



PRESS RELEASE

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NO BOULEVARD, PLEASE! THE WRONG APPROACH FOR EPSOM STATION, COUNCIL TOLD

Epsom Protection Society this week criticised a new design for the town's landmark but dreary looking railway station.

The latest long awaited proposal, in a planning application by Solum Regeneration, is an improvement on what was approved by the Council in 2005, but has many unacceptable aspects, says the Society's Vice-Chairman, Alan Baker.

His letter to the Town Hall says that major improvement to the station is necessary and long awaited, but questions whether that should be the rationale for allowing construction of a 5/6 storey block housing 124 residential apartments, a 64 bed hotel and 3 shops or restaurants, together with 67 car parking spaces. In the end, the only enhancement of the station itself would be a new ticket hall and some improvements to the subway, stairs and toilets.

"But that will have been achieved with the loss of the current slip road area, including public parking and the taxi rank."

The Society's objects particularly to the height of the proposed building, which the developers consider will produce a "boulevard" effect for Station Approach when combined with the blocks of apartments already built on the town side of the road. The Society – which has 1,750 members - thinks that Station Approach would become "just a busy road lined with high buildings, which has already been described as a Grand Canyon or a wind tunnel".

And it has severe doubts about the conclusions of the Traffic Assessment "which does not take proper account of the loss of the existing station forecourt, and risks worsening congestion by moving the taxi rank and pick-up area on Station Approach itself, close to its junction with Waterloo Road".

The letter concludes that "the use of the public highway as a transport interchange, a key part of the operation of the station, is unacceptable and appears to have been done simply to provide maximum development potential".

Overall, the Society urges the Council to explore with the developers "a more modest concept with lower buildings, possibly to include a curved service road running beneath the upper floors of the

new building to allow better vehicle access,” and warns against “missing an opportunity to provide a development which would become a landmark the town could be proud of in years to come”.

ENDS

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Epsom Protection Society

- EPS is a civic society that was founded in 1959 and currently has over 1750 members.
- It aims to protect the heritage of Epsom and to encourage high standards of new planning and building; it is also concerned to promote civic pride and to inspire the progressive improvement in the quality of urban life for everyone. The Committee review all significant planning applications affecting Epsom, and responds to these on behalf of the Society’s membership.
- It is a voluntary organisation with a constitution based on the Civic Trust model. The Executive committee meets monthly to handle the volume of business and to ensure a speedy response. Members receive four newsletters a year; they are invited to the AGM in spring, and there are organised social events including lectures, an annual buffet supper and visits to places of interest.
- Membership details are available from the Secretary, or from the Society’s website: <http://www.epsomprotectionsociety.co.uk/>

The station development

- Details of the planning application can be obtained from Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, under reference 09/00824/FUL. Full plans are on the council’s website at <http://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/EEBC/Planning/Epsom+Station+Planning+Application.htm>

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