

Coroner's Court, 65 Horseferry Rd, SW1P 2ED. 20/01252/COFUL

**25<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

We object to this planning application, for reasons set out below.

As a 'housekeeping' matter we find it curious that the D&A statement includes no plans to explain the design.

We understand the need to extend the building on the west side of the existing building and we welcome the proposed improvements to the landscaping around the Coroner's Court, but we object to certain features of the new building:

The existing is a charming domestic-scale pavilion, for which the monumental scale and design of the proposed extension is inappropriate. We do not think that any extension has necessarily to mirror the design details of the building being extended, but when it is a prominent listed building of public significance like this we think it has to have some relationship to it and/or to form a satisfactory composition with it, and this seems to us to do neither.

The Pavilion-like quality of the existing, emphasized by the ornamental eaves cornice running round both prominent elevations means that it should be allowed to read as a free-standing building visible from at least two sides. Any extension on the site proposed would be in conflict with that, but the conflict could be minimized by setting the street frontage of the extension back by at least 3 metres to allow the side or west elevation of the existing to be read as a clear return, and by keeping the height of the extension a full storey lower.

The whole proposed vaulted roof seems to us to be unnecessary - it is a void. If it was removed the cornice and the pavilion-like quality of the existing would be much more visible and be retained to some extent. The internal ceiling height could be as much as 3.5m high with a flat roof, which should be ample for the jurors in quite a small room, and even for the occasional use as a courtroom that is apparently envisaged. We note that Historic England's opinion of the barrel vault was negative.

The windowless blank north wall is aggressively unwelcoming – a redesign in which the building is set back behind a garden would mitigate this, as would the insertion of a window.

Generally we would like to see a design that responded to the playful character of the existing building, which this proposal does not at all. In addition it probably should pick up on the brick colour of the original. Ideally it could be set back much further than 3m from the street - why could it not extend to the western boundary of the site, leaving a garden in front of the extension rather than alongside it?

The new Garden of Remembrance on the east side of the building will be an improvement, but could we suggest that a screen of some sort is built on the south side of the courtyard, in order to achieve a better sense of enclosure?