

Epsom Civic Society

shaping the future, safeguarding the past

2 Leighton Way
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KT18 7QZ

20 February 2014

Mr Mark Berry BA(Hons) MRTPI DMS
Head of Planning and Building Control
Town Hall
EPSOM
KT18 5BY

Dear Mr Berry

PLANNING APPLICATION 13/01335/FUL
NESCOT ANIMAL HUSBANDRY LAND
ERECTION OF 91 HOUSES

In view of the controversial nature of this proposed development it was discussed at the recent meeting of our Executive Committee and a number of important points were considered.

We recall that the animal husbandry land was included for discussion as Site 10 in the Housing Site Allocations Consultation Paper 2011 with the type of possible housing being described as a mix of family housing and flats. The principle of permitting the use of this land for 91 houses is a very difficult one. On the one hand it is a rare opportunity for a major contribution to the Council's obligation to provide additional units. On the other, we have much sympathy with the substantial number of objections from the residents of Ewell, who feel that the services and character of the village are under threat. We do, however, believe that the applicants' argument that this should be seen as an enabling development to help finance work on the main College site is not acceptable. The application should be determined solely on its own planning merits.

Access was correctly seen in the Consultation Paper as a possible constraint with a new access point off the roundabout seen as desirable with a second access possibly off Reigate Road. The application scheme seems to have ruled out the roundabout access and has the main access from Reigate Road with a secondary exit to the Bypass. We are very concerned that the congestion in Reigate Road would be substantially increased. In the light of the appeal decision at the Organ Inn we feel that an independent traffic study would be very desirable, although we realise that it would probably be impracticable. It must also be ensured that access is sufficient for emergency vehicles.

The Paper then quite rightly refers to the high value of the existing green space. It goes on to say that development provides an opportunity to retain key elements of the site as planted and landscaped open space, which will form part of a wider green infrastructure network and provide a buffer from the Ewell Bypass. We entirely agree with this ambition but feel that the proposed layout, although claiming to provide a green corridor, does not achieve this satisfactorily.

The Paper also says that the density of any development must take account of the character of the neighbouring residential areas as well as retaining some of the area's landscaping qualities. It states that the area to the immediate north east, towards Cheam Road, is developed at about 18 houses per ha. and that fronting Reigate Road at about 12 per ha. The extent of this application site is 3.8 ha. and 91 houses therefore represent 24 per ha. The applicant says that density has been reduced following local objections, but in our view it is still far too great at twice the rate of the adjoining site. We recognise the work carried out in preparing the layout but believe a lower density and a more imaginative scheme would make the proposal more acceptable.

On balance we think there is a strong case for housing on this land, but only if it can be at a density and design acceptable as a valuable addition to the character of the village, and we do not think this has been achieved. The effect on traffic and pedestrian safety is also of major significance.

Yours faithfully

ALAN BAKER FRICS
Vice Chairman

cc Nonsuch ward councillors

