

## **DESIGN REVIEW PANEL NOTE OF MEETING 20/11/07**

### Panel Members Present:

Cllr John Bowcott (Chair)  
Marcus Beale  
Tony Michael  
Paul Coe  
Chris Abell  
Nicholas Waring

### Officers Present:

Phil Ryder: Design & Conservation  
Paul McGarry: Design & Conservation

### **1. Mitcham Gas Depot. Western Road / Miles Road, Mitcham**

This application was submitted in relation to decontamination works for the site, but it included, for illustrative purposes, a block layout plan, showing streets, building footprints and open spaces, and it was this plan which was the focus of most of the Panel's attention. The strengths of the revised scheme were felt to be:-

- Decontamination of a brownfield site
- Split of industry and residential accepted given the tight constraints on the site
- The masterplan makes every opportunity to draw the surrounding streets and spaces into the site, rather than previous developments on Western Road which in the past, have tended to be rather introverted. The street layout approach, and the way in which it knitted into the surroundings was welcomed.
- Providing the open space as a natural extension to the neighbouring park is a sensible way of providing higher quality public spaces, but will require careful management, or transfer to the Council upon completion of the development. It was noted that the new park should not look separate from the existing one, but be regarded as one space.

The weaknesses of the scheme were considered to be:-

- Issues regarding the treatment of Field Gate Lane 'backland' space would benefit from being considered in partnership with the Council to either develop as a back-to back with the existing housing, or enclose the space within a block.
- The reliance on car parking courts may confuse the notion of public fronts and private backs throughout the development. This needs to be more carefully considered in the detailed planning of the site and through designing out crime.
- The amount of open space is slightly smaller than the planning brief. Officer's views have been to allow less space, but seek higher quality space, and a more high profile character of space (ie residential square rather than a public park) The Panel question this approach.
- Lowering the ground levels too much after decontamination should be avoided as the area is prone to localised flooding and lower site levels may exacerbate this – however this provides an opportunity to consider sustainable urban drainage systems in the parkland to manage surface water run-off.
- New streets could be aligned so that views are terminated by the open space.
- Future plans should have regard to renewable energy, particularly with the B1 units and Merton rule.

- Approaching a housing block via the industrial area road needs rethinking.

Overall Conclusion:-

The panel appreciate that as a pre-app scheme, no details have been worked up yet, but are supportive of the key principles of the development, in particular, how the site aims to aid permeability by linking into existing neighbouring streets. The Panel noted that the Council needs to ensure that the gas depot development is mindful of the council's own development opportunity sites, and that together a more cohesive development could be achieved. The panel look forward to reviewing the detailed application in due course – no red lights so far.

**2. 374 Grand Drive / The Beverley, Lower Morden.**

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

- The building turns the corner successfully, but could be articulated better at the roof level.
- The building demonstrates a respectful approach to the site's suburban context
- The building completes the 5 sides of the Beverley roundabout and complements the scale and massing of the neighbouring Grand Drive and Hillcross Avenue buildings.
- Retail use at ground floor is supported.

The weaknesses of the scheme were considered to be:-

- Noise and vibration issues relating to mechanical car parking lifts, they can also be problematic in terms of disabled parking provision.
- The car parking provision of 1:1 was seen as excessive, as the site does have good bus links.
- The panel felt that a green roof should be considered as a useable amenity space, or alternatively additional accommodation could be provided at roof level.
- The roofscape, and way the building addressed the corner, needed to be re-considered.
- There was a lack of details about the rear elevation and the Panel would have expected details to be presented as part of the application.
- Metal cladding elements were considered to be too harsh for the suburban character of the area and in terms of sustainability, sends out the wrong message and metal has an inherently high carbon footprint. The Panel suggested a larch cladding option to soften the elevations of the building and to tie into the green roof ideas.

Overall Conclusion:-

The Panel felt that the roof pitch and corner apex detail should be reworked, and that overall, a more sustainable approach should be taken in terms of selecting building and cladding materials. The false pitched roof could be redesigned as a rooftop amenity space and aid sustainability by providing a natural habitat, rather than restricting to a sedum roof. The scheme represents an opportunity to provide improved landscaping and introduce tree planting on the frontage space, in co-operation with the Local Authority, this would reduce solar gain in the retail units. A cycle parking area could also be provided within this frontage space. Consideration might be given to blinds/awnings on the retail frontage, to protect against sun and rain. Car parking could be accommodated in a rear, limiting space to 7 rather than 14 spaces. Consideration should be given to the requirement for shop signage, and the Panel felt that this should be placed behind the glazing. Planning conditions should be considered to deliver this. The Panel felt that the principle of development was

fine, but some details required further consideration, and the application should be revised, before it could be accepted.

### **3. Thames Water Site, Coombe Lane SW20**

This scheme was reviewed at the Design Review Panel meeting on 20/11/07. 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.