



OLD VICARAGE BIKE SHELTER – retrospective planning & listed building consent

**Application numbers 14/P3702 & 15/P0156
February 2015**

1. Mitcham Cricket Green Community and 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 new Character Study, the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and numerous development proposals in the area. The Cricket Green Charter (<http://mitchamcricketgreen.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/cricket-green-charter.pdf>) establishes our approach to development and change in the area and was developed in partnership with the London Borough of Merton, the local community and our local councillors.
2. Church Road and the Old Vicarage make an important contribution to the character of Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation Area. The Grade II listed Old Vicarage is singled out as a "local landmark" in the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan which also identifies that it is surrounded by "significant open space". This also states that the "*Church and former vicarage reinforce the gateway into the conservation area and are both listed*" and emphasises that the Old Vicarage and its surrounding open space "*is enclosed by a high brick wall and is a quiet haven away from the bustle of Church Road.*"
3. Any development in this area needs to preserve or enhance the Conservation Area and respect the listed building. It also needs to be consistent with development plan policies CS14 (Design) and DM D1, D2 and D4.
4. Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage supports more cycling in the area. We recognise the importance of safe storage to support cycle use. Nevertheless, we have serious concerns about the impact of this development. It is unfortunately a retrospective application although this means we can see its impact and this is evident from the photograph below. The shelter disrupts views of the Old Vicarage from Church Road and severely impacts the setting of this listed building. It also erodes important open space and harms the sense of enclosure provided by the high wall around the Old Vicarage. It also detracts from the gateway to the Conservation Area which is framed by the Old Vicarage and Mitcham Parish Church.

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5. We conclude that this proposal will lead to substantial harm to the significance of important heritage assets, notably the setting of the listed Vicarage, the gateway to Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation Area and the character of Church Road. Alternative acceptable locations are available within the curtilage of the Old Vicarage and the benefits of the development do not outweigh the harm it causes. It is in conflict with adopted development plan policies and will cause material harm so we urge refusal of both planning and listed building consent.