



Campaigners opposed to the building of 351 homes at the St Margaret's Hospital site, in Epping, attended the planning committee meeting. Pictured inset is a computer-generated image of the proposed development (c)

'Prison barracks' plan not suitable for town

By **EMILY ROBERTS**

eroberts@london.newsquest.co.uk

OBJECTORS turned out in force to hear councillors reject plans for a 351-home development.

But the land at St Margaret's Hospital site, in Epping, could still be turned into housing if Bellway Homes launches, and wins, an appeal.

It is not yet known if the home builder will fight on, but the land already has outline planning approval.

Members of the Plainly Say No group and local residents said they were delighted with the decision by the area planning sub-committee, whose members voted unanimously to throw out the controversial proposals.

Bellway Homes had submitted plans to build a range of flats and houses with one to four bedrooms.

But councillors rejected the application, saying the development did not fit in with the character of Epping. And at a meeting of the town council earlier this year, members likened the design to a "prison barracks".



Plainly Say No group leader David Windrow – "we totally object to this development"



Jeanette Goatcher – "I can't see how they could win an appeal"



John Barber – "a sensible decision"

District councillor Chris Whitbread said: "It's completely out of keeping with the town that I've grown up in and loved. It deserves to be confined to the rubbish bin of design."

Plainly Say No group leader David Windrow told the meeting: "Residents will not be able to walk to the station, and High Street parking is already a problem. It will increase the population of Epping. We totally object to this development."

The site was formerly occupied by hospital wards, and outline planning permission

was granted in 2000 for redevelopment to provide hospital accommodation and housing.

But the plans were criticised and opposed by Epping Town Council, the City of London, Natural England and local residents, with 87 objections sent to the district council.

Council leader Di Collins said: "It's obviously not the sort of design we're looking for in Epping."

While councillor Matthew Colling said: "I think it's a very poor design and inappropriate for Epping. It's too far away from the station and it

would lead to a massive overflow to the station which is already fit to burst."

Speaking after the decision, campaign group member Jeanette Goatcher, of The Plain, told the Guardian: "We're delighted. It was a unanimous refusal by the committee members. I can't see how they could win an appeal after a refusal like that. Everyone is against it."

John Barber, of Forest Lodge, added: "I think it was a sensible decision from the council. If they decide to appeal we will fight it accordingly."

Path could lead more people to hidden pond

BETTER access to a pond could be created if a town council gives the go-ahead.

The Theydon Grove Pond, in Epping, is currently used by few people because it is so difficult to find.

But town councillors are deciding whether to build a

path running from Hemnall Street to the pond and installing a gate.

Councillor Rob Macrae said: "It will benefit the people of Epping and could be a real community area."

"Many people don't even know it's there because you

have to walk all the way around to gain access to it and it seems like it's just for the benefit of Theydon Grove residents. But it's a lovely area now and I think we should capitalise on it."

Money put aside for conservation in Epping could be

used to improve access to the pond so more people can use it. Councillor Alan Warner said: "It looks really great and is a really nice area but it's not easily accessible, you have to go up stairs and people are not aware that it's even there."

CLEARANCE SALE
NOW ON
50% OFF SELECTED DISPLAY MODELS
To make way for new 2008 displays

INTERSTYLE FIREPLACES
STOVES & CENTRAL HEATING
Reeves Lane, Roydon Hamlet, Harlow CM19 5DE
Tel: 01279 793366
Opening times
Mon - Sat 10-5pm
www.interstyle.co.uk
Over 40 displays

HAVE YOU BEEN THE VICTIM OF A MEDICAL MISTAKE?

Ask the only specialist medical negligence law firm in the country and we will find out.

We are the medical negligence experts; it is all that we do. It means that we can give you a guarantee that no other solicitors can:

If we take on your claim you will never pay a penny and you will receive 100% of your compensation.

Call us FREE now on **0800 321 3112**

MASSIVE DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE ON TOP QUALITY GARDEN FURNITURE IN OUR FACTORY SHOP

Many displays of discontinued lines, and refurbished stocks of both garden and conservatory furniture

Special offers also at our on line shop: www.bridgman.co.uk

Find us in Brimsdown Business Area
Lockfield Ave. in off Millers Lane, which is off Millson Ave.
(A1055 from Walkers Cross to Tombsbury Hale)
Almost opposite McDonalds, close to Makers and Brimsdown Station.

82, Lockfield Ave, Brimsdown, Enfield, EN3 7PX
Tel: 020 8443 0880
Open 10am-4pm 7 DAYS A WEEK