

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

NOTES OF MEETING Tuesday 24th January 2012

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

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

Panel Members Present:

- Marcus Beale
- Tim Belcher
- Councillor John Bowcott (Chair)
- Tony Edwards
- John Fyfield
- Alistair Huggett
- Tony Michael
- Terry Pawson
- Victoria Perkins

Council Officers Present:

- Paul Garrett
- Paul McGarry (presenting Item 2)

Declarations of Interest:

- Tony Edwards declared an interest in Item 2. His company had prepared images for this item, though had not taken a hand in developing the proposals. It was considered appropriate for Tony to remain in the room as an observer only.
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Item 1: 11/P3437, Application, 153-161 The Broadway

Although this is an application the Panel felt that there were a number of issues that were not satisfactorily resolved with the proposed building.

Despite previous advice from the Council, the Panel felt that the proposal still did not relate as well as it should to the adjacent CIPD building. This was expressed primarily in a feeling that the building was too tall, by 1-2 storeys – there being no clear justification for this. Also there was a feeling that the building line chosen drew undue prominence to the building, projecting forward from the current building line above ground floor, and including a

prominent projecting entrance canopy, rather than following the current building line.

It was noted that at this position on The Broadway, the building frontages were angled to the street, taking their cue from the angle at which the adjacent side streets meet The Broadway. These frontages step more gradually forward as the road curves, but not projecting beyond a building line consistent with, but set slightly further back from, the back edge of the pavement. The only exception to this is the current application building. To amend this, and respect and reflect this feature of the street, the Panel felt that the building line of the new building should be both at this consistent angle to The Broadway (which it is proposed to be) and form a consistent part of this gradual stepping forward, by fitting neatly between the building lines of the buildings either side (which it does not). The Panel therefore felt that the building elevation needed to project no further forward than its boundary with the building to the east (Highlands House), and be set back from the corner of the building to the west (CIPD).

The current proposal, in failing to do this, gave rise to other problems. Where other buildings have stepped back and given something to the public realm, this building was projecting forward and taking something away. In this respect it was not respecting the townscape and felt somewhat greedy. The Panel felt uncomfortable about the large projecting flank wall, though realised this was going to be unavoidable in one way or another until the adjacent site was redeveloped. Although the Panel did not criticise the quality of the architecture per se, they did feel that it could be anywhere, and did not do enough to try and find either something that was 'Wimbledon', helped define Wimbledon or provided a striking new piece of architecture.

The Panel raised the issue of the hotel having a suitable and positive presence on the street and noted that there was now a reception area at ground floor. However, the projecting entrance canopy needed to be balanced against the need to find an appropriate building line. The Panel also felt that the first floor restaurant use needed to be expressed better and more obviously in the architecture of the building frontage, especially given the lack of ground floor street frontage the hotel had.

It was suggested that, although the rear of the building was stepped back a little further than the previously refused application, it would be prudent to undertake a rights-of-light study to determine an acceptable building envelope. Concern was raised regarding the tightness of the servicing area and whether it was adequate for a refuse vehicle to use. It was also felt that opportunity should be taken to improve the frontage quality of Griffiths Road, either by setting the parking back to the building line and using landscaping and screening, or by infilling the gap with a building and accessing the site via an undercroft.

Although it was questioned whether it was realistic to build around an operating ground floor use, the applicant explained that piles for a previous

permission had already been driven, at which time the then tenant vacated the building temporarily, and received compensation for this disturbance.

Finally the Panel was concerned that at this late stage the applicant had given little thought to how environmental and building sustainability, and climate change issues were to be addressed. Due to all these concerns and the fact the proposal was a live application, the Panel felt that only one verdict was appropriate.

VERDICT: **RED**

Item 2: Pre-Application, Morden Public Realm

Pre-Application – Notes Confidential

Item 3: Pre-Application, Dundonald Primary School

Pre-Application – Notes Confidential

Item 4: Pre-Application, 21 Eastfields Road

Pre-Application – Notes Confidential