

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

NOTES OF MEETING: 27 September 2018

Agenda and notes (where appropriate) can be viewed at the Council's website at:

<http://www.merton.gov.uk/living/designandconservation/designreviewpanel.htm>

Panel Members Present:

- Councillor Linda Kirby (Chair)
- Tony Edwards
- Sophie Medhurst
- Tony Michael
- Clare Murray
- Shahriar Nasser
- Terry Pawson

Apologies:

- Jon Herbert
- Juliette Scalbert

Council Officers Present:

- Paul Garrett
- Katharine Thomas

Councillors Present:

- Cllr Simon McGrath (Item 1)
- Cllr Nigel Benbow (Items 1-3)

Members of the Public Present:

- None

Declarations of Interest:

- Clare Murray declared a potential conflict of interest relating to the estates regeneration programme (Item 2). No objections were raised.

Notes:

Item 1: Consultation, No Application Number, **Wimbledon Masterplan**

The Panel felt that they were being asked to comment on the strategy rather than any specific design as this was a long term vision for the whole town. The analysis seemed to be thorough and set a sound background for the proposals.

The Panel noted the level of intensification proposed and the thinking behind this. They had no particular objection to the strategy for how additional buildings and floorspace should be provided. However, they were concerned that there may be a disconnect between what seemed appropriate from an urban design perspective and what would need to be provided to make decking over the railway viable, or what the Mayor would expect to see in terms of optimising the potential for intensification.

This needed to be better analysed to ensure there was a robust foundation to the proposals. If there was a problem in this respect, then the proposals in the masterplan may have no force and the document could become meaningless.

It was agreed that the town was more than just its physical fabric and the masterplan needed to encompass issues about how the town worked and what was needed to make it successful in all respects. Public realm enhancements were welcomed, and that the pain of disruption due to change needed to result in tangible gains in the public realm. It was also felt that the masterplan needed to address how changes in retailing and the use of town centres would affect the town and what its approach to this should be.

There was some concern that the masterplan was focussing a bit too much on offices, employment and ensuring economic viability and success. It was felt that the town needed to be looked at holistically, where everything comes together to make the town work. Kings Cross was cited as a regeneration that does this and also accommodates taller buildings successfully. This was done with a variety of heights and the station area is the right place for extra height to go.

There were also references to the need to test the practicality of some ideas by going into a little bit more detail. This included issues such as levels and microclimates around taller buildings. It was noted that housing on Alexandra Road was excluded from proposals yet inclusion of this area could provide the opportunity to resolve some of the bus/taxi/drop-off issues the station faces. The Panel also questioned the role of CentreCourt Shopping Centre in the proposals, which seems to remain relatively unaffected.

If such large retail areas were redeveloped they must be done in a way that did not kill or severely blight the town centre. The Panel noted the significant employment expansion but felt that there should also be scope for some new residential use in the town centre to add to evening surveillance and activity. The masterplan also needed to focus on the human scale experience of the 'high street' and the 'place' function of the town centre. What was the 'added value' being sought – the 'excitement' of ideas was not yet coming through in the document.

In many respects the Panel felt the document felt it was 'there', but the overarching concept was not clear and this needed to be expressed in a concept drawing or key diagram – easily understandable to the public. This led to the question of whether

the document was actually a masterplan and not more of a general guidance document for deciding planning applications.

The Panel felt that to be a masterplan it needed to do more than this. For example, it should commit itself more in places such as saying where and what size a new town square should be – at the moment it seemed to be letting developers decide if they wanted to provide one or not. There was some feeling that a masterplan should be a town plan, or that at least, this was what was anticipated – a complete plan for the whole town, from how it is managed to specific site proposals

Overall the Panel felt that the document was a good start and particularly liked that it addressed some big issues such as the station, new public space and retention and improvement of older buildings. They liked that the process started with good public consultation but stressed that this needed to continue throughout the whole process of creating the masterplan.

VERDICT: **NONE GIVEN**

Item 2: Pre-Application, number, High Path Estate - Phase 2, South Wimbledon

Pre-application – Notes Confidential

Item 3: Pre-Application, 18/P2195, Former Burn Bullock PH, 315 London Road, Mitcham

Pre-application – Notes Confidential

Item 4: Pre-Application, No number yet, Wimbledon Guild, 32-34 Worple Road, Wimbledon

Pre-application – Notes Confidential