

Epsom Civic Society

shaping the future, safeguarding the past

7 March 2019

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

Dear Ruth

PLANNING APPLICATION 18/01556/FUL
5 DERBY SQUARE, HIGH STREET, EPSOM
ROOF EXTENSION AND CHANGE OF USE TO CINEMA

This is a most interesting and important application, proposing the substantial alteration and extension of the building now occupied by El Patio Restaurant and its change of use into a six-screen cinema.

Derby Square – now known as Epsom Square – is disappointing, even after its recent redesign. It has not developed the potential, foreseen, in Plan E of a bustling piazza. It is tucked away with little passing trade and the Library is not sufficient to draw enough people to support a thriving food and drink centre, especially in the evening. The introduction of the cinema would encourage greater footfall and increase the demand for attractive restaurants. It would be of advantage not only to Epsom Square but also to Epsom Town as a whole, and would contribute to the development of Epsom's identity as an arts and cultural centre. We are therefore very happy to support this proposed change of use.

However, our first impression of the roof extension is one of horror. It is very significantly higher than the adjoining library building and would be clearly visible from many viewpoints. The excellent Design and Access Statement illustrates the proposal very clearly, and we can understand that each screen is through two floor levels, leading to the extent of the proposed roof, which follows logically from multiscreen cinema construction. This is also apparent in the Odeon in Upper High Street. We would, however, greatly prefer a reduction in height and would ask,

therefore, whether this number of screens is entirely necessary for the success of the cinema. The design of the roof has attempted to reduce its impact, but more could perhaps be done and any further adaptation of shape or materials would be most welcome in order to reduce the possibility of it becoming an eyesore.

We do, however, welcome the prospect of the cinema in Epsom Square.

Yours sincerely

ALAN BAKER FRICS
Vice Chairman

cc Ward Councillors