



MERTON ABBEY MILLS OFFICE DEVELOPMENT
A response by Wandle Valley Forum to London Borough of Merton
Application number 17/P0390
March 2017

Wandle Valley Forum was established in 2005 and is the primary consultative forum on Wandle Valley issues for the Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust; the London Boroughs of Wandsworth, Merton, Sutton and Croydon; Greater London Authority and other statutory bodies

1. Wandle Valley Forum has reviewed the proposals for redevelopment of an important part of the Merton Abbey Mills complex. We have considered the proposals in the context of the Wandle Valley Forum Charter (<http://bit.ly/27Yal2m>), its location in sub area 3 of the Wandle Valley Conservation Area and existing development plan policies.
2. It is difficult to overstate the significance of Merton Abbey Mills to the Wandle Valley. Its diverse heritage, significant buildings and riverside location combine to make it one of the most important locations in the Wandle Valley Regional Park. We applaud the enterprising efforts over many years to sustain the area, conserve its heritage and give it a sustainable future. This is being boosted by the remarkable volunteer-led restoration of Merton Priory currently underway with Lottery support.
3. We recognise the current plans as the latest in a long line of proposals to support an economically viable future for Merton Abbey Mills. We support the need for this while also seeking to ensure any development respects the significance of this site and meets the legal requirement to preserve or enhance the conservation area. Given the long genesis of this development we are disappointed not to have been approached to contribute to the evolution of its design.
4. We share the view that the temporary structures to be replaced by the new building are of limited merit. We support the principle of a sensitively designed replacement and applaud efforts to create a more diverse range of office accommodation. Nevertheless, we are concerned by the mass and height of the development proposed and its impact on the surrounding heritage assets (including locally listed and listed buildings and a scheduled ancient monument) and the Conservation Area. The new building crowds rather than complements its historic surroundings and we question its consistency with development plan policies CS14 and DM D1, D2 & D4.
5. We urge that full consideration is given to the proposals by Merton Council's Design Review Panel ahead of any decision being made.

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Please respond to Chair, Wandle Valley Forum, c/o 43 Bramcote Avenue, Mitcham CR4 4LW

About Wandle Valley Forum

Wandle Valley Forum brings together people and organisations that care for the River Wandle and its diverse network of open spaces. We provide support and an independent voice for over 100 community groups & voluntary organisations and for everyone who shares a passion for the Wandle. Wandle Valley Forum monitors planning applications for developments which impact on the special qualities and character of the Wandle Valley. We make representations on developments which raise Valley-wide issues by reason of their strategic significance or potential to set a precedent.