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Two Epsom brownfield developments?

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With local controversies about the draft **Local Plan** eyeing up **Green Belt**, **Epsom and Ewell Borough Council** soon decides on two Town proposals. LDRS reports:

Plans for a care home on the site of the former Epsom police station and ambulance station are set for refusal by councillors. The planned building, a 96-bed care in Church Street in Epsom, would be over three to five storeys, but council officers have raised concern about its “overly-domineering” impact on the surrounding area.

A meeting of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council’s planning committee on Thursday (April 20) will make a decision on the application.

The 96 bedrooms in the proposed home would provide nursing, residential and dedicated dementia care, and would have en suite wet rooms.

There are 20 listed buildings in the The Church Street Conservation Area, which wraps around the south and west ends of the site. Officers said the scale, form, design and materials of the plans would cause “cause less than substantial harm” to the nearby listed buildings including Hermitage (Grade II Listed), Ashley Cottages (Grade II Listed) and The Cedars (Grade II* Listed).

A council report into the care home said the building would “represent an overly domineering and incongruous addition that would fail to integrate with the prevailing character and appearance of the area”.

Concerns were also raised about the future of trees on the site including a cedar and a lime tree during excavation works for the development.

At the same meeting, councillors should make a decision on a plan for 20 homes in a five- and six-storey development on the corner of West Street and Station Approach in the town.

The plans, which would include just two affordable homes and five parking spaces, received 51 letters of objection raising concerns about the impact on the character of the town, and the loss of the existing building.
Officers have recommended the plans be approved, which would include the demolition of the current 1905 building which was originally a corn and coal merchants.

The redevelopment of the former Gillespie’s Bakery building has been objected to by the county council’s highways authority, because of the need to reduce the width of the existing pavement and cycle path.

Under a previous application, the highways authority had not objected to plans, but since then a stronger policy had been adopted to improve travel methods for pedestrians and cyclists, leading to the objection.

Despite the five car parking spaces not meeting the council’s guidelines for parking, an officers’ report said: “The site is in a highly sustainable location with access to a number of public transport modes and the displaced parking can be accommodated in adjacent public car parks and via on street parking.”

The two affordable homes in the plans also fall below the council’s affordable housing recommendations, but a 40 per cent provision would “substantially affect the overall viability of the scheme”, according to council documents.

The meeting will take place on Thursday, April 20 at 7.30pm.

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