

PLANNING MATTERS

In 1984 EGRA was born out of a campaign to save the Hemdean Valley (Bugs Bottom). Residents campaigned for many years in conjunction the the wider population of Caversham to prevent development. After lengthy legal battle, the developers eventually got permission, and building began in the mid 1990s. However a generous swathe of land remains unbuilt for all to enjoy. Tribute is paid to all those who worked so hard under the Chair of David Miles, including Alan Perrin, Bill Goodworth and Brian Warren.



Campaigning in the 1980s



Building in the 1990s



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Post Millennium

The first ten years of the new millennium were dominated by often fragmented infill development. In more major cases householders were encouraged to set up their own action group. Overall, the Association agreed to submit objections, if a proposal would have a general adverse impact on Emmer Green. Particular attention was paid to developments which could affect the character of the area, especially the Surley Row Conservation Area.

For many years Vice-Chairman Barry Prior monitored the relevant Reading Borough Council / South Oxfordshire District Council planning applications, followed in 2016 by committee representative Veronica Leeke. In 2017 non-committee member Dr Harvey Smith took over and continued when the support role transferred to CADRA.

An application to SODC from Gladman Land in 2016 to build 270 homes in South Oxfordshire on bordering Emmer Green required considerable focus and, after consulting members, EGRA partnered other local organisations in opposing the development, which was eventually refused.



Reading Golf Club



Caversham Park

Two major planning applications followed, both impacting greatly on Emmer Green and the surrounding area. Reading Golf Club and Caversham Park, following the end of BBC Monitoring Services in 2016.

As early as 2018 Reading Golf Club members were consulted about the closing of the course and sale of the land for development. The majority of RGC members voted to sell. Development of part of its land was put forward as a site for development in the Reading Local Plan, adopted in 2019. A series of applications by Reading Golf Club and its development partner, Fairfax Acquisitions, using all the land within Reading Borough for housing. Careful monitoring alerting the committee to developments, to new technical documents, and to the work of a campaign group opposing the development, set up in 2018 by a number of local residents, called Keep Emmer Green. EGRA consulted its membership twice on these developments and joined other organisations in vigorously opposing the applications, but Reading Borough Council eventually permitted the development in March 2022.

With the dissolution of EGRA in 2022 the planning support role has transferred to CADRA, where the former EGRA member who had that role now continues to monitor applications relating to the Reading Golf Club site and elsewhere and supports the CADRA committee in playing an active role on behalf of Emmer Green residents.