45 Petworth Road
Haslemere
GU27 2HZ

The Planning Officer
Waverley Borough Council
Western Planning Committee
BY EMAIL

8 February 2021

Dear Sir

Land at Edgecombe, 10 Hill Road (WA/2020/2062) - Objection

The Haslemere Society wishes to object to application WA/2020/2062 on the grounds that the proposed development is inappropriate for the site.

1. The applicant accepts that the majority of buildings in the immediate vicinity of the site are traditional in design and that the proposed design is a deviation from the vernacular but argues that it nonetheless "does not appear incongruous". We disagree. In our view, the property would stand out as markedly different to the other dwellings in the area in a way that would not be at all sympathetic to the local character and history of that part of the town. Contrary to the applicant's assertion that "there is no prevailing architectural style in the area" it is, in fact, well-known for the number of properties designed by Hutchinson and has an unusual degree of homogeneity. Although there is a range of styles, these are all traditional and the proposed design falls clearly outside the range. We therefore consider that the application contravenes both NPPF Paragraph 127 and the Haslemere Design Statement requirement for designs to complement the local vernacular style in various ways, including matching local materials, and to relate to their sites and surroundings.

2. We note that the application describes the design as "exemplary". It is inevitable, of course, that the applicant should so describe it, but this is a matter of personal taste and not relevant here. We emphasise that our objection is not to modern design per se but to the use of a contemporary design on this site. If, by "exemplary" the applicant means something more than that they find it attractive then evidence should be provided to support that contention.

3. Nor should the assertion that the property would be "barely discernible" in the street scene carry any weight. The applicant's own drawings show that the property will stand out strongly from College Hill and in any case the trees and hedges which would partly screen the property from other angles are not protected and could be removed by the owner at any time. Indeed, some of the trees on site have recently been felled, apparently since the application was made, which rather undermines the reassurances given in it.

4. Permission has already been granted for a new dwelling of traditional design on the site. The applicant claims that the primary reason for the change to a modern design in this new application is to allow the use of more green and eco-friendly building materials. However, the application is silent on what these might be, beyond a reference to a 'living green wall' (though there is no reason why this could not be done alongside a traditional design). The application does not refer to the other building materials beyond stating that the walls will be clad in slate and burnt oak (or burnt larch, depending on which document you look at). The applicant has made not the slightest attempt to demonstrate how or to what extent the new proposal is more eco-friendly than the previous one or why this cannot be achieved within a more traditional design. This is hardly convincing as a reason for such a wholesale change in design.

5. Finally, although the plot size is in keeping with others in the area, we note that, taken together, the proposed building and hard landscaping appear to leave very little open garden space giving, overall, a significantly larger footprint to plot area ratio than in the previous application. Furthermore, the new design leaves long narrow strips of the plot to either side of the property, adding to the sense of overcrowding. We consider that this would set a deeply unhelpful precedent, leading, if it were followed, to a much more crowded feel in the area.

We strongly urge the Council to reject this application.

Yours Sincerely

Sonja Dullaway
(on behalf of The Haslemere Society Planning Group)