

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

NOTES OF MEETING Tuesday 19th April 2016

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 John Bowcott (Chair)
- Marcus Beale
- Tim Day
- Tony Edwards
- Rachel Jones
- Tony Michael
- Terry Pawson
- Sally Warren

Council Officers Present:

- Paul Garrett
- Jill Tyndale

Apologies

None

Declarations of Interest

- Tony Edwards declared a minor interest in one of the items. It was not considered sufficient to be a conflict and he remained in the meeting.

Notes:

Item 1: Application, 15/P0890, Former Cricketers PH, 240 London Road, Mitcham Cricket Green

The Panel spent almost an hour discussing the application for this site. They acknowledged that the applicant had addressed many of the concerns expressed at an earlier meeting and had explained the reasons for not adopting 4 others. However, this was seen as like a process of attrition, that made a good design difficult to come up with. The applicant needed to make it their own building, not one designed by committee

In assessing the proposal the Panel reiterated the importance of the heritage assets across the Conservation Area and confirmed its belief that 'the bar should be set higher' for the design of any application at this site. The site would form part of a group of high quality buildings in a wider context of many heritage assets.

The Panel felt that one measure of the quality of a building was how well it turned a corner. The Panel felt that the two primary elevations, if viewed together, did not sit well with each other (eg. different window openings) and that the corner was not taken advantage of as a means of defining the building and its quality. The primary corner is the 'specialness' that an individual design could be built around

The Panel saw the proposal as 'inoffensive' but not as good as it should be. The design seemed too muted and deferential and this prevented the architecture from being engaging or expressing a feeling of delight. The Panel welcomed the analysis of the Vestry Hall, but saw that the end windows on the primary elevation did not match, with the southern one being half window, half south facing balcony. The northern ground floor opening frames a car space. Such compromises show the design is not of the highest quality. The Panel still maintained there was scope for balconies on this elevation.

Of the earlier concerns that the applicant has chosen not to address there was general agreement that the site was not suitable for residential accommodation on the ground floor with a number of reasons offered. This included the treatment of the private garden space in front of the building. Here the Panel felt that it would be a poor quality space that residents would either not use or would attempt to screen in a way that would reduce natural surveillance, screen the building and create clutter.

Visually the building should serve a public benefit but it was difficult to do with a private use. The Panel was unsure how a protected private space on a publicly prominent site could be made to work. A non-residential use could have a raised ground floor and improve the building proportions. It could also see the building being located closer to the edge of the site and so allow a more private amenity space at the rear.

There was still a belief that increasing the pitch of the roof had design merit. Similarly there was still a feeling that within the right design there could be scope to move the building closer to the Vestry Hall and for balconies fronting onto the Cricket Green. The Panel reiterated their previous assertion that a new building had the potential to successfully abut the blank end wall of Vestry Hall, whilst maintaining servicing access to the rear at ground level.

The Panel recognised the efforts that the applicant was making but in its final analysis concluded that the proposal did not achieve the design criteria expected for this very important site. 4 members gave the application a red light and 2 gave it amber.

VERDICT: **RED**

Item 2: Pre-Application, 15/P2690/NEW, Haig Homes, Green Lane, Morden

Pre-Application. Notes Confidential.

Item 3: Pre-Application, No Number Yet, 141 The Broadway, Wimbledon

Pre-Application. Notes Confidential.

Item 4: Pre-Application, 16/P0014/NEW, Leathes House, The Drive, West Wimbledon

Pre-Application. Notes Confidential.

Item 5: Pre-Application, No Number Yet, Wellington House, 60-68 Wimbledon Hill Road, Wimbledon

Pre-Application. Notes Confidential.