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Build, build, build - How do we respond?

Chris Curry

After all the reports you have read in The EMS in recent editions, you might be surprised to discover that there are yet more significant developments in the pipeline for Emsworth. However, we are getting to expect such proposals and you too may have become numbed by the sheer number.

History

Developments that have occurred over the last eighteen months include: the laundry site of 35 dwellings including the demolition of a fine Edwardian house in New Brighton Road; 10 new apartments at the Grange, New Brighton Road; 3 houses under construction on the site behind the Catholic Church off New Brighton Road.

Major developments applied for at the time of writing involve demolishing the house at:

- 50 Bath Road plus felling numerous trees and building 8 apartments
- 58 Horndean Road and building 14 apartments;
- 26 New Brighton Road and building 34 sheltered housing apartments
- 97 Havant Road and building 6 flats and 4 semi detached houses ***(see Planning Roundup page 4)***

Additionally, there are many smaller developments, recently completed or under construction and more are expected soon. Applications presently withdrawn but expected to be revived are the employment sites to the east and west of the Interbridges area off New Brighton Road.

Finally, a plan for the Oak Tree Drive development has been produced. We objected without success to this site being included in the Local Plan and it has now reached the pre-application stage with a presentation by the developer of plans for 68 dwellings, not 55 as originally proposed.

ERA Views

The Emsworth Residents' Association recognises that there is some justification for development within Emsworth on brownfield sites, such as the old laundry site. What we do not agree with is the over development of sites such as gardens or the demolition of perfectly good houses to squeeze in blocks of apartments in streets of otherwise well-spaced residential homes. Most of all we object to such development in the Conservation Area. We also wish to retain a mix of different types of accommodation around Emsworth, for example by integrating affordable housing, sheltered housing and residential homes in small units throughout the community keeping the types of accommodation in balance. This needs to be considered at the time planning applications arise to avoid isolated concentrations of the old or the young.

How do we respond?

We are fighting the applications one by one, as the planning system presents them. If approved, the overall effect of so much development will be to change the face of Emsworth well beyond that which the majority of residents are prepared to tolerate. In the next few weeks, the ERA will put together a strategy involving as many Emsworth residents and organisations as possible, with the objective of limiting the changes to Emsworth to an acceptable level. Come to the public meeting on the 18th April (see box). Watch the ERA website and/or the notice board outside the Co-Op for further announcements.

Residents' views

The articles below give a flavour of the feelings and views of those who are campaigning against planning applications near them. The ERA has given support to them in their objections.

See also *Chairman's Report* on page 3, *Planning Roundup on page 4* and *Letters* on page 2.

Death by Development in Bath Road

Chris Clode

A planning application which is being strongly objected to has been submitted by Seaward Properties to demolish 50 Bath Road, a well-proportioned four-bedroom detached family home built in the 1950s, and replace it with eight apartments.

Bath Road in Emsworth runs along the western side of the Town Millpond and comes within the Emsworth Conservation Area designated by Havant Borough Council.

Terraced cottages happily standing alongside detached and semi detached homes add to the architectural ambiance of the area, which is much enjoyed by tens of thousands of both locals and visitors every year as they walk around the Millpond and the Promenade.

To grant planning permission to demolish a perfectly viable home in a Conservation Area and replace it with eight apartments would be scandalous. In Havant Borough Council's own words Conservation Areas are there to 'conserve and protect the area'. It would set a precedent that would further open up this and other Conservation Areas to development, the very thing Havant Borough Council says it is trying to avoid, thus changing the entire character of the area for ever.

50 Bath Road

The Havant Borough Local Plan, adopted in September 2005, forbids demolition within Conservation Areas unless all of five key elements apply. None of them do in the case of 50 Bath Road.

Bath Road is narrow and has no pavements and the proposed development is at the very narrowest part of the road, creating a dangerous access onto what is already a crowded pedestrian and traffic area. It has all the ingredients for an accident with additional traffic from the apartments.

If this application is granted, it will be the start of a sinister creep of apartment development in Emsworth's Conservation Area, something that those of us who take pride in our surroundings are determined to preserve.

26 New Brighton Road

Theresa Oliver

Churchill Retirement Homes held a consultation meeting in January to discuss their plans for the above development. They listened to what the local residents had to say then completely ignored what they heard and have put in a revised planning application. The new proposal is to knock down one large, beautiful house and erect 34 sheltered flats which rise up to three storeys and provide only twelve car parking spaces. The access for this estate will be on New Brighton Road, exactly opposite the twenty one new flats of the Grange development!

