



James Garside
Planning Officer
Borough of Richmond upon Thames Civic Centre
44 York Street
Twickenham TW1 3BZ

9th October 2018

Dear Sir

Planning Application 18/2977/FUL Marble Hill

I wish to record my firm support for the new planning application by English Heritage.

On behalf of the Playcentre, I have attended the Steering Committee meetings organised by English Heritage and I believe that English Heritage has listened to local feedback and vastly improved their proposal. I am very proud of our community for their sense of responsibility to ensure that any changes made to our much loved Marble Hill Park are robustly debated and must of course enhance the House and Park for continued local use as well as for visitors from further afield and of course protect the space, environment and heritage for future generations.

I am writing because I am concerned that due to a very vocal few and an uneven distribution of information about the proposals, we (and future generations) are going to miss out on this opportunity to restore Marble Hill House, create beautiful gardens, provide a much improved cafe facility and receive investment in sports and other local facilities, including the Playcentres. Having listened first hand at the Steering Committee meetings to the remaining criticisms levelled at the proposals, it is my personal opinion that it is now the remaining 'campaigners' and not English Heritage who are not listening and seem determined to prevent this project irrespective of the improvements made, the opportunities potentially lost and the risks inherent in the unsustainability of the site if the project doesn't go ahead.

I am also concerned that the "public meeting" being organised by the remaining campaigners on 16th October is presenting information on the landscape history which has not been provided to English Heritage so English Heritage has not had an opportunity to comment on it, nor include it in its considerations of the history. I strongly believe that any presentation to the public on this topic should fully represent all of the information available and the processes conducted by English Heritage so that the public can make their own informed decision. I also believe it is potentially misleading for this public meeting to focus on questioning the financial viability of English Heritage's proposal when we

have all been told at the Steering Meetings that English Heritage will commit to supporting the developed site indefinitely, which thankfully makes the financial viability of the plans irrelevant to the public in respect of this planning consultation.

As a local resident, I can appreciate that there would be some advantages in retaining the status quo and making no changes, but I feel we must give enough consideration to the downsides for our community if this project does not proceed. In the event that this project does not go ahead, it seems unlikely that English Heritage could justify the risks and costs of making any further funding applications to restore and open up the House (which I think everyone wants) and it would be understandable that English Heritage would need to reduce their maintenance and other site expenses to a bare minimum to stem the losses they incur in relation to this site (it is my understanding that this site costs around £200-£300k a year to run). Without investment and the unavoidable change this entails, it seems likely that the house will crumble further and the grounds and community facilities will be neglected.

I would like to note that I am comforted by the existence of a parking overflow plan which I understand is envisaged with Orleans School as I think at peak times, this will be necessary.

Finally, I am not experienced in the workings of the planning process, but I hope that the merits of the remaining “campaigners” objections are robustly considered and the volume, authoritative tone and insistence of their few voices alone is not given undue weight. Having listened to everyone, I firmly believe there is much to be gained in proceeding and much to be lost if not.

Yours sincerely

Katy Grieves
Chair of Trustees, Marble Hill Playcentres





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