

# Epsom Civic Society

formerly Epsom Protection Society

shaping the future, safeguarding the past

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Justin Turvey  
Interim Head Of Place Development  
Epsom & Ewell Borough Council  
The Town Hall  
Epsom  
KT18 5BY

19<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Dear Justin,

Ref Planning Application 23/00487/FUL Linden Cottage, 44 Christ Church Mount  
OBJECTION

The Epsom Civic Society are very concerned at this latest proposal to erect residential units in the rear gardens of 44-42 Christ Church Mount. This is one of the Borough's most quiet, tranquil and sylvan locations.

The application is for 3 Family houses. A recent application (22/01371/FUL) for 2No 2 bed flats and 3 family houses was Refused by the Council. We note that several of the points noted within The Planner's Report of the previous application have not been adequately addressed.

These points are as follows.

- 1) The proposed development, as a result of its overall siting and scale would represent a cramped overdevelopment that fails to respond to the pattern of development in the locality. At present there is a wide sweep of greenery within these rear gardens which the site would create an incongruous addition that would fail to integrate with the wider street scene. This is contrary to Core



Strategy 2007, policies CS1, CS5 and DM9, DM10 and DM16 of the Development Management Policies 2015. Although the latest block layout represents an improvement, we still suggest that the site would be cramped and overdeveloped.

- 2) The proposed development as a result of its siting, scale and design and proximity to the shared boundaries would allow for overlooking into the garden areas of 38,42 and 46 Christ Church Mount and to the rear of Lower Hill Road. Future house extensions could exasperate this privacy situation. This is contrary to Policy DM10 of the Development Management Policies Document 2015.

The existing Linden Cottage (44 Christ Church Mount) is a fine example of the existing architecture of the dwellings in this road and surrounding streetscape. The general view is of brick facades, vertical clay tiling, timber features, clay roof tiles and sloping roofs. The gardens (front and rear) are well established with a range of trees and flora and fauna.

The proposal, based on land used as rear gardens, would result in an inappropriate form of backland development which would be out of keeping with the area. The location is strongly characterised by neat front gardens and houses with long rear gardens which contribute to the overall area appearance. We note that the proposed dwellings would be highly visible from Christ Church Mount and consequently their elevations should be seen as part of the context of the road's existing frontages. The application is therefore contrary to the requirements of Policies CS1, CS5(The Built Environment) of the Core Strategy (2007) and Policies DM9, DM10(Design Requirements) and DM16 of the Development Management Policies (2015)

Policy DM16 (Backland Development) of the Council's LDF Development Management Policies Document (2015) states that there will be a presumption against the loss of rear domestic gardens due to the need to maintain local character, amenity space, green infrastructure and biodiversity. It is only in exceptional cases that modest development is acceptable. This is not the case as 1) green infrastructure is not retained 2) Privacy is not maintained nor light spillage 3) visual impact of access road 4) excessive mass and scale of development 5) trees, shrubs and wildlife habitat not retained.



The proposed design, bulk and scale of the new dwellings do not reinforce local distinctiveness and would have a materially harmful impact on the wider area's character and appearance. The material selection is completely alien to all dwellings in the area.

The new access road would serve the 3 dwellings and would abut the site boundary of 42 Christchurch Mount. We note that the entry road is narrow. Vehicle traffic and pedestrians using this access would introduce noise disturbance into an area which is currently quiet and secluded. This would significantly affect the peace and enjoyment of the occupants of the neighbouring residences.

The proposed development will threaten the sylvan character of the setting. The close proximity of the proposed buildings to the many established trees is likely to have an adverse impact on the living conditions of the new occupants, resulting in future pressures to further prune the trees, to the detriment of the visual amenity of the locality. This rear garden location is also a haven for the local wildlife eg badgers, bats, foxes and birdlife. Its' replacement with overbuild will destroy this habitat.

The ECS have reviewed this proposal in the context of The Borough's Draft Local Plan. This draft plan states that 'New Development does not have a detrimental impact on the Borough's environmental assets inc landscape character, water quality and biodiversity' We do not believe that this proposal achieves this criteria.

In conclusion, the Epsom Civic Society still objects to this proposal, as it is at odds with the ethos to incorporate principles of good design and respecting local character and local distinctiveness. The dwellings are out of keeping with prevailing development typology. This back garden scheme is completely inappropriate and these infill houses would erode the character and local distinctiveness of the surrounding area. We strongly request that this application is refused.

Yours Sincerely,

Bob Hollis (Vice Chair of The Epsom Civic Society)

