

Mitcham Cricket Green Community and Heritage

PRIOR NOTIFICATION FOR CONVERTING BROOK HOUSE INTO 21 FLATS

Application number 14/P0273
February 2014

1. Mitcham Cricket Green Community and Heritage takes an active interest in the future of the Cricket Green Conservation Area and its Environs. We are the civic society for this part of Merton and part of the wider civic movement through membership of the national charity Civic Voice. We have been closely involved in the development of the Borough Character Studies, the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and numerous development proposals in the area.
2. We have worked with the London Borough of Merton and our local councillors to produce the Cricket Green Charter (below) which establishes our approach to development and change in the area and has been acknowledged in finalising the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Cricket Green.
3. This application demonstrates the flaws in the new freedoms granted to convert offices into flats. The planning considerations raised go much wider than the traffic, flooding and contamination issues which the Council is limited to addressing when making its decision. We welcome the efforts to restore effective planning controls being made elsewhere in the Borough through Article 4 Directions and ask that these also be extended to include Conservation Areas.
4. Brook House is prominently located at the heart of Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation Area and fronts the oldest cricket ground in the world. It is located near the end of Cricket Green road which has been identified as a site for specific local enhancement measures in the Cricket Green Charter. The sensitive nature of this road has an important bearing on the proposals as it is already under significant short and long term parking pressure. We ask that the application is not permitted unless a satisfactory parking plan is provided. Such a plan was recently required in relation to recent prior notification applications for change of use in Willow Lane Industrial Estate and the issues are far more sensitive at Cricket Green. We urge that the principle access is via Chatsworth Close and not along Cricket Green road. We also urge that no additional external lighting is permitted as a result of this development.
5. We acknowledge that the principle of conversion to flats is not a matter under consideration because of the limited controls which Merton Council now has over this kind of development. We also acknowledge that there are no issues of flooding or contamination with the site.

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Cricket Green Charter

This charter should be used to inform policies and decisions about the future of Cricket Green

The rich story of Cricket Green told through its buildings, open spaces and people sets the standard and makes development in the area a privilege. All development should be required to show it matches up to the quality of the area and contributes positively to its future.

Character and context

1. All new development should be considered in the context of the whole area and its contribution to the Cricket Green Charter
2. All new development should add to and not detract from the local character, and be respectful of setting, context, massing and height
3. Cricket Green's history and story should be revealed more effectively and the area given greater coherence
4. The diversity of building characters and styles across different periods is a vital asset, and any new development should add positively to this story

Open space

5. There should be no loss of open space, and the established common land and town greens should have absolute protection
6. The variety of open space should be positively managed for quiet enjoyment, recreation, sport and nature
7. Cricket should continue to be played on the green in perpetuity
8. Retaining and enhancing the character of Cricket Green road running alongside the east of the cricket ground should be a starting point for any future development in Birches Close or at Brook House

Walking

9. Pedestrian movement around the area should be made easier, including by action to improve road crossings, manage traffic and remove lorries from Church Road
10. Pedestrian routes should be enhanced throughout the area, including between Church Road and London Road Playing Fields and through the Wilson Hospital site

Quality

11. Any new development facing the cricket ground and other open space at the heart of Cricket Green should be of a standard that could warrant listing within 30 years
12. High-quality modern development has its place in the future of the area if it makes a distinctive contribution that positively enhances the local area
13. New development should strengthen Cricket Green's reputation and support its aspirations – including the type of new housing and attracting high quality facilities

Lighting

14. The sensitive lighting and attractive nightscape should be respected

Affordability

15. Cricket Green should remain an affordable location to live

Activities

16. There should be more reasons for people to linger and things to see and do, including in the evening
17. There should be a community arts centre providing a focus for the area and opportunities to meet

Canons House and Park Place

18. Canons House, Park Place and their grounds should be restored, given greater unity and become a thriving centre of cultural and leisure activity which appeals beyond the local area

The island site

19. The island site – including the fire station and Cricketers – should be a focus of local community activity, and be developed and managed as a coherent whole

The development process

20. The potential of land swaps, planning gain and the community infrastructure levy to secure the best location and outcomes from development for the area should be fully exploited
21. There should be opportunities for greater community ownership and control over management of key sites and development decisions, including the potential of a Community Land Trust and local community trust



The Cricket Green Charter presents the conclusions of Tune In Cricket Green – a workshop for all those involved in the area organised by Mitcham Cricket Green Community and Heritage working in partnership with the future Merton team at London Borough of Merton and local ward councillors.

www.mitchamcricketgreen.org.uk

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