

Planning Division
Environment & Regeneration
London Borough of Merton
Crown House
MORDEN
SM4 5DX



9 April 2021

For the attention of Alyce Jeffery, Case Officer

Dear Ms Jeffery

21/P0855 – HARTFIELD WALK, WIMBLEDON, SW19

This is a planning application submitted by Love Wimbledon to transform the alleyway that runs between Black's & Robert Dyas in the Broadway and leads to the back entrance of Morrison's.

The application was registered on 16 March with a last date for comments of 14 April. The application states that it is for a "temporary installation of 2 x 2 kiosks for up to 5 years, from 26/03/2021 to 25/03/2026" – i.e. for a period starting within the consultation period and before Planning Permission could possibly have been granted.

We consider this is a worthwhile initiative and the alleyway is now visually more appealing. Creating an informal pedestrian priority open space in the town is welcome and the seating provided is something Wimbledon Town Centre is very short of.

However, we note that all the work seems to have been completed. It is unfortunate that Love Wimbledon has proceeded without Planning Permission in place: this sets a bad precedent for others.

Furthermore, the installation is not in total accordance with the plans they have submitted. The "Hartfield Walk Kiosks" plan shows two hopscotches but one has been replaced with "Find the Flowers".

Nevertheless, we would like to offer the following points for consideration by Merton Council pending their decision.

- 1) The metal arch at the entrance from the Broadway is interesting, but as the site is in the Wimbledon Broadway Conservation Area and is a public highway, presumably a licence to put these structures in place will be needed from the Council as Highway Authority.
- 2) The two double kiosks will presumably all sell fast food (one is already doing so) and rubbish containers should be provided near them (there is just one double-sided bin at 5 on the plan). The responsibility of clearing the area should be borne by the stall holders. There appears to be no plumbing in the kiosks.
- 3) It is unclear what the arrangements are for maintenance, clearing likely graffiti, removing litter from the planters or periodically repainting the paving. This could possibly be dealt with in the allocation of trading licences.
- 4) The proposed Hopscotch by Morrison's back entrance is not best placed. Children might clash with emerging trolleys, and the "Find the Flowers" design/maze takes up the entire width of the unencumbered part of the alleyway.
- 5) Trees already existed in the alleyway. Tree guards have been added which are not buried in soil, which is good, but instead they seem to have been boxed around and left clear and have some "artificial grass" at the upper soil level, fitted closely to the trunks, and presumably with air space around the trunk below. The soil and the planting are in separate containers, kept a few inches from the trunks.

Whether this arrangement will allow the tree trunks to move in the wind etc, and how moisture is to get to the roots of the trees seems unclear. Air can presumably get to the roots via the gaps in the wooden structure.

We have concerns about the long-term effects of these structures on the existing trees. They are currently tightly enveloping the tree trunks, covering over their root systems, and preventing water getting to them.

We would prefer to see a design that placed seats beside the trees, but which leaves the trunks and root systems clear.

6) We have seen the responses from the Metropolitan Police and the Tree Warden, both of whom make very valid points that should be considered and implemented.

7) Because of the numerous ill-thought aspects of these plans, we urge the Council to refuse the application and to encourage Love Wimbledon to submit a fresh one that takes into account the comments made.

8) If the Council is minded to grant retrospective approval to this application, or approval to a fresh one, we believe that the permission should run from the date that planning permission is given, not from a date before then.

Yours sincerely

Chris Goodair
Chair, Wimbledon Society Planning & Environment Committee

Please send all correspondence by email to chairmanpc@wimbledonsociety.org.uk