

Epsom Civic Society

shaping the future, safeguarding the past

3rd June 2019

Virginia Johnson
Planning Officer
Town Hall
Epsom
KT18 5BY

Dear Virginia

Ref - 6 The Grove, Epsom Planning Application 19/00461/FUL

We strongly object to this Planning Application for the erection of a block of 4 bedroom apartments to the rear of 6 The Grove. This is in addition to the recently permitted scheme (18/00647/FUL) for the alteration works and extension of the existing detached house into 5 flats.

The site is located within the delightful Church Street Conservation Area and closeby to the Grade 2 listed Grove House.

We note that there have been several Planning Applications concerning this property, these have included the erection of 13 flats following demolition of the house 17/00893 (withdrawn), house conversion and extension for 5 flats 18/00647FUL (permitted). This application is a mix of the previous applications, adding a rear block, reconfiguring the main house and providing a link structure joining the two units. This undoubtedly has been a 'stepped' continuation of the previous permitted proposal. Whilst supporting the previous scheme for the house conversion and extension, albeit with reservations regarding the wildlife habitats, landscaping and poor parking arrangement, we find that this application is an entirely unacceptable addition.

We have reviewed this particular application under the following matters listed within the scope of Planning Control :-

- **This Proposal conflicts with planning policies** – These include Development Management Policies 4,5,8,9,10,11 but the main infringement being DM16 Backland Development. In this proposal 75% of the garden is lost to car parking and road access. This is a major green area located within the Conservation Area. There is a severe impact to the neighbour (7 The Grove) as the rear car access route is abutting their boundary fence, thus causing noise impact and fumes. The mass of development on this backland would cause an overbearing on the existing dwellings and associated gardens. Also there would be a major reduction in trees and shrubs which would severely reduce and affect the wildlife habitats.
- **The appearance and size of the new building** – The proposed new rear block is not in keeping with the neighbouring properties and the surrounding area. The Grove has a delightful

selection of detached houses and residential blocks at the north end of the close. The proposed new block does not line up or fit in with their designs or symmetry.

- **Adjoining Residents** – The occupants of 7 The Grove will encounter a severe loss of privacy due to the positioning of the new flats and their road and pedestrian access proposals. We also note that Badgers Court flats residents will be impacted by this proposed development.
- **Proposed Use** – The present site is one of tranquil peace with a substantial detached house amongst a spacious garden, which provides a wildlife habitat. The proposed development changes this into a large car park, access road and multi occupant flats.
- **Unreasonable increase in general disturbance** – the site changes from being a single resident to 11 flat dwellings. As the new flats have no gardens nor recreational areas there will be a substantial increase in disturbance eg noise, fumes, comings and goings.
- **New roadways and safe pedestrian paths** – It is noted that there are no designated pedestrian pathways. The rear flats can only be accessed by pedestrians walking along the driveway. This is both unsafe and dangerous.
- **Visual effect upon the landscape** – This is of major concern. This delightful Conservation Area is severely impacted by the reduction of the trees and shrubs and replaced by concrete oversite. The few remaining green areas are to the north of the site and are isolated from the main areas. We note that there are several trees that are not shown on the existing plans that will be need to be removed to suit the proposed parking and access road layouts.
- **Impact on the character of the listed building and Conservation Area** – The site is closeby to Grove House (Grade 2 listed) and at the north end of The Church Street Conservation Area. The application proposals severely effect the nature of the conservation area. The area strives to achieve an excellent wildlife habitat, good landscaping and is of architectural interest.

In summary, we are extremely concerned about this application and object to it in the strongest terms. Unfortunately, this proposal completely destroys the wildlife habitats, sylvan character of the site and the rear garden. In fact, what is the point of having Conservation Areas, if we allow such applications to ignore all the aims of these delightful retreats?

Yours sincerely,

Bob Hollis (On behalf of The Epsom Civic Society)

cc Town Ward Councillors