



**PROPOSAL FOR TWO ADDITIONAL STOREYS ON DRIVE HOUSE (337 LONDON ROAD
Application number 22/P0490
October 2022**

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 closely involved in the development of the Merton Local Plan, Borough Character Studies, the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and numerous development proposals in the area. Our approach to development and change in the area is established in the Cricket Green Charter which was refreshed in 2019 with the support of London Borough of Merton and local councillors (<https://mitchamcricketgreen.org.uk/cricket-green-charter/>). The Charter has been acknowledged in the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Cricket Green. We have also contributed to production of the Merton Heritage Strategy as a member of the Merton Heritage Forum. We are members of The Canons Steering Group delivering a £5m Lottery funded project and also undertake practical projects, organise walks and run Mitcham Heritage Day and Community on the Green. We ask that these representations are made available online through Planning Explorer.

2. We have considered the plans in relation to development plan policies and their impact on the area. Where well designed and located we are supportive of efforts to make more effective use of brownfield sites and existing buildings to provide homes. Our representations on Merton's new Local Plan supported the allocation of 11 sites for the development of hundreds of new homes. We also supported recognition for and protection of the local parade which forms the ground floor use on this site.

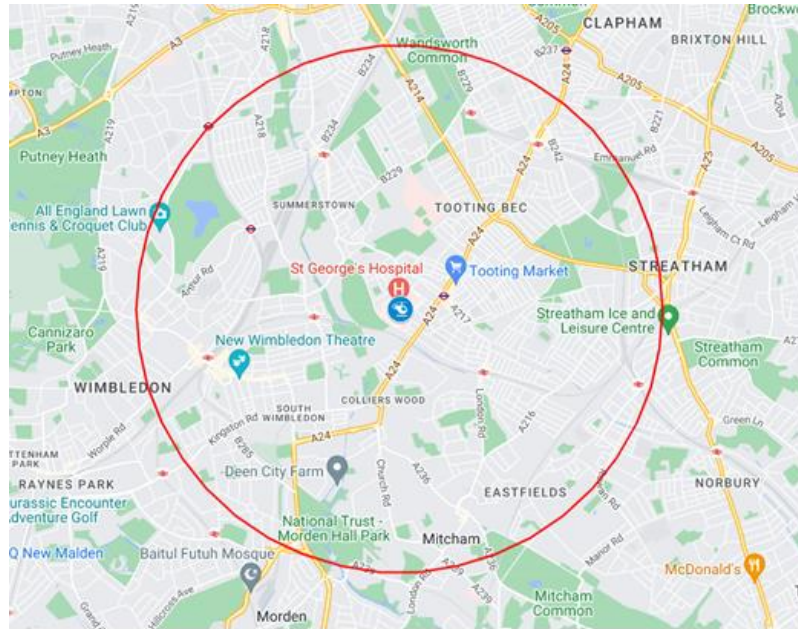
3. We do not support the current proposals. Our concerns relate to planning matters which can be addressed when considering prior approval – the external appearance; impact on local amenity and the quality of accommodation. Additionally we do not believe the proposals qualify for permitted development rights and so should be the subject of a full planning application. We are also concerned that the economic resilience of the parade is such that disruption caused by building works may result in further vacancies.

4. The applicant claims permitted development rights under Part 20, Class AA of the General Permitted Development Order. Development is not permitted by Class AA if *“the land or site on which the building is located, is or forms part of.....land within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome”*. The site does not therefore benefit from permitted development rights for upward extensions as it lies within 3km of an

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aerodrome or airfield (see map below). The St George's Hospital helipad falls within the definition of aerodrome (see [planning appeal decision letter](#)).



5. Notwithstanding the lack of permitted development rights for the site we object to the proposals on the following grounds:

- Drive House is designed as a three storey building and it sits well in London Road. We recognise there is a range of building types and architectural styles in the immediate vicinity and the impact of the recent consent on the former KwikFit site along with plans for the car wash site immediately opposite. This changing context confirms the need to retain existing building heights that protect the character of the townscape and avoid a canyon of new building along London Road. Drive House comprises a significant proportion of the buildings running along the south of London Road and so defines the character of this part of the area
- The design of the proposed vertical extension is harmful to the external appearance of Drive House. It lacks appropriate architectural detailing and relates uneasily to the existing building which was not designed to be of this scale
- The quality of the proposed dwellings is below acceptable standards as evidenced by the increase in the number of dwellings when compared to those provided on the existing first and second floors.

6. The owners have allowed the existing building to develop a serious maintenance backlog and we ask for action to address this whether or not the development proceeds. This includes action to address the decaying awning which has lost render, causes leaks in the ground floor retail uses and is now surmounted by numerous buddleia plants, causing visual blight. Merton Council has section 215 powers to require action to address this.

7. We object to the plans and consider them to be in conflict with conflict with NPPF paragraph 48 (refusing poorly designed development) and Policies DM D1, DM D2, CS2 and CS14.