

Epsom Civic Society

shaping the future, safeguarding the past

2 Leighton Way
EPSOM Surrey
KT18 7QZ

20 March 2018

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

Dear Mr Berry

PLANNING APPLICATION 17/01755/FUL
BRADFORD HOUSE, 39A EAST STREET, EPSOM
DEMOLITION AND REDEVELOPMENT

Permission was granted in 2014 (14/00606/FUL) for the development of Crossways House, which was completed with ground floor offices and student accommodation over, and the adjoining Bradford House for offices and residential units, which was not carried out because changes in demand led to different intentions for offices, service flats and now more student accommodation. The present proposal is to demolish the existing outdated office building and erect a six storey (plus basement) building for ground floor offices, 99 student bedrooms above and 11 basement car parking spaces.

The two main differences from the previous permission are the new building and the change of use. The existing building has little architectural merit and the new design, if undistinguished and filling the site to an almost excessive extent, is an improvement, using similar materials to Crossways House. In our view, brickwork throughout would be better than zinc cladding and less of a fire risk; it should also be matching as claimed but not shown on drawings in the Design and Access Statement. The height falls within the limits of Plan E and is satisfactory.

Employment use is indicated in Plan E for this part of East Street, although the previous permission allowed residential use. This must be seen against the emerging revision of the Local Plan. In view of current pressure for housing, this might be considered a preference, to be balanced against the UCA need for student accommodation. Housing would however need larger room sizes which are, as proposed, very small even for student rooms, and the site would be able to provide many fewer units.

In terms of street scene some imaginative soft landscaping would be desirable, preferably at the front rather than the back, with use of colour. Street trees would help if that could be arranged. It is also to be hoped that an attractive use will be found for the ground floor offices as there is a marked lack of sufficiently active ground floor frontages in East Street,

In summary we welcome the improvement of this part of East Street and the retention of the potential access to the utilities site at the rear. Attention should be paid to suitably matching materials, landscaping and to the loss of the site for housing use.

Yours sincerely

ALAN BAKER FRICS

cc Ward Councillors