



MITCHAM SOCIETY

Web: www.mitchamsociety.org.uk
Email: TheMitchamSociety@gmail.com
Twitter: @MitchamSociety



21/P4129 370 – 374 London Road Mitcham

Mitcham Society comments

February 2022

CHANGE OF USE FROM HAND CAR WASH TO RESIDENTIAL INVOLVING THE ERECTION OF A NEW RESIDENTIAL BLOCK COMPRISING 8 x 1 BED FLATS AND 1 x 2 BED FLAT WITH ASSOCIATED PARKING AND LANDSCAPING

Mitcham Society has considered this planning application and has the following comments.

- 1) In the new Merton Local Plan, which has been submitted to the Secretary of State, this site is identified as site Mi7. The site allocation is “mixed use non-residential (shops, services, offices, community on the ground floor and residential on upper floors” (sic)

We concur with this designation.

The site is immediately alongside two groups of three shops – i.e. a parade of six shops. Further along London Road, past the currently being developed Kwik Fit site are two more commercial units, one occupying a double-front.

Between the development site and that three-unit parade lies the former Kwik Fit site. There are two planning applications for this site ([19/P4072](#) – undecided and [15/P3114](#) – granted). Work has begun on this site. While it is unclear which scheme is being built out, both applications include commercial uses on the ground floor.

By providing retail or other non-residential usage this development would complete a long shopping parade. In addition, there is a popular shopping and commercial parade immediately opposite this site.

If this application is allowed in its current form, it will present a disjointed, entirely inappropriate bracket of non-active frontage which will jar with the existing active frontages on both sides of London Road.

- 2) In the new Merton Local Plan, the indicative site capacity is “5-8 new homes”. If the site designation were adhered to, this would be entirely achievable within the height and scale of the development as currently proposed. Merton Council should refuse this application

and ask the developer to return with new plans which include non-residential uses on the ground floor.

- 3) In the new Merton Local Plan the design and accessibility guidance is:

“To provide new homes sensitive to the heritage assets and historic setting and character

“Development proposal will need to enhance the frontage on London Road, while enhancing the character of this part of the conservation area and the setting of the listed buildings.”

We have dealt with the need to “enhance the frontage on London Road” in part in our comments on non-residential use.

In addition:

The cycle parking will bring clutter onto a much used footway every day. Visitor cycle storage should be off the main thoroughfare of London Road. It could be incorporated within the resident cycle storage.

The bin stores, while putting bins behind doors, will create unsightly on-street clutter on collection days. Bins left out for collection may gather their own additional refuse around them from passers by. There is no guarantee that residents will replace their bins behind the doors provided for them. There is every possibility they will become permanent features of the streetscape. In this scenario they are even more likely to collect further refuse from passers by or, indeed, from residents. Bin collection will mean lorries stopping on London Road on the weekly collection days, impeding both pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Refuse collection is rarely mess-free, and dropped refuse from the bins or collection lorries will result in permanent and ugly mess. This is a significant concern.

- 4) Merton Council’s Highways Officer states in their submission “Please note that no doors or openings are to open into the public highway”.

The application contravenes this. Both the entrances to the homes and the doors to the bin store open onto the public highway. The bin store doors open outwards directly onto the footway.

- 5) There is a bus stop on London Road. Our observation suggests this will block the private entrance to one of the homes. No provision is made in the application to deal with this, and TFL is clearly unaware, as it does not make mention in its comments. TFL does say, “It is understood that the bus stop outside the site on London Road will remain unaffected during the construction.” Clearly more consideration needs to be given to the bus stop. Putting it further out into the footway along London Road could impede pedestrian movement. Relocating or removing it would be a poor solution.
- 6) No consideration seems to have been given to the post box which is currently on the footway next to the bus stop.

- 7) Merton Council's tree officer comments that the developer proposes removing three trees which it does not own. It does not seem to have shown it has the owner's permission to remove these trees.

These trees are mature and while the developer proposes to plant three new trees there is no assurance that these will be similarly mature trees. Merton has declared a Climate Emergency. Trees are very important in terms of terms of climate change. They provide habitat for birds and insects, and they make an important visual contribution to the landscape.

There are three trees showing on the drawing on page 25 of the Design and Access Statement. These should be trees of the same maturity as those being removed, and suitable of providing bird nesting and other habitat values. Younger trees will not be acceptable.

This side of London Road stretching from Cricket Green to Morden Road has just one street tree – on the footway fronting this development. The tree shown in the Design and Access statement looks younger and less mature than the tree currently present. The intention of the developer with regard to this tree needs to be understood. They should not under any circumstance remove a thriving street tree.

- 8) The planting is inadequate. Small, narrow beds of planting are proposed around the visitor bike store. This is meagre, and much more, high quality planting is required alongside a long term maintenance commitment.
- 9) The building materials used in this important new development on the gateway to Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation Area should be subject to the highest level of scrutiny. High quality materials are required throughout. Recent experience of bricks leaching salts even before a development is finished should not be repeated.
- 10) We are disappointed that the applicant did not reach out to us, as it is encouraged to do in the National Planning Policy Framework. Had it been unaware of the guidance, the Case Officer within Merton Council could have taken on enlightening the applicant as part of their role.
- 11) Merton Council should refuse this application. Relevant polices include CS14, DM D1, DM D2, DM D4.