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PLANNING

Planning Roundup

Planning sub committee

Apart from the two major issues written about by Chris Curry on this page, the planning scene has been quiet over the last three months. A rash of modifications, extensions and tree pruning comprise most of the proposals for work in Emsworth.

There is, however, a worrying increase in applications to convert shop premises into dwellings. Following on the 53 North Street application to convert office accommodation into two flats (revised application still pending) is the conversion of half of the florists shop in Queen St into a tiny house (6 Queen Street). We understand that the florist will continue to trade from No. 4, however, this is still a regrettable loss of retail space. Now 51 The High Street is subject to a proposal for conversion to residential use. At present the building houses the Scott Pinkham letting agency.



51 High Street – change of use threatens vitality of town centre

With the currently inflated prices of houses in the South of England, the temptation to convert shops to houses is obvious. However, in the words of the (draft) Emsworth Design Statement:

“Pressure to convert commercial properties in response to the demand for houses and apartments in the town centre could crowd out commercial premises or community facilities which are essential for a thriving community.”

The loss of an estate agent, not the most popular usage from the viewpoint of many residents, is not the issue; already that end of the High Street is mostly residential and is threatened as a shopping area. The ERA is registering a strong objection to this planning application.

New Brighton Road Developments

Chris Curry

The ERA is concerned about the flurry of building and destruction in the New Brighton area of Emsworth.

To quote from the Draft Emsworth Design Statement, “New Brighton Road was constructed to serve the development of New Brighton during the late 19th century and is now the north east feeder, through Westbourne village, to the A27(T) junction at Warblington. The road benefits from many large, mature trees lining garden frontages. Larger Edwardian houses of architectural interest, which are set in large, mature gardens, are an important addition to the spatial character of this area. Any loss to high-density development will have a detrimental effect.”

There has been the recent development on the old laundry site, which included the destruction of one of the older houses in New Brighton Road. This was followed by several applications for planning permission and others rumoured, which affect other local roads. These could seriously affect the general appearance and residential character of the area, which we believe will be detrimental to that part of Emsworth. In fact a number of roads with Victorian or Edwardian villas can be changed rapidly by the destruction of older houses and the replacement with dwellings at a density of 40 or more to the hectare.

The changes to the Grange and expansion into the land at the junction of Hordean and New Brighton roads have already been approved. The position of the applications for number 26 New Brighton Road, was unknown at the time of writing, but a large number of trees have already been cut down.

As a result of our concerns we have arranged a meeting with the relevant staff at the Borough Council to discuss the general situation in that area. Normally they only deal with one site at a time as it comes up for planning application. We want them to consider the consequences of a number of applications affecting the character of the area.

Rubbish or Resource?

Richard Jannaway

People in Emsworth threw away about 5,000 tonnes of household rubbish last year. About 33% of it was food waste, 33% paper and card, and 13% plastics. The remaining 20% was glass, metal, textiles, and other miscellaneous materials.

Havant Borough has a target set by the government of recycling 30% of domestic refuse, in 2003-4 they managed only 19%. This amount is set to rise as the fortnightly collections restrict the amount of general refuse that will be collected from householders. The government has set recycling targets with penalties for missing them to back-up this target.

Recycling has long ceased to be a fringe interest. Research by MORI in Hampshire shows a rising and positive expectation of more recycling. People want to play their part and expect local councils to provide a comprehensive doorstep collection service covering glass, food waste, clothes and garden waste as well as more disposal points.

So what's stopping them? See page 8

A27 Site (Interbridges West)

Chris Curry

Since the last EMS was distributed, we have learned a little more about the options that are planned for the development now called the A27 Site (formerly referred to as the Interbridges West site) and have had some time to consolidate our own thinking based on comments and advice from a number of people.

The first point is that since the Inquiry into the Local Plan found in favour of using the A27 Site for industrial purposes, this cannot be overturned now. The Inspector did, however, state that the site must have a Flood Risk Assessment and that legal conditions can be imposed to avoid worsening any flooding below or above the site, or attenuate any risk of flooding on the land itself. The inspector also assumed that access to the site would be on the railway side thereby adding an additional distance between the industrial buildings and the gardens of houses in Selangor Avenue.

An environmental impact survey will have to be conducted, the outcome of which will be most interesting.

The site itself may contain both light and heavy industrial units in addition to the hotel and filling station accessed from the A27(T). There is still the possibility of access to the hotel from the Emsworth side. No mention is now made of the distribution facilities originally set out in the First District-Wide Plan.

Our concerns remain:

- quantity of traffic which will access the site through the North Street junction and the effect on traffic flowing north and south, particularly emergency services such as the fire brigade getting to the northern part of Emsworth.
- hazard to those walking on the footpath between Washington Road and the Hordean Road Recreation Ground, especially the “safe route to school” programme which envisages using this path.
- drainage of the site and the drainage into the Westbrook, particularly the management of any Sustainable Drainage System including who is responsible in the longer term.
- disposition and nature of the buildings on the site and their surroundings, in relation to their appearance and that of Emsworth from the A27(T) and from the railway. The screening of the site from both the A27(T) as required by the inspector and from the railway.
- need to restrict hours of access to avoid disturbing the peace of the area round the site and in North Street during building and on-going operations.

We would like to gain as a minimum:

- A guaranteed safe crossing at the footpath between Washington Road and Hordean Recreation Ground.
- An improved pedestrian and disabled access through the station building from the west side of New Brighton Road to the present station forecourt.



A27development site – this rural view of Emsworth seen from the A27 and from the train will be changed forever



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