

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL NOTE OF MEETING 1/10/07

Panel Members present:

Cllr John Bowcott (Chair)
Neil Baldwin
Sir Duncan Michael
Norman Plastow
Kirsten Jeske
Tim Day
Tony Edwards
John Fyfield
Marcus Beale
Tony Michael

The conclusions of the Panel on each of the schemes was as follows:

1. Pre- application scheme, P3 Site, Hartfield Rd car park site, Wimbledon SW19

This application was reviewed at the Design Review Panel meeting on 1/10/07. The minutes of this part of the meeting will be treated as being confidential until the scheme is submitted, with or without amendments as a formal planning application, by the current prospective developer.

2. Merton College, London Rd, Morden

This application was reviewed at the Design Review Panel meeting on 1/10/07

The strengths of the scheme were felt to be:-

- The frontage landscaping, some of which is already in place, is very good quality
- The renewable energy features

The weaknesses of the scheme were considered to be:-

- It was felt that the scheme (and particularly the engineering block) might have better expressed its function in its design, and the latter could have been an “extraordinary building” because of its distinctive use
- The College could be making a bold statement, but instead it is hiding behind a planting belt, in particular views to the rotunda entrance from London Rd could be opened up, or a striking landmark on the street frontage could “sign post” the presence of the college
- The College could have opted for an architecture which expressed moving on from the previous stage of development, rather than completion using the same architectural language as in the completed buildings
- The building could have been designed to better acknowledge the presence of the Listed Church on the adjacent site, rather than relying on tree belts to visually separate the buildings

Overall conclusion

Though criticisms were made of the scheme in terms of opportunities that had not been taken, nevertheless the Panel gave it a “green light”, and considered that from a design point of view it should be approved. A planning condition should be used to strengthen the landscape belt along the southern edge of the site.

3. 25/27 Landgrove Rd, SW19

This application was reviewed at the Design Review Panel meeting on 1/10/07.

This scheme had been referred to the Panel in particular from the point of view of seeking a view as to the appropriateness of the use of contemporary architecture in a Victorian terraced street, which is also within a Conservation Area. Any view expressed by the Panel could also be relevant to other similar situations.

The strengths of the scheme were felt to be:-

- The contemporary approach to architecture and design and layout, the panel were in admiration of such an approach, considering it to be the most appropriate architectural approach in this context. A traditional “pastiche” design would be quite the wrong approach

The weaknesses of the scheme were considered to be:-

- A very minor criticism was made about the way that the windows aligned in relation to those of the neighbouring house.
- There was a further minor concern in respect of the way that the roof projected beyond the front roof plane of the adjacent house.

Overall conclusion

The Panel were enthusiastic about the scheme, and notwithstanding minor concerns, gave it a clear “green light”. The eventual success of the scheme will be dependent on achieving high quality of finish and on getting small detailing right. Planning conditions should be used to ensure that both detailing and materials are right. Development in Conservation Areas is about respecting character, not copying or mimicking it. The architect was congratulated for providing a good model of the scheme, which assisted the Panel’s understanding.

4. 1 Caxton Rd, SW19

This application was reviewed at the Design Review Panel meeting on 1/10/07.

The strengths of the scheme were felt to be:-

- The size, scale and height of the development were felt to be right for this site.
- The proposed living wall (green wall) was welcomed, and it was recommended that the necessary management of this feature would need to be put in place.
- The idea of securing a step free access to the Haydons Rd station was applauded.

The weaknesses of the scheme were considered to be:-

- The bridging section linking to the neighbouring house in Caxton Rd did not work well, and does not marry the scheme to the Victorian terrace.
- The building could be brought forward on the Caxton Rd frontage, to better relate to the frontage of the Caxton Rd houses.
- The use of picture windows on the west elevation attracted some criticism on account of the traffic noise, though it was recognised that the west elevation has the best sunlight aspect.
- There was some concern on the size of the new flats, and indicated that officers should look at this aspect of the scheme.

Overall conclusion

Notwithstanding the weaknesses identified above, the Panel gave the development a “green light”, in doing so they were comforted by the commitment that was given by the applicant in respect of their intention to straighten the alignment of the proposed path access to the station platform.

Again the production of a model to illustrate the scheme was applauded.