

## **DESIGN REVIEW PANEL NOTE OF MEETING 28/1/08**

### Panel Members Present:

Cllr John Bowcott (Chair)  
Marcus Beale  
Tony Michael  
Tony Edwards  
Norman Plastow  
Belinda McGahey  
Richard Holden  
Sir Duncan Michael  
John Fyfield

### Officers Present:

Phil Ryder: Design & Conservation  
Paul Garrett: Design & Conservation

### **1. 14 the Downs SW20**

Proposals for the development of this site had previously been considered by the Panel in June 2007. The scheme now being considered is scaled down compared to the previous proposal.

The strengths of the scheme were felt to be:-

- In principle the green roofs were a good idea.
- The retention, and re-use of the Victorian villa.
- Retention of trees.
- Removal of later buildings from the site.
- The increase in the gap between the front of the villa and the new houses.
- The care and maintenance of the frontage strip of land by a general management company.

The weaknesses of the scheme were considered to be:-

- The architecture of the new buildings appeared to lack any aspiration or courage. The scheme had been designed to “fit in”, rather than to promote good quality contemporary design, (even in Conservation Areas).
- New buildings in Conservation Areas should be so good that they might one day be “Listed”.
- The scheme would be designed to a “Code 3” level of energy efficiency. For this type of upmarket residential development the standard should be set much higher. It is noted that by 2016 all residential development will need to reach Code 6 level. Development of this type should be trailblazers towards that end, and the modest aspiration was seen as a major disappointment.

### Overall Conclusion:-

It was felt that given the planning history of this site, and in particular the views expressed by the Planning Inspector, and views expressed by local residents, major constraints have been placed on the design of the scheme, which has limited scope for a bolder proposal. Whilst the scheme will be seen to do “no harm”, the Panel was disappointed at the lack of architectural ambition for a highly visible site.

The Panel suggested that the following condition should be applied, to ensure the intended outcome, to ensure that no change was made to the green roofs above the lower ground floor, at the rear of the proposed new houses, including withdrawal of permitted development rights in respect of new buildings within the garden areas. It

was important that these roofs should be compatible with resident's access (so sedum would not be appropriate). A condition should also be used to restrict the height of the fences between each private garden (1.2 metres, except where the fences are close to the houses), and to prevent any later increases in this height, in order to allow views across the site, and to the villa building. Detailed landscape drawings would need to be prepared, and approved by the Council, dealing with the planting of these roof areas, including appropriate soil depths, and any possible irrigation requirements. New trees in this part of the site should be avoided.

The architectural success of the scheme may depend on detailed design work, which will be carried out after the planning application has been determined. It is important that the same architect should be retained at this stage. Planning conditions should be used to ensure that window sections, window surrounds, and window frames were correctly detailed.

There was some concern about the possibility that stone might be applied in a superficial way to the elevations, reference was made to 2 houses in Cottenham Park Rd where this had happened.

It was considered that in spite of the well voiced reservations, the scheme should be given a "Green Light".

## **2. 3 – 5 Trinity Rd SW19**

The strengths of the revised scheme were felt to be:-

- The site requires a large building. The environment here is mainly "urban" in character.
- From an architectural point of view, the scheme does have some good features.
- It was noted that it was intended that the same architects would be involved with design work throughout the whole process, which should help to ensure that detailed design quality was not lost in the later stages.
- The design statement set out a well-considered site analysis.
- It was noted that balconies would be screened to reduce overlooking.

The weaknesses of the scheme were considered to be:-

- Consideration should be given to taking away the boundary walls, and dedication of land on the frontage of the site as a public space. As proposed, the space at the front of the site has no value as private amenity space.
- The scheme attempts to combine an urban scale of building with a suburban layout (the development being sited behind a suburban garden wall). It is not possible to successfully reconcile these opposites.
- Consideration should be given to a commercial/non-residential use on the ground floor, with an active frontage facing directly onto the public domain, with flats above. This could be an extra floor, with the same number of floors devoted to flats. The flats could use any available roof space above the commercial floor as private amenity space, where its amenity value would be greater than the ground level space currently proposed.
- The retention of the trees should not be regarded as the principal factor determining the layout of the site, though trees could be retained within a hard landscaped public space, with an urban character.
- It was felt that a development of this type, should be able to meet "Code 4" level in relation to energy efficiency. As proposed, it would not do so, though certain energy efficiency measures were to be included. If the scheme was to

be approved, then a condition should be used to secure the implementation of the solar roof panels.

