

To / Sukhvinder Dhadwar
From / Sarah Cheng
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Our ref /
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ADDRESS // GREAT OAK, COOPERSALE STREET, EPPING, CM16 7PG
PROPOSAL // DEMOLITION OF TWO EXISTING OUTBUILDINGS & ERECTION OF SEPARATE DWELLING & GARAGE, PROPOSED NEW ENTRANCE ARRANGEMENT TO IMPROVE SITE INGRESS & EGRESS TO IMPROVE HIGHWAY SAFETY. (REVISED APPLICATION TO EPF/0503/19).

Great Oak forms part of the Old School House built in 1850 by the National and British Societies as a school for boys and girls, and is an early example of a purpose built school building. The building demonstrates strong Victorian architectural elements particularly the use of polychrome brickwork in diaper patterns and stone dressing to the windows under a steeply sloped roof. We believe that due to the quality of this building, it should be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset.

This application seeks consent for the demolition of two outbuildings and the erection of a separate dwelling & garage on the site. This is a revised application from EPF/0503/19 where two access points were proposed, this application sees the entrance to the site being combined into one. Concern was raised with the submission of this application as to the significance of the two outbuildings on the site and a Heritage Statement was submitted in order to justify the demolition of them. The Heritage Statement argues that the outbuildings are “*modern structures of no historic interest*”, that they have little architectural merit, are of poor construction and condition, and only served a temporary purpose.

We believe however, that the outbuildings are of historic and social value especially in the context of the main school building. This association is recognised by the Heritage Statement. The large outbuilding is a good example in the provision of school buildings in the early 20th century. The use of Crittal windows, brick and corrugated iron are distinctive materials for buildings of this type and period. Lack of funds and building materials following the First World War, saw many emergency classrooms and buildings being formed using advances in building material knowledge developed during wartime. The larger outbuilding provided a temporary building that would have been quick to erect, inexpensive and made of readily sourced materials. Brick was considered a relative plentiful building material at that time and was used in place of timber. We agree with the Heritage Statement that the smaller outbuilding is likely to have been built as an air raid shelter. A concrete roof and the use of an English brick bond provided strength to the construction. For the previous reasons we feel that without further justification their demolition should be strongly resisted.

In 1993, a planning application for the conversion of the larger building into residential was dismissed at appeal. It was felt at that point that the building was not redundant and was still expected to be used as a building ancillary to Great Oak due to the scale of the house and the rural setting. Conservation policies have evolved to a greater degree to support the sensitive conversion of heritage assets in order to ensure their future maintenance and repair. We feel that this is a way forward for the buildings.

In line with the above, we cannot give our support to the scheme and proposed demolition and recommend that planning permission is refused. As discussed above, the retention of the building through its sensitive conversion could be considered as a suitable way forward.

This is supported by policy DM7 of our Submission Version Local Plan (2017), and paragraphs 184, 189, 190, 192, 193 and 197 of the NPPF (2019).

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