

Comment on a planning application

Application Details

Application: 19/0646/FUL

Address: GreggsGould RoadTwickenhamTW2 6RT

Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings (with retention of single dwelling) and redevelopment of the site to provide up to 116 residential units and 175sq.m commercial floorspace; landscaped areas; with associated parking and highways works and other works associated with the development.

Comments Made By

Name: Ms Cathy Cooper

Address: 49 Talbot Road Twickenham TW2 6SJ

Comments

Type of comment: Object to the proposal

Comment: The development of the former Greggs bakery site is the one that everyone in the area has been anticipating for years. The issues are complex and affect very many households and the environment in general.

I am writing this as a resident who was deeply involved in the Hamilton Electricity Works re-development which took 10 years before a final solution was found. During that period, the Works, Hamilton Road and part of Edwin road were granted Conservation Area status. This was due to the historical industrial aspect of the buildings and surrounding roads that served them. It was a hard fight and many applications were submitted and rejected, each one lowering the density. The first planning application had six story apartment blocks! Fortunately, we had a sympathetic council and support from local conservation groups such as FORCE besides hundreds of concerned residents.

When the final application was accepted, I projected how much impact the site would have on my property. I expected noise and light pollution but in fact it is very quiet and looking at it, I wouldn't even know it had been developed as it has kept the same façade as before. I would say it was a planning success story.

However, the two-year construction period was a nightmare – dust and vibration from demolition and drilling out tanks sunk into the ground caused cracks to appear in some of the cottages in Talbot Road. We had to keep our windows shut during working hours because of the dust. During the summer that was very frustrating. Traffic was kept at a standstill in Colne Road for hours one day when a lorry got stuck under the railway arch past Chapmans. I have seen cars damaged by trucks trying to negotiate our narrow backstreets.

Another site that was developed around that time was the old Munitions factory in Gould Road, which became Crane Mews. Again this had history and was fortunately bought by developers who had an interest and expertise in industrial buildings. I cannot comment on the re-construction process but I expect there were similar difficulties as in Hamilton Road.

Greggs is a different matter and the developer has a clean slate to work on. The site, though large, is in a very tight corner wedged between terraced housing with really only one proper access point. The mews style houses coming off Edwin Road look very attractive on the drawings but then at the end are the monstrous five-story apartment blocks.

These really do have an impact on the Townscape from all angles and of course they will impact on the nearby residents. The report on loss of light states that most residents will benefit from the development and receive more sunlight to their properties. There will be exceptions though and a few will receive much less light. No-one should receive less light than they do already whatever part of the house is affected.

This is a quiet part of Twickenham with narrow roads and small cottages. We do not want any overbearing, high rise blocks setting a precedent in the area. The development is far too dense and as in all planning applications, the developer will try for the most first.

This is an ideal opportunity to create an attractive addition to an area which very much has a community feel. Somewhere where people can gain access to the River Crane and enjoy the Nature Reserve. I have lived here now for 38 years and love the mix of small industries together with the worker's cottages. We have a rich history – the first working class area in Twickenham which expanded quickly after 1860 and the coming of the railway.

When I first saw the plans, I thought wouldn't it be nice if the developer gave some land to the boundary residents of Norcutt Road so they could have larger gardens at the back.

This needs to go back to the drawing board.