- The location of terraces on the north and east sides would have limited amenity value.

#### Overall Conclusion:-

The development of this site offers an opportunity to give life to this part of the Broadway. There is potential for creating a vibrant place. This provides the church with an opportunity to give space and liveliness to the local community.

The Panel suggested that the proposals should encompass the whole of the Church's landholding in this area. If possible the vicarage should be included in the redevelopment. An enlarged scheme would offer the chance of a scheme which could be more sustainable from social and environmental points of view.

As proposed the scheme is not the best that could be done for the site, and is a missed opportunity. The treatment of the ground floor was considered to be particularly disappointing, and the sustainability of this proposal was inexcusably sub optimal. It was given a "Red Light".

### **3. 189/191 Streatham Rd Mitcham**

The strengths of the revised scheme were felt to be:-

- The idea of the "winter gardens" on the Streatham Rd frontage was supported from the point of view of providing some acoustic protection against traffic noise.
- The site was considered capable of taking a strong building presence, and the development would "repair" a gap in the street block frontages.
- The transparency provided at ground floor level, by the glazing at the street corner, is a positive aspect of the scheme.
- The articulation of the elevations was also felt to be a positive feature of the scheme.
- The idea of incorporating into the design specific spaces for shop signage was supported.

The weaknesses of the scheme were considered to be:-

- The use of a bio diverse roof, in place of the proposed sedum roof, was suggested, and access to the roof would be required, in order to allow for it to be maintained.
- It was felt that from the point of view of aspect, it would be better to have the larger windows on the SE facing elevation. However large windows on the SW elevation might suffer from too much solar gain.
- There are other ways (apart from the large windows proposed) of giving architectural recognition to the main Streatham Rd frontage of the site.
- It was felt that the fenestration was too "busy", and that it could be improved if glazing bars were in alignment with one another.
- The detailed design of the courtyard space at the rear needs to be unified by a limited palette of materials which provide a cohesive character to the space.
- The positioning of the common entrance to the flats was questioned. It was right to place it directly onto Melrose Ave, but it lay between 2 rubbish stores, where smells could be a problem. It could be placed against the external wall of the building, offering the opportunities for window openings. At present the long corridor behind the front entrance door provided no sense of arrival, and this needs further attention.

#### Overall Conclusion:-

It was felt that the proposals suggested that a good start had been made on the design for the site, though there were areas which would benefit from further consideration.

There was a case for providing a canopy to give weather protection to the footway in front of the site. As proposed, projecting bays at 1<sup>st</sup> floor level provide this on an intermittent basis, and the gaps might be filled to provide continuous cover.

The scheme was given an “Amber Light”, with further attention to the identified points this scheme could merit approval.

#### **4. Manor House, 230 London Rd Morden**

The strengths of the revised scheme were felt to be:-

- No strengths were perceived.

The weaknesses of the scheme were considered to be:-

- Any development needs to “honour” the original 18<sup>th</sup> century Manor House, and this included the garden setting in front of it. The scheme failed to do this.
- Views of the Manor House from the road would be obscured by the development.
- One of the better features of the property, from the point of view of the users, is the south facing aspect, and the sunny garden. The development would severely compromise this, and would compartmentalise the garden into small useless areas. The garden is currently neglected, but this neglect can be rectified.
- From an architectural point of view, the scheme was considered to be very poor. A contemporary design should be considered. Reference should be made to advice given by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, in relation to design of new development in the vicinity of historic buildings. By attempting to copy the original architecture of the 18<sup>th</sup> century house, the designer is being disrespectful to it.
- The proposed development should include plans to repair the front garden wall on the London Rd frontage.
- The scheme was considered to be over-development.

#### Overall Conclusion:-

Any development should be restricted to the south-western edge of the site. No building should be allowed to the right of a line extending through the garden, based on the line of the left edge of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Manor House building. The space in front of the original 18<sup>th</sup> century building should be kept as open garden space, to enhance the setting of the historic building.

Consideration might be given to the idea of a single storey building within the north-western arm of the site, provided that such a building did not obstruct views of the church tower as seen from Epsom Rd (to the south of the public house).

The site demanded a scheme which would upgrade the character of the area. If the proposal displayed superlative architecture, then there might be more sympathy for allowing some development within the garden land.

Whilst it was recognised that the premises offered a valuable service to the community, this factor should not override the design problems that the scheme presented.

The scheme was given a "Red Light".