

Epsom Civic Society

shaping the future, safeguarding the past

Gemma Paterson
Principal Planning Officer
Epsom & Ewell Borough Council
Town Hall

12th February 2025

Dear Ms Paterson

Ref - Planning Application 24/01630/FUL - 81 College Road OBJECTION

Epsom Civic Society is concerned by a yet further application to construct a new dwelling in the rear garden of 81 College Road. Although it purports to address the reasons for refusal in June 2024 of the previous backland development proposal at this location (24/00360/FUL), in the opinion of the Society it fails adequately to do so.

The scheme is still for a two storey house which would front onto Copse Edge Avenue and therefore poses two location concerns, ie a further backlands development to 81 College Road and the frontage to the private unadopted Copse Edge Avenue.

In addition, while it may be argued that the threat to the mature oak tree in the neighbouring property subject to a TPO is still further reduced, it is by no means certain to have been extinguished completely. In any case, the reasons for refusal under the first heading of the letter refusing the prior application remain.

The applicant's response of "No" in the Application Form to the question "Do the proposals require any diversions/extinguishments and/or creation of rights of way?" and the drawings accompanying the present application appear to ignore the need to create a new vehicular access to Copse Edge Avenue for the proposed new property, the original vehicular access now being part of the first backland development of this plot to create No 46 Copse Edge Avenue. Thus the application should have included a Cert B in respect of that part of the site (as shown on the drawings) not in the applicant's ownership.

Judging by the objection comments from many Copse Edge Avenue residents, permission to create a new vehicular access will not be granted. In itself, this is not a planning consideration. However, without a Cert B, the application itself is invalid.

The proposed building itself, being according to the applicant some 18% reduction in Gross Internal Area, would now provide very cramped accommodation, stretching the generally accepted meaning of a “family home” to breaking point. It would certainly be much smaller than the majority of the surrounding properties, and thus still cause harm to the surrounding area. Nor can the proposed garden area be deemed “family-friendly”. Indeed, the existing garden of 81 College Road is, even now, smaller than the average of nearby properties in College Road, and would be further reduced if the proposed new dwelling were built. The proposal remains backland development causing significant harm to the existing property and the locality.

The Society is very much concerned with the effects of Climate Change and any adverse conditions that such a new development could achieve. This development would replace the established lawn with a concrete oversite and could thus increase off-site drainage discharge and the possibility of flood risk. This is contrary to DM19 and CS6 and will certainly be non-compliant with the anticipated Epsom Local Plan. We note that there would be insufficient ground space to provide a ground source heat pump system, while an air source system would inevitably create excessive noise for the adjacent 46 Copse Edge Avenue.

It is also hard to believe that the required 10% increase in net biodiversity can be achieved given the site’s footprint together with the loss of vegetation, not least in the area of grass verge to be removed in Copse Edge Avenue to make access possible. Nor will any funding of planting off-site reduce the adverse impact on the street scene from College Road and in Copse Edge Avenue itself.

In summary, the proposal remains backland development, of a “cramming” nature given the existence of the prior building now known as 46 Copse Edge Avenue, which was created by the disposal of the bottom section of the garden originally part of the curtilage of 81 College Road. The proposal would leave 81 College Road as a large detached dwelling with an inappropriately small garden.

For all the above reasons, Epsom Civic Society requests refusal of the proposal as inappropriate for the area and contrary to Core Strategies CS5 and CS6 of the Core Strategy 2007 and Development Management Policies DM9, DM10 and DM16.

Yours Sincerely,
For and on behalf of Epsom Civic Society

Mark Bristow