

## DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

### NOTES OF MEETING Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2017

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

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

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#### Panel Members Present:

- Councillor John Bowcott (Chair)
- Marcus Beale
- Tim Day
- Vinita Dhume
- John Fyfield
- Sophie Medhurst
- Tony Michael
- Nicholas Waring (Items 1 & 2 only)

#### Council Officers Present:

- Paul Garrett
- Nuala Kennedy (Items 1-3)

#### Declarations of Interest

- Marcus Beale absented himself from Item 1 as previously, due to earlier involvement with the site.

#### Members of the Public Present (item 4 only)

- Sarah Sharp
- Eve Cohen

Notes:

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**Item 1:** A Pre-Application, No number as yet, **247 The Broadway**, Wimbledon

Pre-Application – Notes Confidential

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**Item 2:** Pre-Application, 16/P3371, **Baitul Futuh Mosque**, 181 London Road, Morden

Pre-Application – Notes Confidential

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**Item 3:** Pre-Application, 16/P4673, 27-39 Hartfield Road, Wimbledon

Pre-Application – Notes Confidential

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**Item 4:** Application, 17/P0390, Merton Abbey Mills, Watermill Way, Colliers Wood

The Panel had a number of issues with the proposals for this site. They acknowledged the difficulty of relating to a sensitive conservation area on one side and large blocks of flats on the other. The feel was that the building was trying to do both, and possibly not succeeding in either.

The uses and open character of the ground floor, with its colonnade, related well to the site. However, the scale, form and height related to the blocks of flats. Essentially, the Panel felt the building was too tall to achieve both of these necessary aims. The hierarchy of organically placed buildings was disrupted by the position and scale of the new building. Its rectilinear form and simple shape emphasised its scale and presence and did not seem to fit in with this organic form. The relationship of scale between the single storey Long Shop and the new 5-storey building was picked out in particular. A 3-storey building with a different approach to form or materials for the upper storey would fit in far better to the site and setting. The Panel were clear in believing the extension to the 1929 shop was of an appropriate scale and design.

The Panel noted that the Abbey Mills site itself was difficult to get to and appeared as an inward looking cluster of buildings. It had an ambiguous relationship with the surrounding buildings. It was questioned whether the building should be strengthening the 'wall' of the site boundary. Should it try and be part of the existing organic cluster of buildings or should it be more permeable and open towards the inside of the Conservation Area. The boundaries were not clear and these issues needed to be sorted out.

The Panel noted the dynamic and modern way the building was designed to be used, and felt that this was a good thing. However, the Panel noted the possibility for the building to revert to a traditional office building – as the upper floors essentially were so. If the building was to relate to different contexts it possibly needed to look and feel different on each side.

Overall the Panel felt that the proposed building could be said to be harming the character of the conservation area, but were not convinced that other aspects of the proposal were outweighing or justifying this in terms of public benefit. This needed to be better demonstrated. The Panel discussed for some time the appropriate verdict, with some members clearly preferring a Red.

VERDICT: **AMBER**