

Epsom Civic Society

shaping the future, safeguarding the past

2 Leighton Way
EPSOM Surrey
KT18 7QZ

30 December 2014

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

Dear Mr Berry

PLANNING APPLICATION 14/01374/FUL
LAND REAR OF 23A-29 LINKS ROAD, EPSOM
ERECTION OF FOUR DETACHED HOUSES

This land is described in the Planning Statement as a privately owned land-locked site comprising former garden land of adjoining houses. Its history is described in the interesting letter from Dr Edward Willhoft of 41 Higher Green as a former woodland area from which 38 substantial trees were removed some years ago under somewhat peculiar circumstances. The present proposal is in any event a matter of serious backland development.

The proposal consists of four large detached houses each with four main bedrooms plus a guest bedroom over a garage “annexe” and access on an existing drive between 27 and 29 Links Road. They are said to be designed in an Arts and Crafts style and most existing trees would be retained.

As backland development we are concerned with a number of issues, especially those highlighted in Policy DM16 of the emerging Development Management Policies Document. (a) The effect on rear garden land – it is not clear whether the land is still directly connected to any of the gardens, but it was, and to a lesser extent still could be, a natural undeveloped wildlife area of amenity value to all adjoining houses, provided it were properly maintained. (b) Impact on neighbours – the houses would be an adequate distance from adjoining houses, but very close to boundary fences which could invade privacy. (c) Vehicle access and parking - the access seems satisfactory but parking provision for four 5 bedroom houses is far from adequate. (c) Mass and scale – the proposed houses would be large but not so large as to be overbearing on existing dwellings; we do, however, feel that the two houses at the north of the site are too close together with smaller gardens and a single house in this location would be preferable. (d) Trees, shrubs and wildlife – this can be related only to the existing

state of the land, and the applicant proposes to retain most of the existing trees; in view, however, of Dr Willhott's comments you will no doubt wish to give this aspect careful study. (e) Design – a pastiche of the Edwardian designs of Links Road would not be satisfactory, and an Arts and Crafts approach would be acceptable; but we are not entirely convinced by the “annexe” idea, even though it does reduce the apparent bulk of each house; as the houses could not easily be seen from the road they would have little effect on the street scene.

It is difficult to draw a very positive conclusion but there are enough features of the proposal that we find unsatisfactory, and which could be related to planning policies, to conclude that planning permission should not be granted for the development in its present form.

Yours sincerely

ALAN BAKER FRICS
Vice Chairman

cc Ward Councillors