

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

NOTES OF MEETING Thursday 17th November 2011

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:

- Councillor John Bowcott (Chair)
- Marcus Beale
- David Breen
- John Fyfield
- John Merivale
- Duncan Michael
- Tony Michael
- Andre Sutherland
- Nicholas Waring

Council Officers Present:

- Paul Garrett

Apologies:

- Joanna Averley
 - Terry Pawson
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Item 1: 11/P0815, Application, Morden Tavern

Overall the Panel unanimously welcomed the revised proposals and considered that they represented a significantly better resolved scheme, notably with respect to the development and clarification of the contemporary architectural language.

It was felt that the architecture of the flats worked best, with the flat roof and vertical zinc standing seam panels. However, it was felt that this material did not work so well with the pitched roofs, which tended to appear somewhat overbearing, with potentially 'clunky' eaves. It was suggested that tile or slate may be a better material for the pitched roofs. Overall it was felt that some further work was needed to ensure the architectural detailing was well resolved and achieved a high quality.

The Panel felt that the retained tavern building worked better being clearly separated from the adjacent proposed flats. However, the setting of this and the flats fronting Central Road still remained poor in many respects. This was the element the Panel were least satisfied with. The ground floor Flat 1 was single aspect directly on to a car park, and despite a small garden area this was considered a poor quality space. The adjacent bin store also meant the refuse vehicle would park right outside the flat. It was felt that the flat would work better if it ran front to back and was dual aspect. It was also suggested that the amount of parking in front of the flats should be reduced to improve the quality and amount of amenity space.

The Panel also felt that whilst the gap between the buildings was an improvement, it was still not well resolved. The group of four parking spaces was considered to be an imposition preventing the creation of a welcoming and clear entrance to the building – and should be removed, and that the pedestrian route across the car park was somewhat mean and akin to an afterthought. It was suggested that the rear single storey extension to the commercial Unit 3 should be removed either wholly or in part. This would provide clear green views into the heart of the site as well as continue better the green strip of rear gardens from the adjacent houses.

At the corner and on Abbotsbury Road frontage it was felt that the substation and bin store were poorly sited in an inappropriately prominent location and that the quantity and quality of the communal amenity space for the flats above the commercial units was poor. This could be considerably improved if the extension to commercial Unit 3 was removed.

On the Blanchard Road frontage, it was felt that the subdivision of the rear gardens could be resolved better and that this was made more difficult by the retention of the existing low wall and steps to the rear of the tavern building. The north-west facing balconies were noted and their usefulness questioned

In general it was felt that there was a lot of development on the site and although this was not necessarily seen as a problem in its own right, it was felt that the balance was not quite right between amount of building, parking and amenity/green space, with the latter currently losing out. The Panel was yet to be convinced of the applicant's commitment to meeting and if possible exceeding sustainability targets. In conclusion, the Panel felt that the proposal was much improved, but needed further work in a few key places. In order to give themselves the time to do this, the Panel suggested the applicant consider withdrawing and resubmitting the application.

VERDICT: **AMBER**

Item 2: 11/P0662/NEW, Pre-Application, St. George's House

Pre-Application. Notes Confidential