

# THE HASLEMERE SOCIETY



C/o 37 Stroatley Rise,  
Haslemere,  
Surrey,  
GU27 1AG.  
15 January 2014.

Planning Dept.,  
Waverley Borough Council,  
The Burys,  
Godalming.

By E mail.

Dear Sirs,

PLANNING APPLICATION 2014/2346  
POLICE STATION SITE, HASLEMERE.

The Society was not able to attend previous public presentations of the proposed development of this site. However and in common with many planning applications for prominent and significant schemes the application has coincided with a major public holiday (Christmas and New Year) which severely limits the opportunity for scrutiny of the application by The Society and the public. This appears to be borne out by the fact that only two days before the closure of the commenting period not a single comment on the submitted scheme has been reported !

The Haslemere Society wishes to stress that this police station site is in a very central and prominent location within the town Conservation Area and the appearance of the proposed scheme should therefore receive detailed aesthetic scrutiny particularly as it will be viewed by the public from at least three sides. (ie, a very public building).

The Society has no objection to the proposed scheme in principle and is pleased that the attractive façade is being preserved and incorporated but there are other aspects which we strongly recommend are given further consideration before any approval is considered. These are :-

1) The proposed extension is higher than the existing building and thus creates an undesirable dominating effect in the area. This is because it is not proposed to reduce the level of the higher ground behind the police station to bring the floors of the extension into level with the existing. We feel that this should be done to reduce the dominating impact.

2) The proposed numerous plain gables to the extension are completely out of character with the many hipped ends to the roof of the elegant character of the existing building. The proposed gables and short pitched multi valley roof are more in character with a factory than a residential building. A change incorporating hips and possibly dormers would be a better complement to the existing roof proportions and style.

3) The flat roof and fully glazed sides of the link between existing and new are totally out of character and a pitched roof would be far more in keeping and much less of a future maintenance problem. The several valleys in the main roof are a similar maintenance issue which if not attended to will potentially detract from the buildings appearance in the future.

4) The specified silver aluminium barge boards on the gables are wrong against the existing building and are more consistent with a commercial as opposed to a residential building. The introduction of concrete cappings to the gables of the section nearest the existing building creates another inconsistency and a significant lack of flow between the existing and new.

5) Whilst tile hanging is clearly a Haslemere vernacular there is no attempt to make the large areas of wall tile hanging interesting by introducing some shape and pattern into the tiling. These bland expanses of tiling, doorways without any form of porch or canopy and uninteresting fenestration so different from the existing building make for unattractive elevations which need to be made more interesting.

6) Red bricks as well as grey bricks are proposed. The latter suggests concrete or sand/lime bricks as opposed to clay bricks (which are used in the existing building) and the appearance and long term colour stability of the grey bricks need to be considered.

Finally we are left with the impression that minimising cost has been a major factor in developing this scheme. Haslemere town centre conservation area requires more than this and the design needs to be radically enhanced/ revised before being approved. Critical aesthetic appraisal of significant development proposals in conservation areas is of paramount importance.

Also the materials of external construction should be confirmed and agreed BEFORE planning approval is granted. Other local authorities require this, especially for their conservation areas, and Waverley B C should also, and desist from deferring such matters until afterwards when developers with an approval will endeavour to get away with the cheapest options.

Yours faithfully,

John Greer (Vice Chairman, The Haslemere Society)