

## DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

### NOTES OF MEETING Tuesday 25 June 2019

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

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

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#### Panel Members Present:

- Councillor Najeeb Latif (Chair)
- Marcus Beale
- Tim Long
- Juliette Scalbert
- Andre Sutherland
- Beatrix Young

#### Apologies

- Jason Cully
- Jon Herbert
- Tony Michael

#### Council Officers Present:

- Paul Garrett
- Paul McGarry

#### Councillors Present

- None

#### Members of the Public Present

- Sara Sharp
- Louise Cole

#### Declarations of Interest

- None

Notes:

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**Item 1:** Application, 19/P0825, **12 Hartfield Road**, Wimbledon

Generally, the Panel were positive about the proposal and the most recent changes made to the design, following clarification of its appearance and scale in relation to the previously permitted proposals. Internally the layout and range of terraces meant that there would be good light penetration and it should be a pleasant environment in which to work.

It was felt important to fully consider the cumulative impact of buildings on the quality of Hartfield Road, notably from the human scale, to minimise the potential for 'canyonisation' of the street. The disparate nature of the buildings in the street made this difficult, but the applicant should attempt to bring some degree of coherence to the street character.

In principle, breaking up the façade and stepping the elevations, the use of colour and hierarchy of windows was moving in the right direction. However, it was felt that the façade design was not yet sufficiently resolved. Firstly, it was felt that there was a lack of clarity about whether the building was trying to appear as two or three separate elements.

Secondly, the proportions of the left hand third of the building made it feel top heavy and that the middle element could occupy more height within the elevation – it needed to work as a stand-alone building if it was to appear convincing. Thirdly, it was felt that the set-backs lacked some conviction – notably between the left side and rest of building. Fourthly, it was felt that the ground floor and its two vehicular entrances did not help in reinforcing the 'three buildings' approach.

Finally, it was felt that it was in danger of becoming a bit fussy in the appearance and number of elements and materials, also lacking a grounding in local context. It was suggested this needed further work and justification, with a view to considering a more simple and elegant approach to quality and materials, possibly with a more restricted palette. The Gort Scott reference to Hills Road, Cambridge was cited as a good example in this respect. The panel were confident that the architect had the ability to take on these considerations to refine the façade to create a high quality building and to ensure it had conviction and architectural integrity.

The Panel had some further concerns regarding the public realm and a number of more practical and functional issues that, nonetheless, would have an important impact on the quality of the building. The footway was currently of an acceptable width, but the proposed cycle parking and tree planting would effectively halve this. This needed re-assessing, to ensure the public realm was successful here. This is important, given the relatively hostile nature of the street for pedestrians and its current lack of a sense of place.

The vehicular entrances were dominating and their effect needed to be minimised by removing unnecessary radii and ensuring a level and continuous footway. Footways all around the building and into the service yard must be fully accessible in terms of

levels and widths. The panel noted that it was not possible to gate the service yard, and that the rear presented an untidy back-of-house. The Panel were concerned that this presented a real possibility of attracting anti-social behaviour and that the applicant needed to engage fully with the police Secured by Design team to minimise this risk.

The arrangement of the basement was considered to be rather convoluted, particularly for cyclists. This would benefit from re-planning and rationalisation. The number of doors and turns and lengths of corridor for cyclists should be minimised and the showers should be more conveniently located. Cycle stackers should not be used, as they are not considered a quality provision and there was sufficient space for level cycle parking. It was felt that a simpler and more logical layout was achievable and would provide a more attractive facility for staff.

It was also noted that the building was likely to overshadow the terrace being proposed for the building to the rear and this needed to be better understood to ensure the quality of that space was good. The Panel also discussed the likely increase in service deliveries that would arise from both the office proposal and the new terrace to the rear, which would share this servicing route. A realistic assessment of this needed to be made.

Overall the Panel were confident that the applicant had the ability and willingness to ensure the proposal could be a successful building of high architectural integrity.

VERDICT: **AMBER**

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**Item 2:** Application, 19/P1196, **17-27 the Broadway**, Wimbledon

The Panel were positive about the concept of this proposal and felt it was an appropriate form of development. It was a good way to intensify the building use and the recent changes to the design were much better than the initial design. Although the host building was not of high architectural quality, it was of a reasonable scale and height, and able to accommodate an additional storey. The proposed design, with copper roofed pavilions, related well to the CentreCourt entrance rotunda and the town hall roof.

The roof form related directly to the rhythm of the existing building façade below. This was appreciated and liked by the Panel, and was captured well in the drawings. It was felt there could possibly be more variation in the arrangement of the roof form. The proposed improvements to the shopfront were considered good quality and welcomed. The means of access to the roof top area needed to be clear and carefully considered, and a section drawing was suggested to aid this.

The Panel noted that the previous item on the agenda proposed an office building that would be considerably higher than this proposal, and would be likely to cast the roof top area into shadow in the evening, when it is likely to be well used. A daylight and sunlight study should be undertaken in order to assess this impact and inform the design appropriately. Other than this, the Panel felt that the proposal worked well with the adjacent office proposal and suggested the applicant may like to

consider a high level link between the two, which could facilitate lunch time use by office workers, as well as serving as a potential fire exit.

The panel felt that the proposal could be improved in one particular way. Above the parapet of the existing elevation is a small section of pitched slate roof. This affected the proportions of the elevation. It was suggested - and endorsed by the whole Panel – that this should be removed and the parapet raised. This would then allow the roof-top area to be enlarged and brought closer to the façade. This would strengthen the relationship between the elevation and new roof form.

If necessary, the central section of the left-hand part of the façade should be raised slightly to preserve its prominence, or the new roof could be brought forward at this point. It was also suggested that the stone pilasters of this section should also run to ground level to provide a stronger grounding of this feature.

It was noted that the food & drink uses produced would generate more intensive servicing requirements, including food waste handling and possible bottle crushers. This needed to be well managed and to be fully considered with the servicing requirements of the adjacent proposed office. As previously noted, it is important that this service area is well designed, managed and that anti-social behaviour is minimised by consultation with the Police Secured by Design officer.

The Panel referenced 'The Terrace' above CentreCourt Shopping Centre and the roof top bar Frank's Café in Peckham as good examples of this type of development. Overall the Panel felt that this was a high quality design and improvement to a mediocre elevation and would provide a good urban space for all seasons.

VERDICT: **GREEN**