

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

NOTES OF MEETING Thursday 24th July 2014

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 Day
- Rob Heslop
- Sophie Medhurst
- Terry Pawson

Apologies

- Tony Michael
- Andre Sutherland
- Richard Walker
- Councillor John Bowcott
- Nicola Theron

Council Officers Present:

- Paul Garrett

Notes:

Item 1: Pre-Application, No number Yet, **All England Lawn Tennis Club – Court 1 Roof**

Pre-Application – Notes Confidential

Item 2: Pre-Application, 13/P3719/NEW, **Kings College School – Music School**

Pre-Application – Notes Confidential

Item 3: Application, 14/P2559, **Wimbledon Bridge House**

The Panel noted that this was now an application, so were advising the Planning Applications Committee, rather than simply the applicant. The panel were looking for improvements to the previous proposals, and whilst some issues had been addressed, it was felt that these had not been adequately resolved as far as they could be.

The Panel particularly noted the design and feel of the new façade, which was felt to be 'bigger, bolder and blander' than the previously reviewed proposal. The façade felt like it was a very flat skin with shallow cut-outs to give it some relief – it had an 'early card model' feel to it. It was also likened to a flattened classical elevation applied to an existing building. It was felt that flatness of the new elevation created a fortress-like boundary between the building and the street, being less welcoming – a stark demarcation that gives less to the street.

The Panel raised a number of points on the detailing and materials to elaborate on these points. This included the actual depth of the window reveals in relation to the surround, depth difference between the stone and cladding elements and difference in projection of the windows. It was felt that the join with the retained white panels could look awkward. All of these elements it was felt needed further work and detailing. Using 'stone-like' materials as a lightweight cladding is not necessarily a problem, but further work needed to be done on deciding how why and where they were used and expressed. There was also some discussion on how the steel frame structure of the building should inform the appearance and proportions of the external façade, whether a secondary rhythm of bronze mullions could act as a counterpoint.

The re-provision of a canopy was discussed at the previous review, but was re-iterated again at this review significantly more strongly. It was clear the Panel felt that the current canopy was a much used and valuable resource. It helped make the building belong to the street. A new, lightweight glass canopy could help address the issue of the flatness of the façade, giving it depth. It need not obscure the upper level advertising, which would be most visible from the far side of the street.

The Panel felt that there was a lopsided approach to improving the public realm, with a lot of work on the office side and very little on the alleyway side. It was felt that the building and its context should be looked at as a whole. Getting to the office entrance had been addressed, so getting to the retail should also be addressed.

The improvements to the route to the office were welcomed, but the changes to the steps to the office entrance still needed improvement, as did the visibility to the upper level walkway. It was suggested that the steps be rotated at an angle so a shallower gradient could be achieved.

Overall the Panel were of the view that the proposal still did well in de-cluttering the area and improving the circulation, but felt that the design of the façade needed more work – including the provision of a new canopy – and

that a more comprehensive approach to public realm improvements was needed.

VERDICT: **AMBER**

Item 4: Pre-Application, 14/P2331/NEW, **Colliers Wood Library**

Pre-Application – Notes Confidential