

Epsom Civic Society

shaping the future, safeguarding the past

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Our Ref: ECS/RHA/15-08

Dear Mark,

15/00845/FUL. Silesian College Sports Ground, Old Schools Lane, Ewell, Surrey KT17 1TJ

At our meeting a few weeks ago, you asked us to let you have our views on this application. We discussed it at our recent committee meeting and I have been asked to write to you to pass on our conclusions.

Core Strategy policy CS4 states that ‘Emphasis will continue to be placed on protecting and enhancing the two strategic open spaces of Nonsuch Park and the Hogsmill River.....these areas provide a particularly important recreational, amenity and wildlife resource.’ Fundamentally, this application must be in breach of this policy and we were therefore concerned about the loss of some 25% of the area for a new care facility, despite the offer of the remaining land being available through the Epsom Sports Club on a long term lease.

There is no doubt that the Epsom Sports Club would make good use of a sports facility here and would run it effectively and for the benefit of the whole Borough. It was unfortunate that the offer seemed to have an element of coercion in it, which we felt was very regrettable. We are concerned that this type of swap arrangement might set some sort of precedent. Even though we are assured that each case is considered on its merits, there can be little doubt that developers could be encouraged to take a similar line elsewhere. We felt that, while a long

term lease might be acceptable, the Borough must attempt to secure a transfer of title for the playing field area, albeit with conditions attached if necessary.

The proposed care facility is no doubt needed and it is located in the most appropriate part of the area. It is however, a very large building, even though its height has been reduced, and we were struck by the absence of drawings to indicate what impact it might have on the area in general, particularly the nearby housing.

Our position is probably best summed up as cautious acceptance, subject assurance that this will not set up any unfortunate precedent, that satisfactory conditions are agreed in connection with the ownership of the remaining sports ground and the final design of the care facility.

Yours sincerely,

for Epsom Civic Society
Robert Austen

