

Epsom Civic Society

shaping the future, safeguarding the past

16 January 2019

Ms Ruth Ormella MRTPI
Head of Planning
Town Hall
EPSOM
KT18 5BY

Dear Ruth

PLANNING APPLICATION 17/01586/FUL
FORMER POLICE STATION, CHURCH STREET, EPSOM
FURTHER AMENDED DRAWINGS

Thank you for your letter notifying us that further amended drawings have been submitted. Clearly careful thought has been given to the design in order to enhance the character and appearance of this part of Church Street in compliance with para 5.3 of the Planning Brief.

The most important architectural feature is the east (front) elevation of Block A. Here, on the latest drawings, the main changes are the addition of proud-standing elements of the ground and first floors with rendered struck courses and curved tops to the windows (with similar features to the west elevation), and a larger featured entrance. These increase the interest of the design and are welcomed, but we are disappointed that at third floor level the slated mansard roof, added in the earlier amendments, with its central feature and parapet, has been abandoned. It has been replaced by a plain flat roof very much the same as in the original design. This is a prominent part of the elevation and regrettably recreates the heavy box-like appearance which we found unsatisfactory before. In our view the mansard roof was a great contribution to the softening of the elevation's design and should be reinstated.

Block B has been revised in a similar way and our comments apply there also.

We remain of the opinion that the car parking provision, although satisfying the Council's minimum requirements, is very inadequate, bearing especially in mind this particular location. We understand the difficulty of the finding enough parking space on the site and have noted earlier criticisms of the design of the parking area. These major drawbacks would be solved by the provision of underground car parking beneath the suggested parking area and possibly under the buildings. This may well have been considered already and been dismissed because of cost but we believe that it is worth reconsidering. Such a solution would be appropriate to this valuable central location where it would give room for a greater number of more secure spaces, increase residents' convenience and allow an opportunity for increased landscaping, to the great advantage of the residents and the community. It would also add considerable value to the apartments. This would assist in the cost which is also relevant to the valuation of the land which is unlikely to have been finally settled prior to the grant of planning permission. There are many successful examples of this approach including Pitt Place in Church Street itself, Sandown Lodge in Avenue Road and the proposed development of Lower Mill in Ewell.

We think that many improvements have been made in the design of this important development but we yet are not able to support the proposal fully for the reasons given.

Yours sincerely

ALAN BAKER FRICS
Vice Chairman

cc Ward Councillors