

# Epsom Civic Society

shaping the future, safeguarding the past

Viv Evans  
Epsom & Ewell Borough Council  
Town Hall  
KT18 5BY

15<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Viv

## **Ref - 6 The Grove, Epsom Planning Application 20/01855/FUL OBJECTION**

The Epsom Civic Society objects to this latest application at 6 The Grove. The scheme allows for the demolition of the existing property and the construction of 7 x 2 bed flats and 2 x 3 bed flats within a new 3 storey building.

This proposal is a modified version of Planning Application 20/00313/FUL which would have been refused by the council had it not been appealed. The Appeal was conducted by Robert Parker of The Planning Inspectorate. He directed that the application should be refused. We understand that this latest application was lodged before receipt of the Inspector's decision and does not reflect and embrace many of the Inspector's comments.

The Appeal was refused on the following points :-

- 1) The proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Church Street Conservation Area. There would be conflict with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007) and Policies DM5, DM8.
- 2) The excessive scale of the appeal scheme would have an unacceptable adverse impact on the outlook of occupants of 7 The Grove, contrary to the requirement of DMPD Policy DM10 that development proposals should have regard to the amenities of neighbours.
- 3) DMPD Policy DM37 requires proposals to demonstrate that they provide an appropriate level of 'off street' parking to avoid an unacceptable impact on the on-street parking conditions and local traffic conditions. The policy links to relevant standards set out in the Parking Standards for Residential Development Supplementary Planning Document (2015) (SPD).

- 4) The scheme is satisfactory in terms of overall unit size and the provision of external amenity space. Nevertheless, the scheme conflicts with DMPD Policy DM12 in respect of bedroom sizes.

A previous application 18/00647/FUL (Conversion of house into 5 Flats) has already been permitted by the council and met many of the issues required for this site.

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

We have reviewed this latest 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 90% 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). The mass of development on this backland would cause an overbearing on the existing dwellings and associated gardens. Also, there would be a severe reduction in trees and shrubs which would severely reduce and effect the wildlife habitats.
- **The appearance and size of the new building** – The proposed new 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. The existing house is of a good design that fits in well with the other houses in The Grove including Grove House. This latest proposal sets the building further back in the plot and extends further along the boundary to 7 The Grove. The new adjacent structure would be oppressive and gives a negative outlook from 7 The Grove. The positioning of the new block within this latest application will now affect the occupants of Badgers Court. Many windows are shown on this elevation which could introduce a privacy problem to the Badgers Court neighbours.
- **Design**  
The design and character of the previous scheme was judged to be unsuitable. Previously shielded by a screen of trees and shrubs the new block is highly visible for the length of The Grove. The building has been ‘turned’ in its orientation to give a side elevation view from the roadway. This idea has not improved its styling nor does it enhance its image with the other Grove houses.
- **Proposed Use is suitable** – 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 9 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. This is contrary to policy DM10.
- **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.
- **Heritage Impact** – It is stated in CS5 that the Borough’s heritage assets and their settings will be protected and enhanced. The Planning Inspector considered that the existing house contributed positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- **Impact on the character of the listed building and Conservation Area** – The site is close by to Grove House (Grade 2 listed) and at the north end of The Church Street Conservation Area. The application proposals severely affects 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 continue to object to it in the strongest terms.

Yours Sincerely,

The Epsom Civic Society (Bob Hollis)