



ABBEY WALL WORKS
Statement to Merton Planning Applications Committee
16 July 2020

I am Nicola Thompson, I'm a Committee member of Wandle Valley Forum. We provide support and an independent voice for over 130 community groups and for everyone who shares a passion for the Wandle.

Abbey Wall Works is an important location within the Wandle Valley. It is in the former estate of Merton Priory. The boundary of the Wandle Valley Conservation Area was specifically drawn to include it. The River Wandle and the Wandle Trail lie at its eastern end.

You will be aware of the historic value of Merton Priory, and that the wall included in this planning application is one of the few vestiges of this significant monument.

We should protect and celebrate the remains of this ancient construction, not bury them within a poorly conceived scheme such as the one before you here.

This over-large development disrespects the listed Merton Priory Wall, creating an unsatisfactory, narrow passage running along the inside of most of its length.

Despite applying for Listed Building Consent no details or method statement for the works proposed have been provided. We see no option other than to refuse Listed Building Consent.

We recognise the site would benefit from investment. We note, however, that the changes made since you rejected it in March are marginal. There has been no effort to engage the Wandle Valley Forum or the local community with these plans.

It is shocking that only three out of 58 homes will be affordable and 29% of the flats will be single aspect.

Moreover, the proposed development is alien to the character of its surroundings. This cramped site, at the end of a cul de sac, is not the place for a “landmark building”. It is one where new building should be modest and sit easily within its context.

Instead, this building is too high, too large, poorly designed and utterly overbearing. It fails to respect the low rise nature of development along the course of the river and will have a negative impact on users of the Wandle Trail.

The scheme clearly still falls well short of what is required. The fact that the developers have appealed the larger scheme you turned down in March makes it even more important you stand firm this evening in order to win the appeal.

There are unresolved conflicts with development plan policies CS1, CS5, CS8, CS14, DM D1, DM D2, DM D4 and it causes harm to the Conservation Area and designated heritage assets.

We ask you to refuse planning permission.