



MITCHAM SOCIETY

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

19/P2747 33-39 Upper Green East Mitcham

Mitcham Society Comments September 2019

DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS AND ERECTION OF A NEW FOUR STOREY MIXED USE BUILDING COMPRISING COMMERCIAL UNITS AT THE GROUND FLOOR LEVEL (USE CLASSES A1, A2, A3, A5, B1 OR D1) AND 20 x SELF-CONTAINED FLATS ABOVE (USE CLASS C3); WITH ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING AND BIN AND CYCLE STORE

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

- 1) Upper Green East is an important part of the retail centre of Mitcham. Both sides of the road provide shopping parades which help Mitcham act as an important retail hub for this part of the borough. Mitcham Society wishes to see no net loss of retail space in any development in Mitcham. We note that this proposal includes ground floor retail space. We are mindful that plans can incorporate retail at the planning application stage, only to have the retail provision removed later in a 'non material amendment' which replaces that space with residential. If this development, or subsequent revision for this site, is granted planning permission, we would expect Merton Council to apply planning conditions requiring:
 - a. No loss of any amount of retail space in any amendments subsequent to planning permission being granted without a full planning application being submitted
 - b. Confirmation of 100% retail occupation before any residential lettings or sales take place
- 2) The development site borders onto Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation Area, and the parade in which it sits includes historic, established Mitcham businesses such as McGraths and locally listed Donald S Drewett (operational since 1760), as well as the Grade II listed 55 Upper Green East and Grade II listed Prospect House. Three Kings Pond (with its locally listed cart dip) and the open space of Three Kings Piece beyond (both inside the Conservation Area) are visible from Upper Green East in front of the site, and the site is visible from Three Kings Pond.

Merton Council must ensure development on the edges (environs) of the Conservation Area does nothing to detract from it. The proposed development will be visible from Three Kings



Pond, and its design and overbearing size will detract from the Conservation Area. It is an inappropriately large building for the site, and detrimental to the Conservation Area.

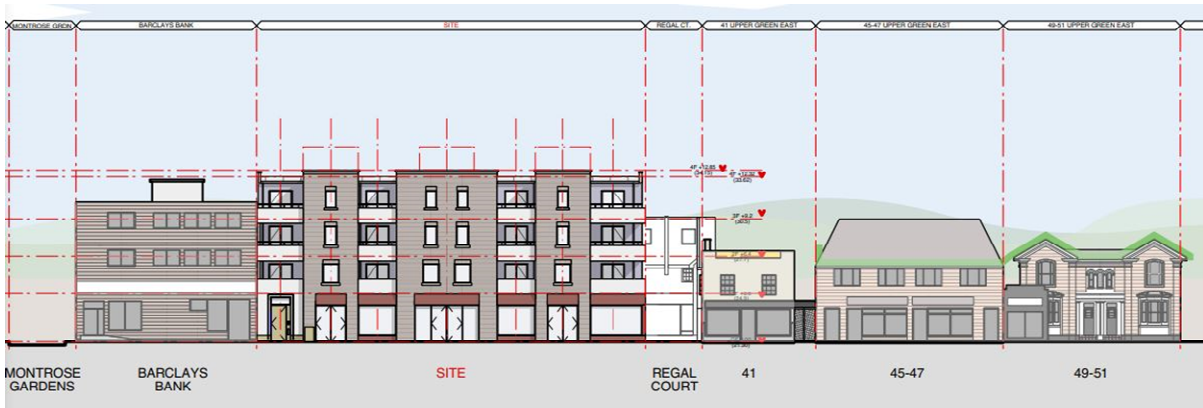
The image below shows the Cricket Green Conservation Area in yellow, Listed and Locally Listed buildings in red and mauve, and the development site with a red boundary.



- 3) At four storeys high the building is too tall for the mid-parade location, and presents frontage far too wide in the context of other buildings to its left and right. In our [response to Merton Council's Local Plan 2020](#), we say clearly, as one of our key principles for any development in Mitcham, that “No new development above four storeys in height is appropriate.” We did not set four storeys as a target, but as a ceiling for the few locations that can accommodate that height. This location can not accommodate the proposed height – or the proposed wide, unbroken frontage.
 - a. It is disingenuous of the architect to submit drawings which show the height line of Barclays Bank – the tallest existing building in this parade - set at a point at the very back of the building which is not visible from the street. The visible height of Barclays Bank is the height of its brickwork frontage, which, on the architects drawing is at balcony height of the upper floor of the proposed development. We have marked the section which is not visible from the street red in the image below.



- b. The proposed building is taller than any other on Upper Green East, and is completely overbearing in its massing. It creates a tall, wide frontage onto the street which is at odds with the much more domestic appearance of buildings leading towards the Conservation Area. It would damage the character of Mitcham town centre for ever.
- c. We are fully aware that new development uses the tallest nearby buildings as its benchmark – sometimes even overstating the case as has happened here – see our comment “a)” above. Allowing this planning application will be likely to open the door to further development proposals being even taller, further degrading Mitcham’s town centre. Merton Council should be mindful of this fact when considering this application.



- 4) In the draft [Local Plan](#) policy N3.2 (Mitcham Town Centre) has as its overriding principle “To improve the overall environment of Mitcham town centre by providing quality shopfronts, new homes, good transport links”, and sub-point b) “Creating healthier streets, continuing to enhance the public realm through high quality streetscape and urban design improvements to shop fronts

and public spaces.” The proposed development achieves none of these things, is detrimental to the public realm and streetscape, and is poor urban design inappropriate for the location.

In our response to Merton Council’s Local Plan 2020 (link to response above) we say “Development needs to be sensitively managed, and within a context that will ensure Mitcham Village does not become a bland ‘anytown’.

Any development in Mitcham needs to live up to both Merton Council’s aspirations and our own. There are many fine buildings in the surround area from which inspiration for a new design could be taken, but sadly the proposed design is bland, repetitive, quotidian and uninspired. It could be taken from a pattern book and dumped anywhere. Mitcham is not anywhere. It has its own distinctive character which this development, if granted permission, will significantly diminish.

- 5) Mitcham Society is not in principle against redevelopment of this plot on Upper Green East. We applaud the inclusion of retail in the proposals. However we find the proposal
- a. overly tall and wish to see its height reduced to three storeys
 - b. presenting too wide an expanse of dull, uninspiring frontage to the streetscape
 - c. in contravention of the requirement not to detract from the adjacent Conservation Area
 - d. in contravention of Merton’s own Local Plan policy N3.2 for Mitcham and of our own aspirations for Mitcham

This development should not be granted planning permission.