

# Epsom Civic Society

**shaping the future, safeguarding the past**

2 Leighton Way  
EPSOM Surrey  
KT18 7QZ

5 April 2015

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

Dear Mr Berry

PLANNING APPLICATION 14/01784/FUL  
LAND AT MILL ROAD, EPSOM  
PROPOSED STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

This is a narrow strip of land lying between the railway embankment and Mill Road; it is believed to have been railway land allotments but is now untended open land reverted to natural scrub and is reported to contain active badger setts. It is locally valued as a green and open area. It is in a residential location with flats and substantial houses.

A previous application was made by an option holder for the erection of 10 dwellings (12/00448/FUL) which was refused on grounds of overdevelopment and loss of wildlife habitat, but was permitted on appeal in the summer of 2013. This was not implemented and the present application is for 11 student homes. It is proposed that the freehold of the northern part of the site will be transferred to Millbridge Wildlife Group as a wildlife sanctuary together with a bequest to cover the cost of management and maintenance. Many local online objectors are again opposing the principle of development but, in view of the existing valid permission, we have considered only the change of use and the new design and layout.

The use of the land for student accommodation must be dependent on the Planning Policy Manager being satisfied that sufficient evidence of need has been provided for the purposes of the emerging Development Management Policy DM21. We do, however, see also the danger created by this number of students being housed in a quiet residential area. This would be quite different from residential use and could be acceptable only if an adequate management scheme could guarantee prevention of disturbance and nuisance.

From the Preapp Report it seems that the first design ideas contained larger three storey buildings, but this has been modified and the submitted designs and layout are now very similar to the permitted scheme, with adjustments for the different use. We objected to the earlier application and still feel that development of this land is very unfortunate; however, the difficulty of opposing the scheme in light of the permission granted on appeal is recognised.

In conclusion, therefore, we reluctantly feel able to object only to the change of use to student accommodation if the need for such accommodation and an adequate management scheme are not fully demonstrated.

Yours sincerely

ALAN BAKER FRICS  
Vice Chairman

cc Ward Councillors