



AMENDED PLANS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMER CANONS NURSERY
Application number 19/P4050
June 2020

1. Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage takes an active interest in the future of the Cricket Green Conservation Area and its environs. We made extensive representations on the proposals for developing the former Canons nursery for 7 houses and 11 flats in January 2020. These identified a series of problems with the proposals, including multiple conflicts with development plan policies and harm to both Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation Area and other designated heritage assets, including listed buildings. They also drew attention to a series of errors, contradictions and gaps in the supporting information.

2. We have reviewed the amended proposals. These present a single amendment to the depth of the proposed balconies to reduce their impact on the listed walls. This is a minor but welcome change. The remaining documents are limited to providing selective information in support of the scheme. In reality much of the new information simply re-confirms why so many aspects of the plans are problematic. The revisions are a distraction. They entirely fail to address the weight of critical representations made in response to the plans, including both the Design Review Panel's view that the designs are *"too harsh and clunky"* and *"too busy, intense and slightly military in feel"* and our own conclusion that *"the development proposed falls woefully short of what is appropriate"*. Our January 2020 representations stand.

3. The additional information provides further evidence of problems with the scheme:

- the new context diagram confirms the negative impact on the Grade II listed Park Place of an elongated, repetitive elevation with the strong sense of a military barracks that is harmful to the setting of this designated heritage asset
- errors in the original arboricultural report are confirmed such that the award winning Pagoda tree is now required to lose one third of its tree canopy cover for the development to be accommodated – with at least a 5m loss in diameter
- the intended "Construction Exclusion Zone" protecting the Root Protection Area of the Pagoda tree has already been breached in the clearance work undertaken on site undermining trust in the project's delivery capabilities and, given the high sensitivity of the site, demanding the most rigorous Construction Method Statement and provision for its monitoring and enforcement
- new information demonstrates the overdevelopment of the site with the townhouses able to provide only half of the outdoor amenity space necessary to be policy compliant (Policy DM D2)

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- the revised Heritage Assessment remains an entirely inadequate piece of work made all the more so by others having to point out the previous omission of any reference to The Canons Conservation Management Plan supplementary planning document. The failure to provide any new information to inform an assessment of the impact on key views of the site from the first floor of The Canons house or The Canons east lawn is just one of numerous critical omissions – we believe the scheme will harm this Grade II* listed designated heritage asset – and it presents an overtly one-sided assessment of the proposals
- impractical arrangements for rubbish collection are shown with some residents having to transport their rubbish 30m on a weekly basis to a collection point
- criticism of the poor quality of design of the rear elevation of the townhouses is met defensively with the blind assertion that the elevation has been "*designed with care*" and without making any change to the scheme. We note the feedback does not even attempt to defend the three storey blank wall in the east elevation of the flats "*to avoid overlooking into the townhouses*". This is an unforgivable design flaw that should result in a refreshed design approach rather than a failed compromise



4. We have also reviewed the revised archaeological report published only hours before the end of the public consultation period on the amended application. This further demonstrates a lack of attention to the historic significance of the proposed development site which is now identified as having "*high potential impact on the archaeological record where ground disturbance is planned*" such that it is "*likely that the local planning authority will require an archaeological evaluation in advance of development.*" This is a marked shift from the previous report that it is "*unlikely that the proposed development would have a significantly adverse archaeological impact on the historic environment*". A similar robust review of the Heritage Assessment is also required given the repeated evidence that the applicant has not properly considered the historic sensitivity of the site.

5. We note that no attempt has been made to address the demonstrable conflicts with the National Lottery funded project for enhancing The Canons landscape and increasing public access and awareness of its significance. The application shows limited awareness of the planning consent relating to this project which is now being implemented. Senior Merton Council officers who also work for Merantun Development Limited have assured us that the scheme will not proceed if it conflicts with the objectives of the Lottery funded project.

6. We maintain our objections to this planning application. It lacks essential information, conflict with national planning policy on heritage impact and design grounds where refusal is directed, harms Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation Area, is in direct conflict with Policy CS8 requiring affordable housing provision to be provided off site only in "*exceptional circumstances*" and conflicts with other development plan policies CS2, CS14, DM D1, DM D2, DM D4 and DM T3. We ask that planning permission is refused.