

MERTON DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

NOTES OF MEETING 24th September 2008

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

www.merton.gov.uk/designreviewpanel

Panel Members Present:

- Neil Baldwin
- Marcus Beale
- Councillor John Bowcott (Chair)
- Tony Cain
- Tim Day
- Tony Edwards
- John Fyfield
- Tony Michael
- Norman Plastow

Officers Present:

- Paul Garrett: Design & Conservation
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Item 1: PRE APPLICATION, Selsey House & 1 Lambton Road, Raynes Park

Pre-application scheme – minutes confidential

Item 2: FULL APPLICATION, 213 Worple Road

Proposals for this site were originally seen by the Panel at its last meeting on 23rd July. A number of amendments had been made to the design as a result of this meeting. However, the Panel still felt that more could be done to make the best of this important site.

Concern was raised about the general appearance of the building. It was not clear whether it was meant to be contemporary or more contextual, and its regularity of form, particularly the lack of relationship to the internal rooms and the treatment of the prominent corner, meant that it was thought to look like an office building. It was felt that the window boxes needed to be carefully designed to ensure that they did not fall into disuse.

It was felt that the corner of the site was an opportunity that had to be taken by the building and to be reflected in its design – currently the building's design simply ignores the location, and the set-back to the upper storeys creates a poorly resolved mass of brickwork on the corner. It was also felt that more space needed to be given to pedestrians at this corner. Narrowing of the car park ramp was suggested as a means by which the building could be set further back to create a wider pavement.

Whilst the columns of brickwork on the elevation provide an improved vertical rhythm, they are poorly resolved at the top of the building, being akin to 'cricket stumps without the bails'. Whilst the materials of the façade were reflective of the adjacent buildings, the top storey was not reflective of adjacent roof materials/colours. It was felt that the top section of the building was not satisfactorily resolved

Overall Verdict: **RED LIGHT**

Item 3: FULL APPLICATION, The Crown Pub, 116 London Road, Morden

It was confirmed that the proposal was to replace the existing walls rather than simply re-clad them. Various questions were raised about the materials. Concern was raised about ensuring the desired appearance of the copper (which would remain copper coloured) cladding was as envisaged by the applicant, and it was recommended this be investigated further. It was also stressed that the join with the existing concrete needed to be carefully designed so as to avoid the feel that the copper had simply been applied to the existing concrete.

The Panel felt the proposed uses were appropriate, as was the scale and form of the proposals, and applauded the production of models. There was some concern that the design might be too horizontal in emphasis, through the window arrangements and the linearity of the copper cladding, and that there could be something on the corner to hold one's attention. Ways in which this could be addressed were discussed, and these included introducing some means of demarcating the entrances in the elevation, particularly in emphasising the double height atrium on the corner, which was not reflected at all in the elevation.

The rear access to the residential units was felt to be poorly resolved, as it essentially being accessed 'down an alley' and partly under cover. It was felt that the existing outbuilding in the car park should be cut back to significantly widen this entrance to make a more inviting and safer feeling space. The general discussion also touched on interpretation of the Merton Rule and how the building could better advertise its green credentials. It was also noted that the flats have no amenity space.

Although the Panel saw scope for improvement, it was very positive of the overall design and supported the proposal.

Overall Verdict: **GREEN LIGHT**