



RAVENSBURY ARMS – SHISHA CABINS
Application number 16/P4019
December 2016

1. Mitcham Cricket Green Community & 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 in influencing numerous development proposals in the area. We have worked with the London Borough of Merton and our local councillors to produce the Cricket Green Charter 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 (<http://mitchamcricketgreen.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/cricket-green-charter.pdf>)
2. The Ravensbury Arms occupies an important site defining the beginning of the longstanding route across Mitcham Common and surrounded on all sides by green space. It has already had a major expansion consented and this has been constructed. The Ravensbury Arms is an important community asset and we welcome that it has now been brought back into use.
3. The revised application to erect eight timber shisha cabins on protected green space alongside the existing building bears a strong resemblance to that deemed "*unacceptable*" and refused planning consent in August 2016. We do not believe the applicant has made any material changes which address the grounds for refusal.
4. The proposed site is Metropolitan Open Land and afforded the highest protection in national planning policy, the London Plan and Merton's own development plan. It is equivalent to Green Belt where "*inappropriate development*" should only be permitted in "*very special circumstances*". In the applicant's report on the issue accompanying the earlier application it was acknowledged that the plans comprise "*inappropriate development*". We agree and no new information has been provided. The flimsiest arguments were put forward in support of there being "*very special circumstances*", namely it will "*benefit the sustainability of the Ravensbury Arms*" and increase investment in the area. These are very "*ordinary circumstances*" common to any development of this kind in any location. No additional information has been provided on this central issue.
5. We also object to this application on the following grounds:

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- urbanising an area of green space immediately adjacent to Mitcham Common and in the Wandle Valley Regional Park, including new evidence of intrusive boundary fencing and car parking immediately adjacent to the Common
- negative impact on the character of the Ravensbury Arms which derives from its unusual location set in a wooded landscape on all sides
- significant tree works which will have a negative impact on the site adjacent to Mitcham Common - the applicant initially said there were no trees on the site
- the spread of odours, noise and light pollution impacting Mitcham Common, including the adjacent Mitcham golf course - each shelter is 50% open and has a television and LED lighting
- lack of evidence that the potential impact of the development on bats and other protected species has been considered in a Site of Important to Nature Conservation

6. We ask that the application is refused on these grounds – it is in clear breach of national, regional and local policy for the protection of Metropolitan Open Land and in conflict with development plan policies CS13, CS14 & CS5 and DM O1, DM 02, DM D2, DM EP2 & DM EP4.