

Epsom Civic Society

shaping the future, safeguarding the past

11 May 2019

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

Dear Ruth

PLANNING APPLICATION 19/00354/FUL
LAND REAR OF 23A- 29 (should be 33) LINKS ROAD, EPSOM
ERECTION OF 4 NEW DWELLINGS

This application is a complete redesign of that refused and dismissed on appeal in 2107 (16/00213/FUL). Its intention is to respond to the reasons for refusal and dismissal.

The main reasons for dismissing the appeal were limited to the intense and cramped form of over-development and the threat to the wellbeing of protected trees. The Inspector thought that these would have significant adverse effects but found that the principle of some form of development of this backland site was not inappropriate, and that the modern design of houses was informed by aspects of local form and scale. We noted his opinion that specific presumption against backland development in policy DM16 does not apply in his case because no domestic gardens are involved, but we believe that the remainder of the policy is still applicable as it relates to all backland.

The new designs are for 4 instead of 5 bedrooms, and the houses are better spaced. Their pitched roofs and gables relate to local form but the use of flat roofed cantilevered elements is unduly prominent. The materials include white or cream ground floor brickwork with timber battens and zinc cladding at first floor and more zinc cladding on roofs. It is doubtful whether these elements, taken together, would satisfy the Inspector's wish that local form and scale should be recognised. We are also concerned that the first floor element of House A is very close to the garden of 25 Links Road. We therefore consider that the design is not suitable for this site.

Since the dismissal of the earlier scheme the housing supply background has changed. We are aware of the Council's view that where any land suitable for housing is available, deliverable and developable its use must be optimised. We do believe however that this should not be allowed to override important environmental safeguards.

The revised proposals for this land have advantages over the previous scheme and we recognise that a balance must be found. There are still, however, adverse elements in the revised design and our own strong preference is for this land to be kept open and maintained for the benefit of local residents.

Yours sincerely

ALAN BAKER FRICS

cc Ward Councillors