

Theydon Bois Action Group

PROTECTING THE VILLAGE OF THEYDON BOIS

04 March 2009

Dear Councillor

Theydon Bois Action Group is sure you are aware of the harm that the developers behind the Blunts Farm 'landfill' have caused both to the environment and to the health and safety of the residents of Theydon Bois. You may not be aware that Parkeng the applicants to develop a commuter car park EPF/2439/08 are part of the same development team and share many of the same directors as Blunts Farm Estates Limited / Parsonage Golf, and currently own both sites.

This application is on the agenda for the Planning Committee of 11th March.

The application has been marked for refusal by the Planning Officer, he calls the application '*not only harmful but poorly conceived*'. TBAG consider the Planning Officers report is a correct and sensible assessment, which recognises the best interests of this sensitive area.

At the close of the official statutory period for consultation there were only a couple of letters of support for the application. The developer then left flyers on car windscreens in various locations in the district. The flyer confirmed that the maximum capacity for the car park would be 250 spaces, which is incorrect, it misinforms and misleads. The flyer also confirmed that the application was '*by Theydon Bois station*', and also gave the impression that the application was supported by TfL which it is not, which also misinforms and misleads. The application has subsequently gained 331 letters of support 95% of which are from these printed standard letters, the provenance of which can be easily questioned. These 'supporters', the vast majority of which do not live in Theydon Bois and many of which that do not live in the District, will not have viewed the plans, they probably do not understand that this land is Metropolitan Green Belt and have no idea of the cost of this car park. How can these commuters support this application?

The development of a car park of this size, twice that of Debden, is wholly inappropriate and may lead to large scale inappropriate development of a sensitive area of Metropolitan Green Belt.

The planning officer has confirmed in his report that '*the redevelopment of which is subject to pre application discussions with the Council.*' Is this development

really for a financially unviable commuter car park or for parking to support another development that will have no benefit to local people and will be inappropriate in the Green Belt?

Objectors include Theydon Bois Parish Council, Loughton Town Council, Epping Forest HF Group, Loughton Residents Association, Theydon Bois Rural Preservation Society, CPRE, Epping Society and London Regional Transport / Transport for London as well as 81 local residents and TBAG.

The Chairman of the Environment Agency, Sir John Harman has called these developers 'unscrupulous' and has commented with regard to the development of the golf course at Blunts Farm that he *'wouldn't want to see the operator get away with this abuse without suffering substantial financial loss.'*

There may be a commuter-parking problem locally; this is predominantly because those living outside the commutable area for the London Underground do not wish to pay the increased cost of travelling on British Rail, typically from Harlow, Bishop's Stortford and the Romford area. Why should residents that have paid a premium to purchase a house close to an underground station then be penalised by providing parking for those that have not? Commuters will continue to prefer to park for free on residential roads. They will not park in an expensive private car park an average distance of 560 metres from the station accessed via an unlit footbridge and dark footpath. There are spaces in the Burton Road car park Debden at £2.80 per day, if commuters will not pay £2.80 for a space which is considerably nearer than the proposal at Theydon Bois, then there is no hope that this development, if granted, would ever be successful and this is too high a price for this level of intrusion on to our Green Belt.

Please therefore refuse EPF/2439/08, as this is Green Belt. The granting of this development would open the flood gates for further applications on this land and this developer should not be granted any further lucrative applications as his track record indicates that he does not have the best interests of the people of Theydon Bois at heart.

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