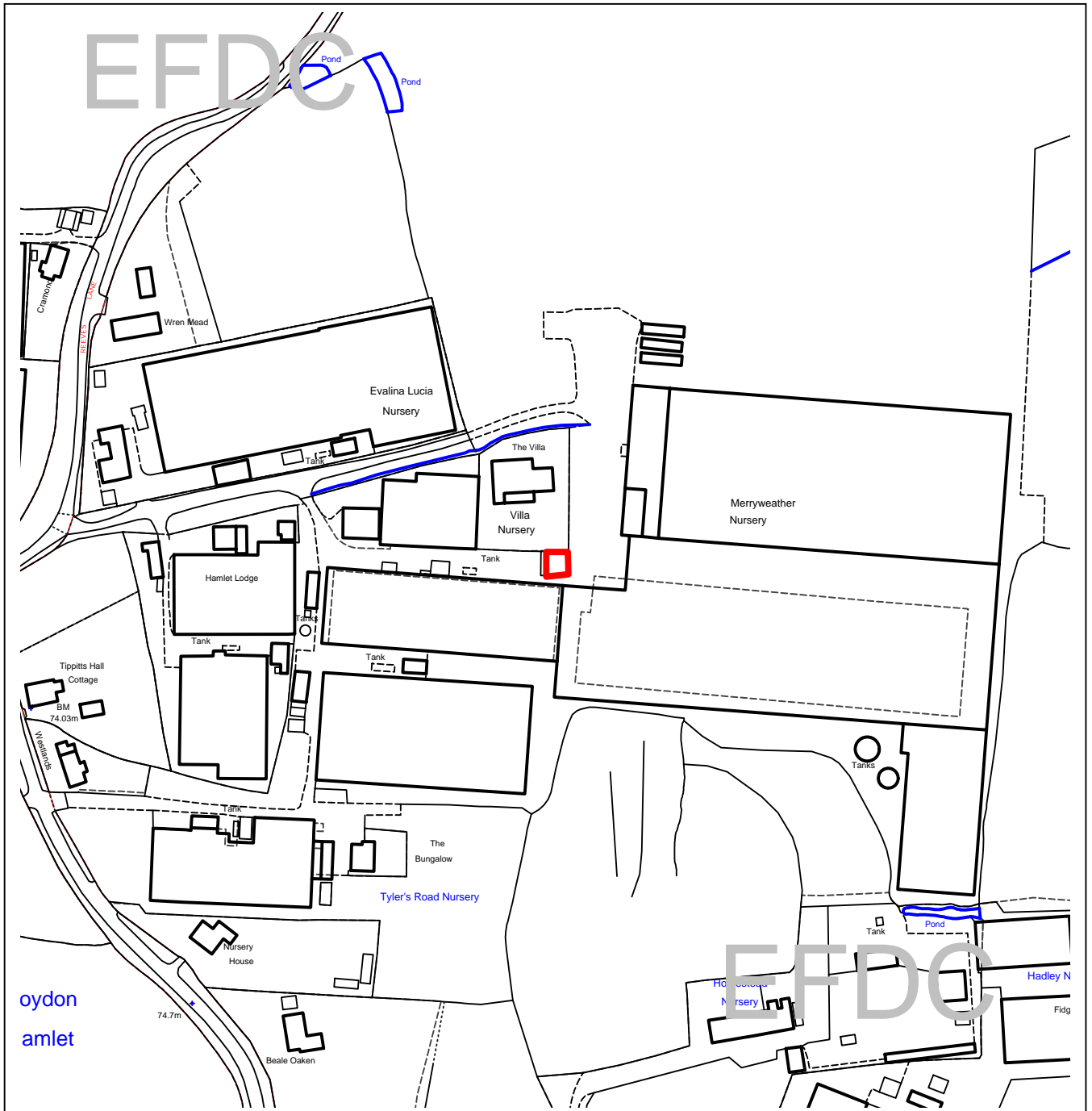
SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS:

PARISH COUNCIL – Object MGB, also the Parish Council has concerns that, at a later date, the annexe could be sold off as a separate dwelling. If the District Council decides to grant this application could a condition to prevent this happening be added?



Epping Forest District Council

Area Planning Sub-Committee West



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Agenda Item Number:	2
Application Number:	EPF/0705/07
Site Name:	Villa Nursery, Reeves Lane, Roydon, CM19 5LE
Scale of Plot:	1/1250

Report Item No: 3

APPLICATION No:	EPF/1793/07
SITE ADDRESS:	87a Monkswood Avenue Waltham Abbey Essex EN9 1 LJ
PARISH:	Waltham Abbey
WARD:	Waltham Abbey North East
APPLICANT:	Mr S Bradley
DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:	Rear conservatory extension, shed and front velux windows.
RECOMMENDED DECISION:	Grant Permission

CONDITIONS

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

Description of Proposal:

Rear conservatory projecting 3m from rear main wall by 3.7m wide, garden shed 1.8m x 2.4m sited at the end of the rear garden and the retention of two Velux windows to front roofslope.

Description of Site:

End of terrace house built recently as an `extension' to No. 87 with open plan frontage and rear garden enclosed by 2m fencing.

Relevant History:

Consent for house March 2006 EPF/2245/05 (p.d. rights removed).

Policies Applied:

DBE9 - Residential Amenity and DBE10 - Design.