The southern end of New Brighton Road has changed beyond recognition in a very short space of time, the development of the "old laundry site" opposite the nursery is still ongoing and the Interbridges development has not even started yet. The impact of all of the extra traffic, huge industrial lorries and the ubiquitous white van man is turning what was once a pleasant residential area into a mini urban city nightmare!

This is not just a one-off situation, there are other plans to demolish houses and replace them with multi-blocks of flats in Bath Road and Horndean Road too. We cannot sit back and let Emsworth turn into a "concrete jungle" can we?

People are drawn to Emsworth because it is a lovely place to live in, but by indiscriminate over-development we are destroying the essence of what makes Emsworth so attractive. We have to stop this rot before our green and pleasant land is changed forever!

26 New Brighton Road

INAPPROPRIATE AND HIGH DENSITY DEVELOPMENT IN EMSWORTH

Public Meeting

To discuss inappropriate development in Emsworth and organise cooperative action amongst people from all sections of the community to safeguard the future character of our town.

This meeting is jointly sponsored by the Emsworth Residents Association and the Emsworth Community Board.

Wednesday 18th April 7.30pm

Mountford Room, Emsworth Community Centre

58 Horndean Road

Resident of Horndean Road

It has to be said, that the sight of small orange notices, tied to lamp-posts is rarely the cause of uplifting joy, for many. Mrs Smith's new conservatory or a bathroom extension to No. 28, sometimes causes unnecessary dramatic swooning from some and rarely unites all. Most of us, are happy to 'live and let live' for the most part. However, when a major planning change is proposed, something that affects us all, well, break out the biscuits, because, there's work to be done.

The proposal for 14 apartments on the site at 58 Horndean Rd is not so much re-development, as the re-structuring and urbanization of this part of Emsworth. The Architect, clearly fuelled by too much Hieronymus Bosch and too many visits to Future Build, proposes a building, so out of character with its surroundings and the people who live here, that most days, you spend your time, pinching yourself, just to sense a bit of 'skin based' reality. You almost wonder if he's ever visited the site. Perhaps there's a virtual Emsworth. Another Horndean Road with towering blocks of apartments, monorail, 10 screen cinema and hover cars gently queueing to get into the metropolis.

I have to say that I was surprised by the depth of feeling and abhorrence of the scheme. At the meeting, some, seemed genuinely in search of a good tree bough and some jute based rope. And all seemingly united, in one voice. Not so much, 'not in my back yard' as not here, nor, indeed, anywhere.

'Future Build' at 58 Horndean Road

Developers and Architects are often accused of riding rough-shod over the feelings of ordinary folk. In this more caring, cuddly and touchy feely society it's good to know that some are not bowing to public pressure but instead, simply looking at the bottom line and dishing out a more inclusive form of contempt.

The people of Emsworth are not prepared to sup from this cup, if you don't believe me, take a look at the letters of objection, I have.

Now, pass the Jaffas.

Oak Tree Drive Development

Peter Rayment

The chaotic development proposal for the site adjacent to Oak Tree Drive is a perfect example of political expediency overriding good planning practice and the interests of the local community. In 1965, this site had planning permission for the completion of an extension to Oak Tree Drive to the same high standard and the same housing density, but the builder went bankrupt, and the land has since been used for horse activities.

Now, the current proposal is for building at approximately twice the housing density of Oak Tree Drive. The Inspector's approved plan was for 55 dwellings at a density of 31 per hectare which was already too high. In the latest application by Wimpey, the density has been increased to 68 units which is 41 per hectare, the government's stipulation for inner urban areas with good public transport links, whilst this is an area adjacent to the strategic gap.

The most strongly expressed objections in a meeting of 50 local residents to consider the comments recorded at Wimpey's presentation, were on the issue of housing density. A second concern is the dangerous consequences of the level of traffic flow arising from the new development in the immediate road network which was designed for 1950's traffic levels. Unacceptable overflow parking in Oak Tree Drive and neighbouring streets will occur since the one-bedroom housing has only one allocated parking space per plot, yet most couples would require two vehicles because of the remote location and inadequate public transport.

Why is a huge company like Wimpey interested in this tiny development? Could it be that they are trying to establish a precedent for the highest density housing so that they can make a killing on larger sites in the future? Oak Tree Drive residents demand that the proposed number of houses should be restored to the original level of the Inspector's plan.