

Theydon Bois Parish Council

Director of Service, Planning Services
Epping Forest District Council
Civic Offices
High Street
Epping
Essex
CM16 4BZ

The Planning Committee of the Parish Council has raised objection to this application. We would be prepared to send a representative to an Area Planning Sub-Committee of EFDC, if this method of determination is deemed appropriate.

11th February, 2020

Application No: **EPF/3001/19**
Applicant Name: Mr S Edlin

Officer: Honey Kojouri

RETURN: 17th February, 2020

Location: Wain & Green Hedges Coppice Row Theydon Bois CM16 7ER

Proposal: Demolition of x2 no. of properties on the site & construction of an apartment building with designated car parking spaces & landscaping.

Return: STRONG OBJECTION

The proposed development site is located in a very prominent and central position within the village, opposite the historic, and iconic, Avenue of Trees, and overlooking the Village Green. Many of the Grade II Listed, and locally-listed, buildings are sited around the Green, and these important and intrinsically valuable heritage assets contribute to the character and feel of the village: their setting and preservation is of paramount importance. In addition, and directly to the rear of the proposed site, there resides a Grade II Listed Building, known as 'Baldocks', which is also of local, and historical, interest and importance.

Pursuant to the Epping Forest District New Local Plan (2011-2033) (the "New Local Plan"), the proposed development site is designated as an 'Allocated Site' in Theydon Bois and is known as "THYB.R3" in the relevant Submission Documents and Appendices. It is noted that, according to such documentation, this Allocated Site is projected to yield an approximate number of 6 new dwellings. However, this current application envisages a substantially greater number of 9 units, one of which would be a 4-bedroom penthouse of significant proportions.

'Wain' & 'Green Hedges' currently comprise two separate residential dwellings which are low-rise bungalows, representing an organic and spacious grain of development. The properties here are in-keeping with the semi-rural character and feel of the locality, do not negatively impact on the neighbouring Baldocks and provide a back-drop which is befitting of a Village Green. Necessarily, the proposed development would incur the loss of two bungalows, contrary to Policy H1 F of the New Local Plan. Further, however, it is contended that the proposed development would not represent alternative affordable housing to accommodate the ageing population of Theydon Bois looking to downsize.

In 2011/12, the site on the opposite corner of Orchard Drive, known then as Darlington's (a former car sales garage) was developed into apartments now known as Pavilion Court (EPF/1423/11 & EPF/1496/12). Pavilion Court is locally regarded as an attractive and prestigious development which, by being set back from Coppice Row to align with the building line of the existing bungalows on the opposite corner, retains the spacious grain of development to complement the visual amenity of the locality without incursion on its character or appearance. Accordingly, the Planning Committee strongly recommends that, by virtue of its sensitive siting

within the plot, alignment with the development at Pavilion Court be considered as the precedent for the proposed development forming the subject of this application. However, the submitted plans do not include a Proposed Site Plan, which would have been helpful in illustrating how the new proposal would be sited in relation to Pavilion Court. That said, the Planning Committee was able to ascertain, from the information provided, that the new development would be sited noticeably forward of the building line of Pavilion Court, (and both those of the adjacent neighbours at Bucklands, and Baldocks to the rear), resulting in an overly-dominant impact on both streetscenes, such that the proposed building would appear to protrude outwards and forwards in a highly-conspicuous manner.

During discussions on the earlier re-development of the Darlington's site, it was agreed that the new building (now Pavilion Court) would be built in line with the existing bungalow of 'Wain'. As a consequence of this considered positioning, the area immediately outside the principal elevation of Pavilion Court, fronting Coppice Row and on the corner of Orchard Drive, was specifically left open to provide a turfed, spacious and verdant frontage. The openness of this corner has been central in ensuring that the development of Pavilion Court is not overly dominant, oppressive or too urban in appearance. In contrast, the proposed development would be built right up to the corner of Coppice Row, with its frontage continuing around the corner of Orchard Drive.

This significant fascia, which would also front onto Orchard Drive would, in effect, give rise to two principal elevations, resulting in a cramped, over-bearing and looming development, that would not be respectful of its setting (thereby also impacting on the Grade II listed building of Baldocks) and which would have a significantly urbanising effect on the locality. The design and scale of this elevation, when viewed in the context of Orchard Drive, would also be entirely at odds with the more modest, low-level development of the nearby bungalows and would directly conflict with the simpler, and more appropriate, form of the side elevation of Pavilion Court, which was carefully designed to respect the visual amenity of the streetscene in Orchard Drive.

