

Theydon Bois
Action Group

PROTECTING THE VILLAGE OF THEYDON BOIS

Theydon Bois Action Group
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Essex
CM16 7LP

28 June 2010

Civic Offices
High Street
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Ref: EPF/0888/10

**40 Forest Drive, Theydon Bois, Essex, CM16 7EZ
Demolition of Existing Bungalow and Erection of Replacement Bungalow.
(Revised application - Amended plans 17th June 2010.)**

Dear Madam

We have considered the above revision of plans, and do not consider the small adjustments to be acceptable as they have not addressed the fundamental reasons why this proposal is totally inappropriate for the site in question. We wish to object based on the Adopted Local Plan and Alterations. The following Policies are relevant to this case:

Policy DBE1 states that:

"The Council will require that new buildings:

(i) Respect their setting in terms of scale, proportion, siting, massing, height, orientation, roof-line and detailing.

(ii) Are of a size and position such that they adopt a significance in the streetscene which is appropriate to their use or function."

Policy DBE2 states that:

"Planning permission will not be granted for new buildings which have a detrimental effect upon existing neighbouring or surrounding properties in either amenity or functional terms.

The scale of new building is important in terms of the context of established urban areas, particularly on 'infill' sites i.e. sites which form a gap in an existing built frontage. Attention must be paid to such issues as.....the character of the streetscene (which is influenced by such matters as the uniformity of the building line, the height of buildings, the width of frontages, the distance of buildings from the street, elevational features, materials and roofscape)."

Policy DBE9 states that:

"The Council requires thatnew development does not result in an excessive loss of amenity for neighbouring properties.

.....The factors which will be taken into account [include] visual impact."

Government Guidance under PPG1 states that:

"Authorities should reject obviously poor designs and that these may include those inappropriate to their context (eg those clearly out of scale or incompatible with their surroundings)."

PPG also acknowledges that ***"....the appearance of proposed development and its relationship to its surrounding arematerial considerations...."***

40 Forest Drive is one of a unique row of small, 1920s bungalows, with small garages which are clearly subordinate to the dwellings. The proposal is to demolish this bungalow with its frontage of 8 metres, along with its garage, thus creating an 'infill' site, and replace it with a two-storey dwelling, having a frontage of over 12 metres, which would span the site, leaving just a one metre gap to the adjacent properties. The scale and appearance of the proposed dwelling are '***clearly out of scale***' and '***incompatible with their surroundings***'. It is quite out of context with the existing row of bungalows and would have a '***detrimental effect on existing neighbouring properties***' in terms of visual amenity. The currently proposed new dwelling would be too bulky and would not '***respect its setting***' and the '***character of the streetscene***'. It is obtrusive and over dominant when seen both from the front in Forest Drive, and from the side, with the flank wall being of an excessive height and length.

We do not believe that this would be an 'efficient use of land' as the present modest bungalow is much needed for our more senior residents, being close to the shops, whereas the current design is for a large, 'luxury' house, which would not be affordable to elderly residents who wish to 'downsize' and remain living in Theydon Bois. The loss of such a bungalow would have a deleterious impact on the 'dwelling mix' in the village.

Policy H4A - Dwelling Mix - states that:

"The Council will require that provision is made for a range of dwellings, including an appropriate proportion of smaller dwellings, to meet identified housing need on a site-by-site basis. This mix should be reflected in both

market housing and affordable housing. When considering extensions to, conversions or amalgamations of, existing dwellings, needs identified in the latest housing needs survey will be considered to ensure that an adequate mix of dwellings is maintained. The Council may therefore refuse planning permission for extensions to, or conversions of, existing dwellings where the result will adversely affect the range and mix of dwellings available."

The Council recognises that **"there is a need to maintain the current stock of smaller dwellings"** in view of **"the needs of the ageing population and the increasing affordability problems within the District."**

We believe that it is important that dwelling mix decisions are made '**on a site-by-site basis**' in the context of Theydon Bois and its local needs. In the past, decisions have been made on the basis of somewhat spurious, aggregated statistics, where the village of Theydon Bois has been grouped in with Loughton and Buckhurst Hill. This has produced skewed statistics which apparently show a need for more 3 bedroom houses. Whilst this may be so for Loughton and Buckhurst Hill, it is clearly not the case in Theydon Bois, where there are ample 3 bedroom houses, but a steady decline in the number of small bungalows due to conversions into larger properties. If this application were to be approved, it would exacerbate the problem.

This unique row of bungalows satisfy a very real housing need, particularly for our more senior residents, as they are close to the village centre with its shops and amenities. The ward profile of Theydon Bois indicates that the village has a higher percentage of the age group from 75 – 85+ than the district. It could be conceded that these age groups rely on a greater dependence in single story dwellings adjacent to both the local shops, the public transport system and health services.

For the above reasons, we strongly object to the current application on the grounds of non compliance with Policies DBE1, DBE2, DBE9 and H4A of the Adopted Local Plan and Alterations.

This application should be rejected out of hand.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Dodman
Secretary TBAG