

# “Blot on the landscape” - Ewell care home inked in

7 October 2022



A derelict site in Ewell is to become a 70-bed care home. The Organ Inn was known to any one of Epsom and Ewell driving to London. Situated prominently on the Ewell-By-Pass at the London Road junction. It last functioned as Jim Thompsons with Thai Cuisine and was also known as The Organ and Dragon. The building was demolished and the ground left derelict for years. Thursday 6th October Epsom and Ewell Borough Council’s **Planning Committee** granted full permission for the construction of a 70-room retirement care home of four storeys and a basement. Councillor **Nigel Colin** (RA College Ward) described the site at present as “a blot on the landscape.”



The Organ Inn before demolition. Image courtesy Peter Reed Epsom and Ewell History Explorer. Top Image: The site viewed from Ewell Bypass.

There were two objections registered that were dismissed by the Councillors in the face of a strong application supported by planning officers. The construction of the home will contribute 38 units to the housing targets of the Borough of @ 579 per annum.

A Planning Need Assessment submitted by the applicant from **Carterwood**, a specialist in health and social care, indicated that there is a net need for 1279 en-suite wetroom bedrooms in the market catchment area (4 miles from the Application Site) and 540 in Epsom and Ewell. In terms of ‘specialist dementia’ care, the Assessment sets out that there is a net need for 529 en-suite wetroom beds in the market catchment area and a net need for 226 en-suite wetroom beds in Epsom and Ewell.



London Road care home plans. From design and access statement, credit: Simon Brown Architects

The Council officers reported that the developer applicant does not have experience in care-home provision. **Surrey County Council Adult Social Care** commented on the application: " While the Applicant is an organisation with no history of operating care homes itself, there is no reference to a care provider working in partnership with the organisation in the application. There is therefore very little indication of what type of care will be delivered on Site, whether the care home will operate with or without nursing care provision, and no description of exactly how the particular development would benefit local residents or the joint health and social care system. The application therefore suffers by comparison with others, which provide details of future operational plans. Having said this, regrettably, I cannot find anything in the local planning policies which requires clarity on who will operate any future care development, nor any requirement for an operator statement alongside other statements in the application."

Cllr **Alex Coley** (RA Ruxley Ward) questioned this inexperience and was advised by officers that the developer will contract with a specialist service provider.

Various conditions must be met by the developer, **65 London Road Limited**, a private company under the sole directorship of **Kirpal Singh**. A company that has declared over £3 million in net assets in its last and only accounts ending 31st March 2021 - in which it declared a trading loss of £2400.

The Council require the company to enter an agreement (known as a section 106) to contribute money to the improvement of bus infrastructure at both the A24 northside bus stop and A24 southside, including shelters and real time passenger information; a Push button controlled pedestrian crossing facilities on London Road and a 3-metre-wide footpath on both the London Road and Ewell Bypass frontages of the Application Site, to be dedicated as public highway.

### **HOBLEDOWN NOBBLEDOWN?**



This popular leisure destination for a family day out on Horton Lane Epsom had asked the Planning Committee for various permits. Installation of new restroom facilities, new boundary fencing and relocation of entrance gates, new play structures etc.

Tempers were tested somewhat when **Cllr Coley** stated a flood risk assessment was necessary before proceeding further. Planning officers disagreed. Cllr **Kate Chinn** (Lab Court Ward) suggested that if the contention had been raised before the meeting the public row could have been avoided. Cllr **Steven McCormick** (RA Woodcote) brought deliberations to an inconclusive end by proposing a deferment of all of Hobbledown's requests. A motion passed by all Councillors bar three.