Therefore, in contrast with the proposed new development, the following design features ensure that the side elevation of Pavilion Court is subservient to its principal elevation: a) the rear element of the development is considerably stepped down from the front section of the building, meaning that it is not overly dominant on the streetscene and does not negatively impact on the adjacent neighbouring properties in Orchard Drive; b) the design of the side elevation is distinctly less detailed and, therefore, clearly subservient to the main frontage and c) the ground floor of the stepped-down rear element is predominantly open to facilitate an under-croft for the parking of vehicles, so lessening the intensification of development and impact on the spaciousness of the corner plot. The Planning Committee would strongly suggest that the arrangement of the rear element of Pavilion Court be adopted into the design for this current application.

The proposal also envisages a development across 3 storeys, making it significantly larger than that of Pavilion Court, which affords 8 apartments across two-and-half storeys. Since the developments will be sited adjacent to one another, the Planning Committee strongly recommends that the new development should be of a similar, or subservient, scale and mass to Pavilion Court and should not exceed the same height. It will be possible to view the properties from across the Green and, should the newer development be seen as competitive in terms of scale and design, the effect will be incongruous and discordant.

In considering this application, the Planning Committee also had regard to the provisions of the adopted Essex Parking Standards, 2009 and noted that pursuant to Section 4, the parking requirement for a dwelling of more than two bedrooms is a minimum of two parking spaces. Such a calculation gives rise to a need for 18 parking spaces for 9 apartments. However, it is acknowledged that, given the proposed site is in a sustainable location, this number could be adjusted down. It was noted that Pavilion Court has the benefit of 13 parking spaces for 8 apartments (albeit one of those has one bedroom). Therefore, the proposal for just 6 car parking spaces for 9 apartments, one of which would consist of 4 bedrooms, with no visitor parking included for this current proposal, would be entirely inadequate by a considerable margin.

It was noted that no roof plan has been submitted as part of the application, but from the information provided, the Planning Committee would raise an objection to the considerable scale and expanse of what will be a predominantly flat roof. Such a design would be an inappropriate and overly-dominant addition to the streetscene and would be visible from many public viewpoints across the Village Green. It was further noted that the penthouse on the Second Floor of the development would incorporate three balconies and a very sizeable terrace and concern was raised that these areas may give rise to significant overlooking, affecting the privacy and amenity of the residents in the neighbouring Grade II Listed Building, Baldocks.

The Planning Committee would also wish to reference the document entitled "Matter 15: Places and Sites (Policies P1-P15) Pre-Hearing Statement by Epping Forest District Council" issued in April 2019. This document addresses the 'Matters, Issues and Questions' of the Planning Inspector, as raised during the Examination in Public for the New Local Plan. It is understood that the following amendments, to be made to Appendix 6 (Site Selection Requirements), drafted in response to the Planning Inspector's comments, are to be adopted as Policy and will form part of the Main Modifications to the New Local Plan:

"Heritage: Development of the site may impact upon the setting of the Grade II listed Baldocks, located to the northeast of the site. Development proposals which may affect the setting of this heritage asset should conserve or enhance the special architectural or historic interest of these Listed Buildings and their settings through high quality design/materials."

"Design: The prominent location of this site, which overlooks Theydon Green, and is located on a main route through the village, is such that any development proposals will be required to make a positive contribution to the character of the area and/or amenity of nearby existing development. The design of any development proposals should therefore take a sensitive approach to the siting, design, layout, levels, density, height, scale, massing and materials."

Accordingly, in any appraisal of an application pertaining to this Allocated Site, the above Policies must be considered and it is the view of the Planning Committee that, for the reasons detailed in this Strong Objection, this current proposal does not satisfy the requirements contained within such Policies. Further, as currently drawn, the proposal would be in direct conflict with Policies DBE1, DBE2, DBE9, CP2 (iv) and ST6 of the Current Epping Forest District Local Plan (1998) and Alterations (2006) and Policies P8, DM7, DM8 and DM9 of the New Local Plan.