

Comment on a planning application

Application Details

Application: 18/2977/FUL

Address: Marble Hill HouseMarble Hill ParkRichmond RoadTwickenhamTW1 2NL

Proposal: 1. Marble Hill House: External decoration and repair work (if a window is substantially rotten, partial or full replacement of joinery) and replacement rooflight. 2. Stable Block: External alterations, installation of mechanical plant, timber plant enclosure to the rear and front landscaping (creating an outdoor seating area) to facilitate the refurbishment of the existing café.3. Service Yard: new pedestrian access and associated refuse storage facilities.4. Landscaping: new soft and hard landscaping including restoration of gardens, upgrade of sports pitches and facilities, replacement of seating and new play areas.5. Sports Centre: External ramp for improved access.

Comments Made By

Name: Mr Tom Williams

Address: 227A Richmond Road Twickenham TW1 2NJ

Comments

Type of comment: Support the proposal

Comment: I broadly support EH's plans for the park. They have listened to many of the objections made by local residents and the new proposals are a significant advance on the original plans.

It is unfortunate that EH's desire to link the gardens with Alexander Pope has led to a very selective interpretation of the historical evidence for the garden layout and the privileging of one specific period when the gardens may, perhaps, have resembled the proposed design. The gardens changed a lot, even during Henrietta Howard's lifetime and the dense tree planting is dubiously authentic and damages the east-west vista, as many objectors have pointed out. I would hope that this aspect of the plans might be very carefully considered by the council.

Some other aspects of the proposed changes, notably the ten-pin bowling alley, are also inauthentic. If the alley existed, which is far from a given, it certainly won't have looked like the pictures provided in EH's plans. However, there would seem to be no reason why planning permission should not be given.

There seems no clear evidence for the palisade and certainly not for the proposed design. However, if EH insist on it (and are prepared to bear the considerable maintenance costs associated with it) there would seem to be no reason why planning permission should not be given.

I have considerable concerns about EH's ability to fund the maintenance of the grounds, keeping them safe and pleasing with the considerable extra planting. However, if EH's budget does not balance in the future, that is, I suppose, their problem and not a reason to refuse planning permission given that a management plan has been provided. The council might like to look carefully at the figures and the number of volunteer gardeners that are required though.

The reason why I am supporting the proposals despite my reservations is because I think that English Heritage's plans are a serious attempt to address the issue of the long-term decline of the park, which clearly requires a substantial injection of funds. Whilst I'm sympathetic to many of the objections made, there is a real danger that we are allowing the best to become the enemy of the good and that the continued rejection of English Heritage's plans will end up with the scheme being withdrawn and the park being condemned to long-term decay.