

Epsom Civic Society

shaping the future, safeguarding the past

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KT18 7QZ

20 July 2017

Mr Mark Berry BA(Hons) MRTPI DMS
Head of Place Development
Town Hall
EPSOM
KT18 5BY

Dear Mr Berry

PLANNING APPLICATION 17/00334/FUL
55 CHRIST CHURCH MOUNT
DEMOLITION AND CONSTRUCTION OF NEW DWELLING HOUSE

New issues have been emerging in relation to this proposed development and it is therefore appropriate to outline our views in a further letter. We understand that the decision has now been called in to the September Planning Committee and we hope this allows time for our comments to be taken into account.

The proposed new house is to be built by the Baufritz system to a design prepared by their Housedesigner. The main reason for the refusal of the earlier application was that “the dwelling in terms of its design, bulk, scale, siting and layout would be clearly at odds with the prevailing dwelling typology in the immediate and wider area, and would appear as an incongruous element in the street scene”.

We were pleased to see in the current application that the front elevation and the external materials had been adapted to match the local typology. We have also had an opportunity to see a completed Baufritz house in Weybridge and were impressed by the quality of the workmanship, although in that case the house is to a Baufritz contemporary design which would not be appropriate in Christ Church Mount.

It is, however, apparent that it is only the superficial external appearance that has been changed, and that the Baufritz structure remains the same. In the terms of the earlier refusal, therefore, the external design has been adapted but the bulk, scale, siting and layout remain the same. The drawings do not make this clear. For example, drawing A04.10, 22.05.2017, section AA, shows the roof height as +8450, compared with the earlier drawing dated 18.10.2016 which shows +8750. This suggestion of a reduction in height of 300 is however misleading as the base line has changed. The earlier drawing uses the External Ground as +0000 and the Ground Floor as +300. The later drawing uses the Ground Floor as +0000. The difference of 300 therefore cancels out and the overall height is unchanged. The drawings are inadequate elsewhere also.

In terms of Neighbour Amenity such matters are important. We have seen the detailed objections from the two immediate neighbours and they contain important issues which we support. Some of these could be dealt with by amendments to the design of the building and we hope that the applicant will be encouraged to do this. If such adjustments are not possible because of the nature of the Baufritz system, it would suggest that the system is not appropriate in this context and it should not be imposed at the expense of reasonable neighbourly requirements.

In our opinion, the current proposal, although providing an elevation adapted to suit local typology, retains the bulk, scale, siting and layout for which it was refused previously. It is therefore contrary to policies CS5, DM9 and DM10, and does not comply with the principles of neighbourliness embodied in the Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes. We cannot support the grant of planning permission unless these outstanding issues are satisfactorily dealt with and failing this, permission should be refused.

Yours sincerely

ALAN BAKER FRICS
Vice Chairman

cc Ward Councillors