Issues and Considerations:

The issues in this case relate to the effect on the amenities of the adjoining houses and the design and appearance of the development.

1. Amenity

This is a narrow plot of 5.7m but the conservatory will be sited 1m from each of the side boundaries and there will be no adverse effect on either of the adjoining houses, particularly as No. 87 has an existing extension to the same depth of 3m, also sited 1m from the common boundary.

2. Design/Appearance

The proposed conservatory has a conventional lean-to roof which will blend easily into the existing rear elevation. The shed has already been erected but is of traditional timber in the rear garden, screened by the existing 2m boundary fencing. The front 'Velux' windows are small and barely noticeable. The proposals are acceptable in design terms.

3. The Objection

The conservatory is relatively small, being 3.7m wide by 3.0m deep and the shed is a small traditional boarded structure, 2.4m x 1.8m x 2.0m overall height. The rear garden will extend some 15m beyond the conservatory when built, giving about 85sqm of private amenity space and it cannot be said that the proposals constitute 'overdevelopment' of the site.

The scheme complies with relevant Local Plan policies and approval is recommended.

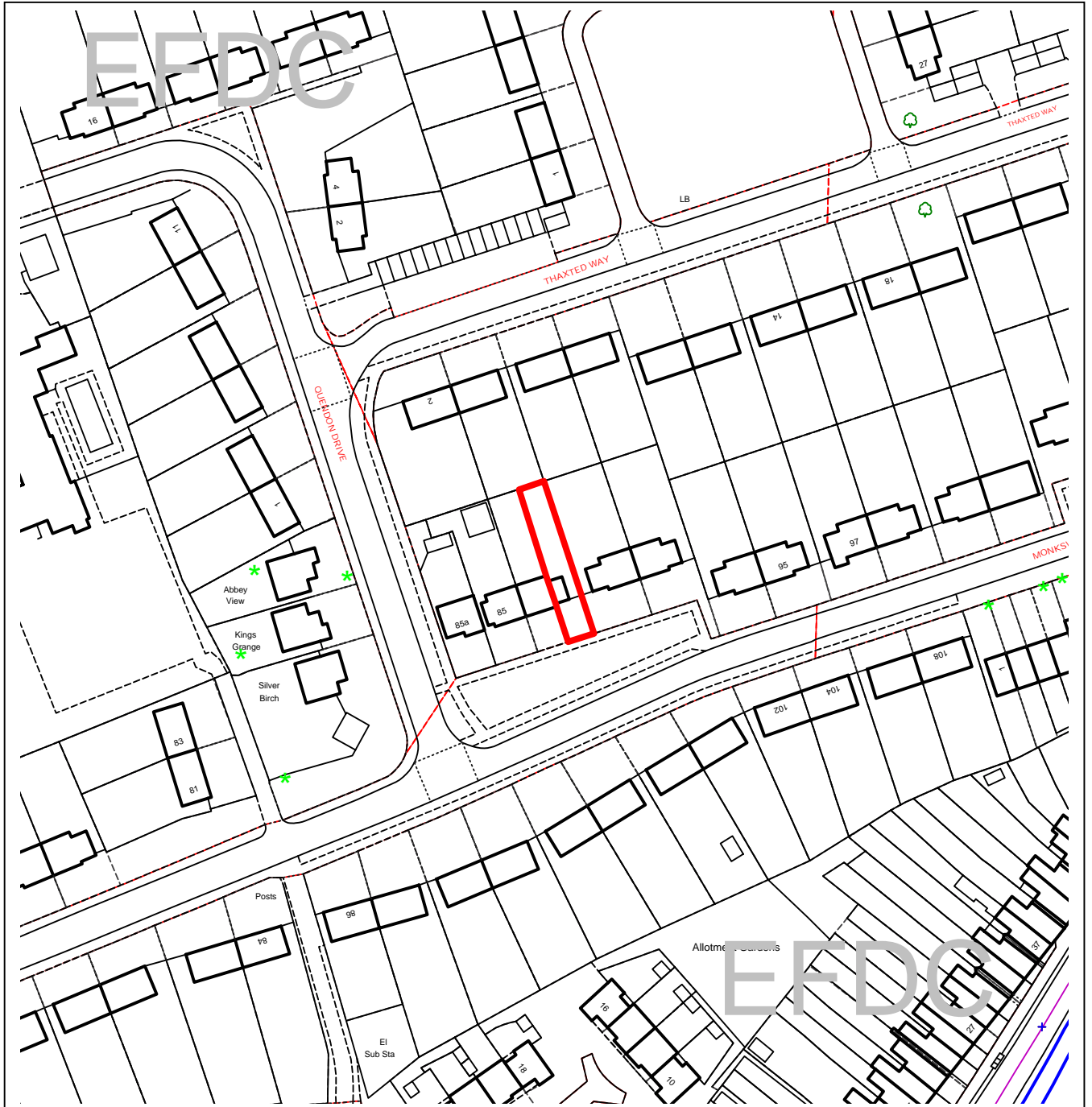
SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS:

TOWN COUNCIL - overdevelopment of site.



Epping Forest District Council

Area Planning Sub-Committee West



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Agenda Item Number:	3
Application Number:	EPF/1793/07
Site Name:	87A Monkswood Avenue, Waltham Abbey, EN9 1LJ
Scale of Plot:	1/1250