



MITCHAM SOCIETY

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

19/P4048 Car Park Raleigh Gardens Mitcham

Mitcham Society comments

REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING CAR PARK TO ALLOW FOR THE ERECTION OF A PART FIVE, PART SIZE [sic] STOREY DEVELOPMENT COMPRISING 36 SELF-CONTAINED UNITS (29X 1B AND 7X 2B); WITH ASSOCIATED CYCLE PARKING, REFUSE STORE, 3X DISABLED PARKING BAYS AND LANDSCAPING.

Mitcham Society has considered the proposals for the above development and has the following comments.

- 1) The proposal is an overdevelopment of the site. We commented on the height and massing after the first plans were made available to the public in August. The building remains six storeys high at its maximum, with an overbearing pitched roof which raises the height further.

The use of an unbuilt additional two storeys on Standor House, which is some way away, is used to justify the height. This is disingenuous. That two storey addition is not built, and is a long way from the proposed development. It is not relevant to the very negative effect this proposal will have both on the street scene and on Glebe Court.

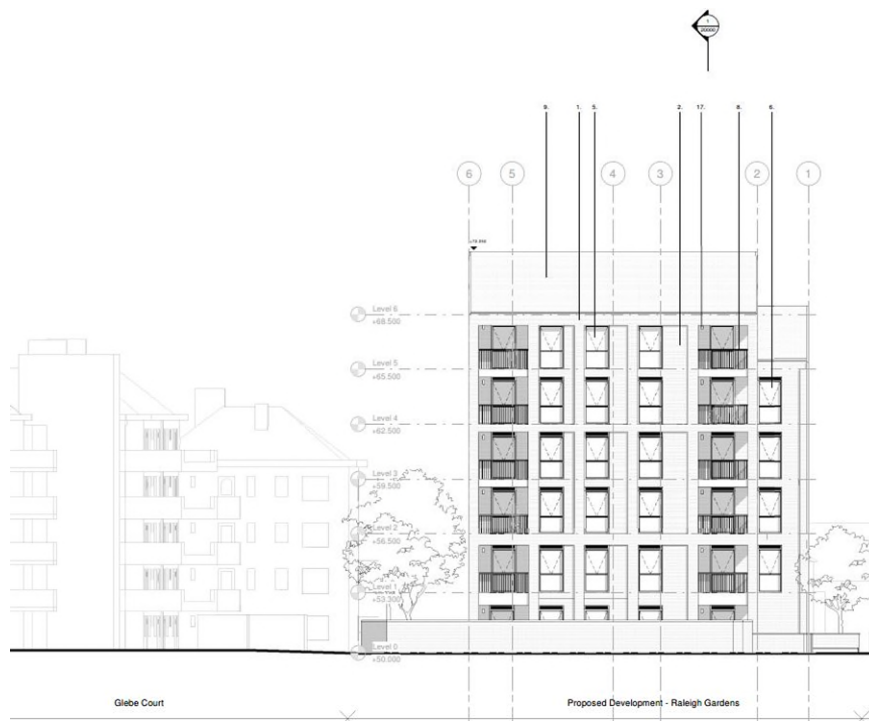
The image used on the first page of the Design and Access Statement presents a view of the proposed development taken from such an angle as to make Standor House with its (unbuilt) two storeys added appear significantly taller than the proposed development. This use of perspective is deceptive, and a disappointing ruse to make the proposed development seem less intrusive than in fact it is.



An image from later in the same document places Standor House in a more realistic position. Sadly this also too uses a deceptive perspective, hiding the taller, six storey proposed block behind the five storey one in the foreground. In reality the height and massing is greater than this image suggests.



When considered in relation to the block of Glebe Court closest to the proposal, the imbalance of height is abundantly clear in the architect's elevation drawing. Glebe Court is to the left in the image below.



The pitched roof, which adds considerably to the overall height, makes no contribution to dwelling space.

- 2) Merton Council's design review panel discussed this development in public at a meeting in October 2019. Mitcham Society heard several members of the Design Review Panel comment that the proposal was an overdevelopment of the site. They specifically said 'overdevelopment'. The comments can be found on the DRP recording at [Merton TV](#). We concur with this view. Four storeys is the maximum height that this site can bear, especially because the pitched roof adds further to the height while adding no dwelling space.
- 3) Merantun claims that in designing the building it was 'keen to respond to the historical industrial context of the area' (design and access statement 01 p26).
 - a. There is no 'industrial' building within the locality of this proposed development.
 - b. The historical context of the immediate area has a mix of design and history.
 - c. Probably the most significant reference point in terms of housing is Glebe Court, which is characterised by light coloured brick that help the blocks disappear into their well-landscaped surroundings. Even the tallest blocks within Glebe Court, which are well away from the proposed development, are set in open, landscaped grounds which help reduce the impact of their height. By contrast this development is squeezed onto a site which allows no amount of mitigation for its height and mass by landscaping.
 - d. The choice of brick colour is stated as a reference to the two storey cottages close by. This dark brick makes the proposed development appear looming, and does nothing to mitigate the sheer, overpowering size of it. It is, as we said in our formal response to the August 2019 consultation, 'an incredibly insensitive material for such a large building in this area.'
- 4) Daylight and sunlight for residents of 1-264 Glebe Court. Merantun presents its daylight and sunlight assessment in a report which shows a shockingly severe impact on 1-264 Glebe Court, and makes some questionable inferences and value-judgements about how Glebe Court residents use the spaces within their homes, and their rights to access to daylight/sunlight.

