



**THE CANONS – discharge of landscape condition 19**  
**Planning application 21/P2210**  
**July 2021**

1. Mitcham Cricket Green Community & 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 engaged with development and delivery of the Lottery funded project for The Canons since 2011. Its origins lie in our first Cricket Green Charter and we are members of The Canons Steering Group. These comments have been developed with input from Friends of the Canons and the Mitcham Society.

2. This is the sixth application relating to the conditions or amendments associated with the original planning application (17/P1449). Given that we alerted Merton Council to our disappointment at not being informed of the previous non-material amendments application (20/P2280, 20/P0704) or applications for the approval of details reserved by condition (20/P1159, 20/P1460 and 20/P1569) and that we have requested details on the discharge of this condition through use of Freedom of Information requests ([here](#) and [here](#)), email requests and The Canons project Steering Group it is more than frustrating and deeply disappointing not to have been engaged in the current application.

3. We identify two main issues with this application to discharge the landscape condition at The Canons:

- First, the works for which consent is being requested have been completed and the landscape contractors employed have already handed them over to Merton Council – this is a retrospective application and it should be recognised as such and be considered in the context of appropriate enforcement. The application form is wrong in stating that the works have not started and a corrected application form should be submitted
- Second, the completed works depart from those for which consent is being requested in important respects and there is already evidence of a failure to deliver on the management and maintenance requirements and of limitations in the approach proposed in key locations

4. We do not support the proposals as presented:

- the new opening to The Canons grounds at the obelisk is inadequate for:
  - failing to provide a long term secure boundary as originally proposed through the extension of the railings running along Cricket Green road combined with a new beech hedge
  - failing to provide a short term secure boundary to prevent incursion by travellers or avoid the risk of children running out into traffic
  - failing to mitigate the additional noise, pollution and visual intrusion from traffic and street clutter which now disturbs the West Lawn

**General enquiries: [info@mitchamcricketgreen.org.uk](mailto:info@mitchamcricketgreen.org.uk)**  
**Web site: [www.mitchamcricketgreen.org.uk](http://www.mitchamcricketgreen.org.uk)**  
**Twitter: [@MitchamCrktGrn](https://twitter.com/MitchamCrktGrn)**

**Registered Office c/o Merton Connected, Vestry Hall, 336/338 London Road, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 3UD**

**Company registration no. 04659164 Charity registration no. 1106859**

- the size and depth of the tree pits provided in the car park is inadequate for the scale of planting required and will inhibit future growth – a higher specification should be required
- the planting and proposed maintenance regime for the new scrape in the West Lawn will result in this being an intrusive new feature that sterilises public use of a large part of this important area and does not match public commitments made during the project’s inception of minimal impact
- the landscape works have created significant disturbance to the manicured East Lawn and the green space in front of Park Place leaving them uneven and damaged – any consent should include a requirement for restitution of these areas to their original quality
- the density and diversity of planting in the Walled Garden, East Lawn and car park provided in the accompanying drawings has not been delivered on the ground – far fewer plants have been provided and there is significant loss from a lack of maintenance and watering. If consent is given then significant additional planting will be required.



5. There is no information on how the planting is to be managed and maintained and it is outside the scope of the current contract with idverde for the maintenance of green spaces in the borough. This is evident in the way The Canons landscape is already being managed by idverde. As Friends of the Canons has reported, the wildflower areas along Commonsides West and next to the walkway south of the track have been wilfully mown instead of being left to flower and then set seed. The rural character of the rough path running through Bellamy’s Copse has been damaged by cutting a double swathe through the vegetation and herbicide known to cause yellow disfiguring has been used on newly sown areas. Long grass under mature trees left during “no mow May” has subsequently and unnecessarily been cut rather than being left to grow and set seed.



6. A summary of a multitude of other outstanding issues with delivery of the planning consent for The Canons project, including many related to this condition is provided with this submission. This demonstrates a failure to deliver on the landscape condition even before it is considered for retrospective discharge.

7. It is important that the planting approach is established for the long term and this requires clearer maintenance guarantees. The Canons needs a Management and Maintenance Plan and this is integral to the successful discharge of the landscape condition. It is already a requirement of the Lottery project but we have been unable to

obtain a copy despite numerous requests. A Management and Maintenance Plan capable of securing the legacy of the landscape plans for which a discharged condition is being retrospectively requested needs to be provided before the application can be determined. Effective arrangements for delivery of the Management and Maintenance Plan need to be in place and enforced as part of any approval.

8. Securing the outcomes of this planning application for the long term will also be assisted by confirmation of the arrangements, already required by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, for re-investing funds generated onsite (including from lease of The Canons house and the community café) into the long term care of The Canons' beyond the period of Lottery funding. This should be required before considering retrospective discharge of the landscape condition.