

THE
HASLEMERE
SOCIETY



c/o 37 Stotley Rise,
Haslemere,
Surrey,
GU27 1AG.
22 May 2015.

Planning Dept.,
Waverley Borough Council,
The Burys,
Godalming. (By email)

Dear Sirs,

PLANNING APPLICATION 2015/0812
COOMBE LEA, CRITCHMERE HILL, HASLEMERE

The Haslemere Society wishes to register its objection to this planning application for the following reasons:-

- 1) Massing, scale, bland and unattractive front elevations dominate the adjacent cottages.
- 2) Cramming of four dwellings across the frontage and so close to the road has a detrimental impact on the street scene.
- 3) There should be a better utilisation of the space the site provides. Why cram the new buildings so close to the roadside when there is so much space rearwards. The houses could be set back similar to the existing house and nos. 38 and 40 .
- 4) The garage doors forming a significant part of the front ground floor elevation of the houses results in very poor appearance. The Haslemere Society considers that the very poor aesthetic quality of the design, including the above points, would have a distinctly adverse effect on the character of the local area and thus does not comply with Local Plan clauses D1 and D4



4 cont.)

Also the proposals do not comply with many of the requirements of the Haslemere Design Statement including:-

- relating to local surroundings and adding interest to the street scene
- heights should relate to adjoining properties
- not having a detrimental impact on existing character
- incorporating landscaping into parking provision in front garden space
- maintaining trees and hedges as an essential feature

5) Three parking spaces per dwelling are claimed per house - one in the garage and two between the garage and the public footpath. A 4.5m wide space is hardly adequate for two cars and only 5.0m length is very tight/inadequate for a larger car and does not allow access space between the garage and the vehicle.

Critchmere Hill is a main access road to Woolmer Hill School, The Edge and the Hockey, Rugby and Soccer facilities at Woolmer Hill and reversing out on to this road should be avoided by providing turn around space in front of the houses.

The existing house has a single entrance on to the road with space to turn a car around. Also existing road parking is hardly adequate for the current demands and this development requiring four access spaces would reduce the road parking immediately lower down from the double yellow lined area.

6) Ground floor living area is on the (colder/darker) less attractive north side with much of the bright south (sunny) side taken up by the garage. This will result in a very probable desire/planning application by owners to convert the ground floor garage into living accommodation especially as the first floor is less accessible in daytime especially for elderly people. A consequence of this would be the loss of a parking space and vehicles parked on the narrow road which is already a hazard area due to existing road parking.

The design statement refers to full access for wheelchair users but we would disagree as the main living area is at first floor.



7) It is stated that refuse bins are to be located down the side of the dwellings (probably near the side door) but these will obstruct the narrow passages which are only 1metre wide (less the width of a fence).

8) Due to the steepness of Critchmere Hill the difference in the ground floor level between the two new buildings is in the order of 1.5 metres and greater between the new and existing houses requiring ground retention structures (retaining walls). The differential levels aspect has not been addressed.

Wide semidetached dwellings with common floor levels exacerbate the level differences and are not suitable for such a steeply sloping site. Individual houses each with different floor levels are more appropriate/practical.

The sloping site and the proposal for a three storey property results in the new long roof ridge being a dominating 2.5/3.0 metres higher than the existing lower house roof ridge.

9) We have not been able to ascertain whether the general condite warrants its demolition. Externally this early 20th century house with its tile hung elevations is in the attractive Haslemere vernacular. The WBC Historic Building /Conservation officer should inspect this house.

10) Overall conclusion :- A poor design requiring much improvement and reduction in size (back to the drawing board !)

Finally but very importantly we refer to the proposal to demolish the existing three storey Victorian house, Coombe Lea. We have not been able to view the property internally but an external inspection indicates very good examples of the turn of the century Haslemere vernacular attractive tile hanging and special brick details to the front porch, flat segmental arch and fine jointed brick window heads and brick dentils. The external condition is remarkably good for its age and there are no obvious signs of distress, cracking , subsidence or significant deterioration and the Fleur d'Lys crested ridge line is true and straight and gable barge boards appear sound.



The applicant acknowledges that the external condition is ‘moderate to good’ and merely attempts to justify his proposal to demolish on its internal condition. The cost of demolition and removal of materials from the site would go a long way towards the cost of internal refurbishment.

Careful demolition of the single storey inferior extensions would improve the property.

A full inspection and report by your Historic Buildings Inspector is recommended to assess whether the retention of this building is appropriate.

The loss of this building could well be in contravention of Local Plan clause D1 and to state in para. 5 of the design statement that ‘the application site has no assets of heritage importance’ is clearly wrong and misleading.

The Haslemere Design statement recommends that buildings of architectural interest may warrant inclusion as buildings of local interest.

References in the Design statement to ‘other successful planning applications’ are totally irrelevant.

Should it be decided that Coombe Lea is worthy of saving the site could accommodate a degree of sympathetic development in the grounds of the house in conjunction with a refurbishment of the existing house. The Haslemere Society regards the current new build proposals as thoroughly unacceptable irrespective of any decision on the existing house.

Yours faithfully,

John Greer (Vice Chairman, The Haslemere Society)

