

RPS

Planning Statement

In respect of

Woodview, Chigwell

On behalf of

Longprime Limited

January 2018

Secure & Stable
ADDING VALUE

QUALITY MANAGEMENT

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CONTENTS

- 1 INTRODUCTION 1
- 2 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA 2
- 3 PLANNING HISTORY 3
- 4 GREEN BELT CONSIDERATIONS..... 4
- 5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS 6

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This planning report is submitted in support of a representation by Longprime Limited made to Epping Forest District Council in response to the Epping Forest District Local Plan – Submission Version 2017. This statement relates to the site of Woodview, Lambourne Road, Chigwell. Longprime Limited are the owners of the Woodview site.
- 1.2 The representation site adjoins the settlement of Chigwell Row. The representation site is currently in the Metropolitan Green Belt. By way of this representation, it is requested that the site be released from the Green Belt and allocated for housing. The representation site included a housing site in the Draft Plan (see Policy P7 – Chigwell, site CHIG.R2). The representation site is allocated for approximately 23 homes.
- 1.3 It is considered that the Submission Version of the Local Plan is sound, in so far as provision is made for additional housing in Chigwell. However, this representation does not address the adequacy of housing requirements across the district as a whole.
- 1.4 It should be noted that the representation site is the subject of a recent planning permission for a care home and retirement living units dated 12 May 2017. This report considers relevant planning issues, which weigh in favour of the site's release from the Green Belt.

2 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The Woodview site accommodates a large Victorian residential property, comprising approximately 1,625 sq.m. (17,500 sq.ft.) of accommodation. Woodview is a three storey property containing 22 bedrooms and 10 other habitable rooms, plus snooker room and gymnasium. In other words, it is not a conventional dwelling house.
- 2.2 The Woodview site also includes another three bedroom detached residential property, plus a series of garages/outbuildings. The site contains a number of mature trees, many of which are subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). The site is well concealed from any public vantage point by the mature trees around its boundaries. The site contains a total area of just over 1ha (2.75 acres).
- 2.3 Woodview is located on the southern side of Lambourne Road, within the settlement of Chigwell Row. It falls within an accessible location, being less than 1km from Grange Hill underground station. Furthermore, Lambourne Road is well served by buses. Additionally, the site is well located in relation to local facilities, including shops and a medical centre. Notably, there is a local parade of shops next to the underground station.
- 2.4 The site falls within the Metropolitan Green Belt. However, the site is visually and functionally within the built up area of Chigwell Row, plus it is within 500 metres of the built up area of Hainault. As is explained in Section 4 of this report, the site does not fulfil the purposes of a Green Belt site. Indeed, immediately to the west of the Woodview site is a relatively large care home, the Alder House Cheshire Home (formerly known as Three Forests Cheshire Home). On the opposite side of Lambourne Road are residential properties. Immediately to the east is a sports ground (including a pavilion building). To the south is another recreational ground. In general terms, the site and the locality is very much urban in character.
- 2.5 Although within the Green Belt, significantly the Woodview site does contain substantial buildings and certainly the major part of the site can be classified as a brownfield site (or previously developed land) within the Green Belt. For the avoidance of doubt, Woodview is not a listed building and the site does not fall within a conservation area. As is explained in the next section, Woodview is now the subject of a live planning permission for a care home and retirement living apartments.

3 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 Woodview was constructed in about 1850. However, the property has experienced extensive renovation and refurbishment since this time. Very few of the building's original features remain. For many years, the property was used as a large single dwelling house. However, it is known that for a number of years, it was used as an elderly persons home.
- 3.2 The District Council's planning records list an application for a garage building, associated with the elderly persons home, which was approved in July 1974. An extension to the property was approved in May 1988. A change of use from an elderly persons home back to a single dwelling house was approved by the Council in June 1996. The property has been in use as a single dwelling house since that time.
- 3.3 The TPO in relation to a number of trees on the site was issued by the Council in 2005. The Council's records also show that consent was granted to fell a TPO'd oak tree in October 2014, following lightning damage.
- 3.4 Importantly, planning consent was issued by the Council in May 2017 for a new three storey 72 bed care home and one three storey block containing 25 retirement living apartments. Accordingly, Woodview is now a development site. This represents an important base position for other development proposals, including housing. Importantly, it represents clear justification for removing the site from the Green Belt.

4 GREEN BELT CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The site currently falls within the Metropolitan Green Belt. However, the Woodview site represents a brownfield site (or previously developed land), and in this connection its release from the Green Belt requires serious consideration. Notably, the recent consent for a care home and retirement living apartments justifies the sites relevance from the Green Belt. In any event, an assessment is made against the five purposes of including land in the Green Belt, and secondly, in terms of potential impact upon the openness of the Green Belt.
- 4.2 As set out in paragraph 80 of the NPPF, the Green Belt serves five purposes:-
- **“To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;**
 - **To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;**
 - **To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;**
 - **To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;**
 - **To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.”**
- 4.3 The proposals are considered below against the five purposes:-
- Redevelopment of the Woodview site will not result in “sprawl”. Rather, redevelopment will maximise the use of an existing built up site, consistent with the extent of existing built development in the settlement of Chigwell Row. Notably, the proposals will respect the line of built development to the south of Lambourne Road.
 - The effect of the proposals will be to consolidate development in Chigwell Row. Chigwell Row will remain as a distinct settlement, and for example, there will continue to be clear separation to the south.
 - The Woodview site does not form part of the “countryside” and therefore this point is not relevant to the proposals. The site and surrounding area is very much urban in character.
 - The area does not contain any historic towns and therefore this point is not relevant to the proposals.
 - Neither Chigwell Row nor the larger settlement of Chigwell contains sizeable areas of derelict land, where regeneration can be encouraged. Again, this point is not relevant to the representation site. Indeed, development proposals in the Chigwell area need to secure sites outside of the defined built up area. Any sites that may be available within the built up area.
- 4.4 Accordingly, it can be concluded that the redevelopment of the Woodview site will not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.

4.5 In terms of openness, the following points are relevant:-

1. The Woodview site already contains buildings, being the large property of Woodview itself, plus a smaller dwelling house and associated outbuildings. Plus, of course, there is now a live planning permission for sizeable development.
2. The Woodview site is entirely screened by mature trees. Accordingly the proposed building will not be seen from beyond the site, either from any public vantage point or from other locations within the Green Belt. Therefore, visually there will be no impact on the openness of the Green Belt. Many of the trees are TPO'd, ensuring that the screening of the site is permanent.
3. This part of Chigwell Row is already largely built up, with other tall buildings in the locality (for example The Bowls development on the northern side of Lambourne Road)

4.6 Accordingly, it can be concluded that the openness of the Green Belt in this location will not be harmed.

5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The Woodview site comprises a large Victorian residential property, plus a smaller detached property, along with a series of garages and outbuildings. The site also contains a number of mature trees, many of which are subject to a Tree Preservation Order. The site is well concealed from any public vantage point by the mature trees around its boundaries. Whilst the site falls within the Metropolitan Green Belt, it is visually and functionally within the built up area of Chigwell Row. Importantly, as the site contains substantial buildings, it can be classified as a brownfield site (or previously developed land) within the Green Belt.
- 5.2 Significantly, the site benefits from a recent planning permission for a care home and retirement living apartments. Accordingly, Woodview is a development site. There is now clear justification for releasing the site from the Green Belt for this reason alone.
- 5.3 The proposals for development of the Woodview site will not be harmful when assessed against the five purposes of including land in the Green Belt, nor will they harm the openness of the Green Belt. Accordingly, there is real merit in releasing the site from the Green Belt.

