

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

NOTES OF MEETING Thursday 30th March 2017

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
- Vinita Dhume
- Paul Dodd
- Tony Edwards
- Rob Heslop
- Tim Long
- Michael Whitwell
- Beatrix Young

Apologies

- Tony Michael
- Sally Warren

Council Officers Present:

- Paul Garrett
- Jeffrey Lennon (introducing Item 1)

Councillors Present

- Councillor Peter Southgate (items 2 & 3)

Members of the Public Present (item 1 only)

- Tony Burton
- Sandra Vogel
- Eve Cohen

Declarations of Interest

- Vinita Dhume declared an interest in Item 3 and absented herself from this item.
- Marcus Beale declared a minor interest in Item 1 and no objections were raised.

Notes:

Item 1: Application, 17/P1449, **Canons House**, Madeira Road, Mitcham

The Panel welcomed the proposals for the building and were supportive of much of the proposals presented to them. They were particularly keen that these were got right as Grade II* buildings were particularly rare in Merton. The concerns the Panel had, centred on the space between the café and house, the provision and location of the lift, and the economic viability of the proposed uses insofar as they affected the long-term sustainable use of the building.

The Panel were conscious that two previous attempts at using the house for community uses had failed. Therefore it was particularly important to maximise the viability and flexibility of the house and café. The Panel were generally happy with the proposed flexible business space use for the house. They were also happy with the café use in principle. However, they were not convinced of the flexibility of the proposals to accommodate a wider range of functions other than the café. The opportunity to host wedding receptions whilst the café remained open was given as an example. This needed to be clearly set out in the business plan.

The Panel were conscious that the house was visually and physically isolated from its surroundings by the landscape and busy roads. Therefore it was important to maximise the means of getting and keeping visitors there. The proposals for the house, with business use and flexible public, interpretation space was considered a good approach. However, the proposal did not seem fully formed with regard to the space between the café and house. This was a new space that had been created and the Panel felt this was a great idea and would be the focal point of the area.

There were various problems with the design in this respect. It did not seem to acknowledge its importance as the focal point, entrance to the house and to the café, with views to both sides of the landscape. This was evidence by the convoluted and cluttered entrance to the house with awkward ramps and new service and plant rooms – new clutter replacing old clutter. It seemed like an inelegant space with a main entrance past a boiler room. This side elevation was very visually pleasing and it was being spoiled by this.

The Panel were also concerned about the proposed use of brick for these new structures and walling. They were attached to the rendered house and looked out of place. It was suggested they either also be in render, or they form an extension of the brick café and its proposed extension. Either way, the Panel felt that this whole area needed further thought and re-working to properly fulfil its potential.

The other key area of concern was the positioning of a new lift inside the building. It was felt this was a large physical intrusion causing considerable harm to the building form and fabric. Alternative locations were suggested, including the north elevation facing the café. However, this was felt to have problems as well. It was suggested that disabled access could possibly be achieved to the lower and upper ground floors without the need for a lift. This would give disabled access to 2/3 of the

building, and was considered an acceptable compromise for a Grade II* listed building.

The Panel also raised a few points about the landscape design, lighting, servicing arrangements and cycle parking that they felt could be better or more sensitively addressed.

Overall the Panel were supportive of the principle of creating a space between the house and café, and this was the right approach to unlocking the potential of the site. However, this needed to be got right to secure the long-term future of the house. If the issue of this space and the lift could be better resolved then the Panel felt that a GREEN verdict would be easily achievable.

VERDICT: **RED**

Item 2: Pre-Application, No Number Yet, **Merton Hall**, 78 Kingston Road, South Wimbledon

Pre-Application – Notes Confidential

Item 3: Application, 16/P2971, **260 Church Road**, Mitcham

Item withdrawn at applicant's request.

Item 4: Pre-Application, 17/P1721/NEW, **High Path Masterplan**, High Path, South Wimbledon

Pre-Application – Notes Confidential