



DEVELOPMENT OF LAND BEHIND PRESRAW CRESCENT FOR 15 FLATS

**Application number 16/P1456
May 2016**

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 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 <http://bit.ly/23StT3t>.

2. We have welcomed the opportunity to meet with the architects and Wandle Housing in advance of this application being submitted (ref Design and Access Statement 03.6). We have considered the development against existing plan policies, its contribution to the Conservation Area and the principles of the Cricket Green Charter.

3. We recognise the need for more affordable housing in the area and the benefits of providing 15 social rented or intermediate homes. Nevertheless, the development site is in an important area of green space in Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation Area and while we are not opposed in principle to some development in this location we have significant concerns over the current proposals because:

- their scale and bulk will intensify development in an already congested area and damage the outlook from neighbouring residences at significant loss to local amenity
- the bland design fails to respond to the Conservation Area location and lacks distinction – for example the timber detailing on the front has no precedent in the local area
- the development would result in the loss of important open space which currently adds to the urban scene and to the character of the Conservation Area. It is perverse for the applicant to suggest that the loss of this large garden is unproblematic because it brings it into line with the existing smaller gardens nearby. The existence of this unusually large open site is one of the key contributors to local character and the scale of the loss is significant
- pre-emptive and unauthorised clearance of mature trees and other vegetation from the site cannot be addressed by providing trees of equivalent value as part of the scheme without significant redesign to allow for much more open land – it would be wholly unacceptable for unauthorised removal of protected trees in the

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Conservation Area to be allowed without replacement by trees of equivalent value and maturity

- there are severe restrictions on access to the site which will cause intractable problems during both construction and long term access for residents and servicing:
 - construction access - the Construction Management Plan provided with the application demonstrates the practical difficulties of construction traffic accessing the site via Russell Road without extensive parking restrictions or the use of small transit vans. Either option will have a severe and detrimental impact on the amenity of this residential area with multiple construction vehicles arriving (from 7.30am) and leaving causing major disruption to both Russell Road and Glebe Path. Indeed, the information provided confirms the number of vehicle movements is not yet known.
 - residential access and servicing - the planning application documentation simply asserts that the long term access requirements for residents, servicing and emergency vehicles are the same as those for Beadle Court and so “*fit for purpose*” – a view strongly challenged by local residents. This will require a tortuous access for residents, refuse collection, emergency vehicles and other services via Glebe Path, Russell Road, Love Lane and Harwood Avenue. These streets are always one track, as the residents have a need to park cars in the streets. Indeed, it is normal to walk in the street for much of their length as the pavements are blocked by cars. This on-going access ends in a cul-de-sac where, on exit, the process has to be reversed, cars coming up meeting cars coming down and often causing deadlock. The arrangements seem to owe more to the convenience of a single servicing point for Wandle Housing than to the amenity of local people
- there is a failure to integrate with the neighbouring Beadle Court or to improve the poor quality public realm which provides important pedestrian and cycling access from Church Road
- this is in effect a gated development and the proposals make no provision to provide public access through the site and improve linkages between Harwood Avenue and Russell Road. This could be one positive benefit from the development, and the applicant should be encouraged to rethink the plans so it can be provided. It would also avoid a single access point for residents and services requiring the use of Glebe Path, Russell Road, Love Lane and Harwood Avenue which are all heavily parked and one track

4. We are disappointed by the quality of some of the information provided with this application which means it should not be relied upon to inform any of the key assumptions on which a decision needs to be made. The application:

- includes basic errors – such as conflating the Wandle Valley Regional Park with SSSI designation (Design & Access Statement 02.5.1)
- lacks vital details such as the number and frequency of vehicles entering the site during construction
- has failed to provide detail of the financial value of the mature trees which have been removed without authorisation and so lacks any substantive commitment to addressing their removal.

5. We conclude that without further modifications this proposal will lead to substantial harm to the Conservation Area and that it is in conflict with adopted development plan policies CS14, DM D1, DM D2, DM D4, DM O2 and DM T2.