



MITCHAM SOCIETY

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

20/P0823 Fair Green Parade

Mitcham Society Comments April 2020

ERECTION OF A PART SINGLE, PART TWO STOREY ROOF EXTENSION TO ALLOW PROVISION FOR NINE SELF-CONTAINED FLATS

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

- 1) This planning application follows a trend we are seeing in Mitcham for applications to add extra storeys to existing buildings. It is an unwelcome trend. Any individual addition of height detracts from the village-like characters of Mitcham, and cumulatively such additions permanently change the character of Mitcham, making it a 'bland anytown' rather than celebrating its special and unique character. The site lies in the London Road Character Area of the draft Character Appraisal for the Mitcham sub area and this identifies it as an "area with scope to reinforce the existing character." The proposal does the reverse.
- 2) Mitcham Village lacks formal recognition or specific designation. Policy N3.2 in the emerging Merton Local Plan is weak in its assertion of the special character of Mitcham Village. Our own assertion of this special character, and our expectations of Merton Council in relation to development, can be found in our [full submission](#) to the Local Plan consultation. To quote from that submission:

"It is detrimental to the character of Mitcham Village to add floors onto existing buildings. We have seen planning applications for this in recent times, including along London Road, and it is likely to be a growing trend. This trend should be halted in the Local Plan because raising height in this way is absolutely contrary to the continued existence of Mitcham Town Centre as a 21st Century Village."

We also assert that all new development should "*Recognise, value and protect the village character of Mitcham*", and that Merton Council should "*Actively discourage development, built or otherwise, which:*

- *Disrupts or damages the existing elements which characterise Mitcham Village*
- *Detracts from the continuation of a village feel in Mitcham*
- *Over urbanises*
- *Removes Green Spaces*



- *Prioritises the 'generic' over the local, special and unique*
- 3) The proposal to add two floors to Fair Green Parade falls foul of four of the five principles stated above, the only one it does not fail on is the removal of green spaces.
 - 4) Fair Green Parade is a 1950s building with a distinctive curve facing onto Fair Green. The two existing residential floors present a pleasing symmetry in design. The building is the most distinctive of those facing directly onto Fair Green, and is a highly regarded local landmark.
 - 5) The proposal to add two further storeys in height destroys the symmetry and the design appeal of the existing building. Mimicking window design and using green cladding is not enough to fool the eye into thinking the building is all of a piece. The new addition jars, and looks exactly like a later addition rather than belonging to the structure as a whole.



- 6) The Design and Access statement references a 'pre-app meeting', and the receipt of pre application advice. This advice has not been published at the Planning Portal, and is not available to the public. It should be published as a matter of course, and we would expect the public to have access to it.
- 7) There is no evidence presented with this application of any form of public discussion or consultation relating to these proposals, and we have received no communication from the applicant. The National Planning Policy Framework states that "*applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot*" (paragraph 128). In the absence of any evidence of any effort being made to reach out or consult, this application can not be looked on more favourably.

- 8) We believe this application is detrimental to the building it is designed to extend, and detrimental to the character of Mitcham Village. It has been progressed with no visible signs of public engagement in its design and development. We believe it contravenes policies:
- a. DM R1 relating to location and scale of development in Merton's town centres, states development must ensure it "respects or improves the character and local environment of the area"
 - b. DM D1 development must "impact positively on the character and quality of the public realm"
 - c. CS2 requiring development in Mitcham Town Centre to be of "high quality design and architecture"
 - d. CS14 requiring all development "to be designed in order to respect, reinforce and enhance the local character of the area"
 - e. NPPF guidance on community engagement

This application should be refused.