

Guardian

AT A GLANCE

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IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU

'Beautiful site has enormous potential'

FROM FRONT PAGE

infrastructure just can't cope with this magnitude of development – the town, and schools and doctors can't cope with it."

Another resident, who has lived in The Plain for 24 years, said: "It's terrible. We've been away and just had this (a council letter informing residents of the application) plonked on us.

"I think it will be horrendous for everything, for access and no-one will be able to get into the town. Are there facilities for schools and doctors, and what about the water?"

Olive Dunseath, chairman of the town council's planning and general purposes, told the latest meeting: "I think it's grossly over-developed. I don't think someone who is a professional would go anywhere near it. It's condemning people to living in a prison barracks."

Councillor Rob Macrae said: "It looks like a Monopoly board. One of the things we need in Epping is more family houses and I don't think this development is answering it. We've got lots of flats as it is. I don't think we need any more.

"It's a fantastic area and fantastic opportunity to have a flagship development that's characteristic to the town rather than an over-built ghetto."



Epping deputy mayor Ben Murphy – calling for a "more suitable application which takes our unique rural market town feel into account"

Deputy mayor Ben Murphy said: "The planning committee believed this application shows a massive overdevelopment of the site, with a poor access route.

"The committee was also alarmed at the proximity between dwellings and existing building, both residential and commercial.

"Members also expressed significant concern at the impact a new estate of this kind would have on Epping's delicate infrastructure.

"We carefully considered how our already busy doctors and schools would cope with such a large influx of new residents.

"We believe this is a beautiful



Councillor Rob Macrae – branded the proposal development "an over-built ghetto"

site with enormous potential and we hope the developer will come forward with another, more suitable application which takes our unique rural market town feel into account."

The 5.51-hectare site was acquired by Bellway Homes from English Partnerships last year. Outline consent for residential development was approved in 2000 with permission renewed in March 2005.

A district council spokesman said: "Outline planning permission has existed for the residential development of this site for eight years with many matters 'reserved'

for later approval.

"This application is seeking approval to the details of the residential development – the numbers, siting, design – that were reserved at outline stage.

"The applicants are only seeking permission for the 'reserved matters' because the principle has already been approved."

A Bellway Homes spokesman said: "The original permission suggested around 300 units although Bellway has now increased the number of apartments in line with Government sentiment and best practice to make the best use of previously developed land."

"Thirty or 35 per cent of the properties will be so-called 'affordable' homes.

"English Partnerships bought the land from the health trust and openly marketed the sale.

"Bellway seek to increase the amount of brownfield land we develop each year and it's preferable to build on sites such as this rather than the adjacent green belt.

"The principles of residential development were established seven years ago and this is only a reserved matters application that will deliver much-needed affordable and key worker housing on an adjacent site owned by East Thames Housing Association."

● To join the residents' campaign email bridgethegap@ntlworld.com

Water fine exhibition

AN album of 51 watercolour sketches painted in the late 1830s by James-Paul Andre has been acquired by the Epping Forest District Museum.

They are mainly views of Chigwell but also feature four views of Loughton as well as others of Theydon Bois, Abridge and Lambourne, plus neighbouring Redbridge and Waltham Forest.

The acquisition was made possible due to grant aid support from The Art Fund, the UK's leading independent art charity which provided £2,875.

Other financial backing came from the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund (£2,500);

Chigwell Parish Council (£400), and Loughton and District Historical Society (£400).

The sketches capture the rural life of the district at the time when the huge growth of London as a result of the Industrial Revolution would change the nature of life dramatically, and there is a romantic quality to the vision of rural life the artist has captured.

An exhibition of the sketches will be held at the museum, in Sun Street, Waltham Abbey, from March 15 until April 26, and at Loughton Library from May 3 to May 29.



(left to right) Chris Pond (Loughton and District Historical Society), Jane Davies (V&A/MLA Purchase Fund), leisure portfolio holder Ricki Gadsby, district council chairman Caroline Pond, Chigwell Parish Council vice-chairman Christine Buttling, Jane Yates (The Art Fund), Richard Morris (Loughton and District Historical Society) and Epping Forest District Council museum officer Tony O'Connor (c)

We need CCTV to prevent gun crime

By EDMUND TOBIN

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PEOPLE living in an affluent neighbourhood claim they are suffering from an alarming rise in gun crime.

At the latest meeting of Buckhurst Hill Parish Council, members of the public told Inspector Simon Werrett, responsible for the Loughton, Chigwell and Buckhurst Hill areas, that a new and disturbing trend for hand guns had arisen.

There was also a discussion about a recent shocking robbery in the underpass near Buckhurst Hill Station, during which three women were held at gunpoint.

Buckhurst Hill Residents' Society

chairman Tony Oliva said: "Something I'm aware of is criminals having firearms. It appears to be new in this area.

"I've lived in the area a number of years and I haven't seen this kind of incident before."

Councillor Peter Sinfield said: "We've been concerned about the underpass for a number of years.

"It would be good to put some pressure on London Underground. We wanted to put something down there, but we weren't allowed to.

"It's their property and the price they were going to charge us for putting something in was totally prohibitive.

"It would be much more of a

deterrent if there was obvious CCTV there. It might put people off."

Mr Werrett said: "There's no particular issue. There have been incidents where firearms have been seen or the threat has been reported. Sometimes people say 'I've got a gun' and people hand over the money. It's a national trend."

He added: "People who carry out gun crime don't live in our area. Eighty-five per cent of the people we arrest don't live in the Epping Forest area, but from where we border. One victim is one victim too many, but if you compare the figures with Waltham Forest they are much higher."

Have your say on sickly trees

THE City of London Corporation is holding a public 'drop-in' consultation to allow Theydon Bois Village residents the chance to comment on the management of the avenue of trees there.

The avenue of oak trees on The Green is in poor health, with a number of them being felled in the past year for safety reasons.

The City of London – conservator of Epping Forest – has now developed eight options for long-term management of the avenue which will be on show at the consultation event.

People will have a chance to view the options at Theydon Bois Village Hall between 1pm and 8pm on Monday, February 18.

LOOKING FOR A JOB: PERHAPS WE CAN HELP YOU FIND ONE...

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