

# Epsom Civic Society

formerly Epsom Protection Society

shaping the future, safeguarding the past

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Ruth Ormella MRTPI  
Head Of Planning  
Town Hall  
Epsom  
KT18 5BY

10<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Ruth,

Ref Planning Application 19/01589/FUL Former Police Station and Ambulance Station  
**OBJECTION**

The proposed development of the former Police Station site and now along with the adjacent current Ambulance Station has been of considerable interest over the last 2-3 years. The ECS has reviewed and commented on several schemes ranging from a 5-10 storey residential block to 2 blocks covering the overall combined site areas. Our preferred outcome would be for 2 bed flats within a 5 storey building. Unfortunately after all of this design development we have ended up with yet more accommodation for the elderly.

We strongly suggest that the Epsom locality has sufficient new elderly dwellings. Recent schemes include Old Schools Lane Ewell, The Lower Mill at Ewell, Epsom Hospital Site, Headley Court and Leatherhead Road in Ashted. The Epsom percentage of new OAP dwellings has been achieved and we feel that this Church Street scheme would be better suited to provide a percentage of affordable flats for local people. Why on earth do our senior residents want to live in a high rise block and have the daily anxiety of fire evacuation and whether the lift is going to be working

The proposed height of new north block at 7 storeys is too high. We note that this tower block does not comply with current Epsom policies on building heights. The Developer in their submission compares the density and proposed height with that of Hudson House opposite the railway station. This is an unfair comparison as this proposed



development sits alongside the delightful buildings in Church Street and the Conservation Area. We note that Historic England's draft advice on tall buildings adjacent to Conservation Areas is "Where a proposal would affect a conservation area, either directly or indirectly, it will be necessary to demonstrate that decisions have been taken with special attention paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the area's character or appearance."

A better comparison on height and massing would be Pitt Place (Church Street) at 5 storeys.

We have studied the Developer's sun path/shading diagrams and note that the buildings on the east side of Church Street ie the Epsom Club & Church would now be in shadow at the latter part of the day.

The new development is located immediately adjacent to the Church Street Conservation Area at the east site boundary. Whilst this is the 4 storey part of the building we suggest that the landscape design could allow for more of a buffer eg evergreen trees & shrubs. Following a review of the proposed floor plans we note that there are balconies at high level looking out over The Parade and Laburnum Road. This will create an obvious privacy problem as there will be a clear sighting into the Parade bedroom windows and gardens. This concern was raised at the consultation meetings and subsequently ignored by the developer.

An elevation drawing for this east façade was not evident in the submission but we feel that the green climber wall design could be again used to soften this frontage.

The proposed elevations comprise of a mix of buff face brickwork with reliefs of darker brickwork, textured feature brickwork, glass balconies and green climber living planter walls. However, the angular design of the elevations along with the flat roofs achieve a rather monolithic result, which does not connect with any other buildings in Church Street.

The location of this site should give the opportunity to fully review biodiversity and Climate Change. The recently adopted Epsom Climate Change Action Plan seeks to improve biodiversity in our green spaces. This proposal could include such features as car charging points, improved recycling, more green walling, porous parking and roadways and roof gardens.

A new development of this nature should also give the perfect opportunity to maximise many of the features of 'Passivhaus' designs. This could include the introduction of

green energy. Such considerations could include geothermal (piling/ground/air source), solar panels and biomass heating. These items could be included in the new design and provide excellent energy savings.

We have reviewed the external works and landscape designs and specifications and suggest that more emphasis could be made in providing a screening of trees to The Parade. It is good that the main cedar trees on the Church Street boundary are maintained but we note concern at the builder's lack of protection at this main entry point to their site.

The McCarthy & Stone application states clearly that they held Public Consultations and have listened to the neighbours concerns and incorporated where appropriate. We suggest that this is not the case and query whether that such consultations were just a 'tick in the box' exercise to appease the planners!

In conclusion, we object to this application based on the building being too high and also the need not to provide more elderly care and retirement dwellings in central Epsom. This is one of the key heritage locations in Epsom and we consider that the design proposed is completely inappropriate for this special site. The massing to the rear abutting The Parade and Laburnum Road is too intense and infringes on their privacy and well being of the residents. We are also concerned at the lack of commitment to Climate Control and environmental considerations.

The ECS believe that there is a fantastic opportunity to develop this unique site and achieve what is best for Epsom.

Yours Sincerely

Bob Hollis