The report assessed 58 windows, and concluded that 17 will be affected by the development – close to a third of those assessed.

The report states that these rooms are bedrooms and kitchens. It defines the use of bedrooms, stating 'a bedroom is generally used for sleeping and storage, and therefore dependency on daylight is less critical.' How people configure and use the rooms in their home is a matter for them. Bedrooms can be used for study or private space during the daytime and evening, for example. The situation is similar for kitchens, which have uses for groups and individuals that may or may not be food related. The value judgements presented in this report are unreasonable and unacceptable. Where there is a loss of daylight/sunlight - which there will be to 17 windows - that loss can be injurious to wellbeing.

- 5) Lighting. The Landscaping Statement proposes three types of lighting – wall lighting, in-ground lighting and tree uplighting. Uplighting is proposed for all seventeen trees in the development.

The purpose is stated as to ‘uplight new trees as focal points’ – i.e. for aesthetic reasons. There has been no consideration of any potential consequences or their mitigation.

- a. 1-264 Glebe Court. Regardless of the spread of the tree uplighting, residents of Glebe Court will be able to see many of the lights through windows when they are at home. It is unclear whether any analysis of this effect has been undertaken. An analysis should be required as a **planning condition**, and if any negative effect is found, the lighting causing this effect should not be permitted. This work should also be carried out for residents of the proposed development, some of whose windows will look directly onto uplit trees.
- b. An investigation of the effect of the proposed tree uplighting on wildlife, including, but not limited to, bird species (both nesting prospects and everyday habit), bat species, bugs and moths should be required as a **planning condition**, and if any negative effect is found, the lighting causing this effect should not be permitted.



- 6) Pitched roof and PV. We have already noted that the pitched roof adds unnecessary height to this design, adding to the overbearing massing. There is no PV provision on the roof, despite Merton Council having declared a Climate Emergency, and despite the growing normalisation of its inclusion on new builds. We feel that PV is a ‘must have’ for all new build across Merton.
- 7) This application contravenes a number of Merton Council policies. Specific clauses are highlighted below where appropriate:
 - a. CS 2 Mitcham Sub-Area policy – this application fails particularly on:

- I. CS 2 i “Ensuring that development conserves and enhances the historic environment
 - II. CS 2 j “Enhancing the public realm through high quality urban design and architecture”
- b. CS 14 Design, which states “All development needs to be designed in order to respect, reinforce and enhance the local character of the area in which it is located and to contribute to Merton’s sense of place and identity”. This application fails particularly on:
- I. CS 14 b iii “improves Merton’s overall design standard”
 - II. CS 14 b iv “responds to heritage assets and the wider historic environment to enhance local character and distinctiveness”
- c. DM D1 which is clear that “Development proposals must impact positively on the character and quality of the public realm”
- d. DM D2 which focuses on high quality design. This application fails particularly on:
- I. DM D2 a) i “Relate positively and appropriately to the siting, rhythm, scale, density, proportions, height, materials and massing of surrounding buildings and existing street patterns, historic context, urban layout and landscape features of the surrounding area”
 - II. DM D2 a) ii “Use appropriate architectural forms, language, detailing and materials which complement and enhance the character of the wider setting”
 - III. DM D2 a) vi “Protect new and existing development from visual intrusion..... so that the living conditions of existing and future occupiers are not unduly diminished”
- 8) This application fails to comply with a number of Merton Council’s policies. It is large, overbearing, designed in a bland fashion, has a pitched roof which adds to the height and massing while making no contribution to dwelling space, and is faced in dark brick which does nothing to detract from its overbearing experience.

Merton Council’s own Design Review Panel commented that it is an overdevelopment of the site.

Merantun’s greedy approach to this site adds nothing to the character of Mitcham Village – quite the opposite. If it were built, it would be a significant step in turning Mitcham, an area under considerable development pressure, into a place characterised by crammed, cramped, overdevelopment. As Merton Council’s development company Merantun should set the standard, not contribute to the destruction of an area’s character.

This development should not be granted planning permission.