

Planning Officer,
London Borough of Richmond upon Thames,
Civic Centre,
44 York Street,
Twickenham TW1 3BZ.



Frances Bennett
Chair
Friends of Kneller Gardens

7th April 2019



Dear Ms Simpson,

**PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBER: 19/0646/FUL
RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION BY FRIENDS OF KNELLER GARDENS**

The Friends of Kneller Gardens are writing in order to object to the proposals put forward by the developer of the Greggs site in Gould Road. The Friends of Kneller Gardens believe that the development would constitute an adverse impact on Kneller Gardens and the local people who currently make use of it for the reasons outlined below.

Please note that the Friends of Kneller Gardens have only responded on matters related to the local public open space and we have not considered other planning, transport and public realm matters. We welcome any opportunity for discussion of all matters raised with council officers.

We understand that the proposals are for 116 dwellings and likely to be lived in by families due to the proximity to good schools and other local facilities. The proposed building development together with all other recent building developments in the local area will have the impact of significantly increasing pressures on adjacent open spaces which are free to the public to access for leisure and health activities. Kneller Gardens is one of the closest open spaces to the proposed development site. It is heavily used by residents living in streets local to the development site but our park users consultation has shown that local people come from across the borough to make use of the park. We believe that the use of the park is at capacity with several 1000 making use of it every week and in danger of becoming over used especially when the cumulative new housing in the local area (Twickenham Station, post office sorting office site and other infilling development) is also considered.

The play space for children proposed for this development is very small in relation to the amount of housing that is being proposed. A reduction in the number of dwellings would allow the developer to increase the provision of play/social open space on the development so giving an alternative place for children and adults to spend their leisure time. This should be large enough to include, for example dog walking areas, as well as informal play. The proposal includes provision of a riverside walkway that could be developed into something more than the Environment Agency's requirement that developments adjacent to rivers must provide an 8-metre strip between the development and the edge of the river. The proposals should instead include a new pocket park for the local area freely accessible to the general public at all times. This would give a new open space for the residential area between Twickenham Green and the River Crane.

Mitigation arising from this development

In response to the proposal by the developer the Friends of Kneller Gardens would like to suggest the following suggestions for mitigation to the incremental pressures that the housing development will impose on Kneller Gardens as the closest and most popular local open space and play space in the area. Our aim in requesting these is to add to the community value of the space which is already suffering from pressure of use from the local community. Residents from the Gregg's development will benefit from the proximity of the park and are

likely to make use of it adding to the pressure of use. There is a number of improvements which this development should be expected to contribute. These include:

1. Improvements to local playing fields and tennis courts.

Both Craneford Recreation Ground and Kneller Gardens have been experiencing unprecedented use of the playing fields over the last few years. This is a result of an increase in local clubs working with young people interested in taking up sport and local schools who do not have playing fields of their own making use of public pitches. Both open spaces would benefit from investment to improve the quality of the playing fields over the next few years.

The tennis courts in Kneller Gardens are in need of renovation and investment and are becoming increasingly dangerous to use because of bad surfaces.

2. Pavilion renovation

The Friends of Kneller Gardens have been working over the last 5 years in preparation to provide an indoor community room in the pavilion using unused space at the rear of the pavilion. The café in the park would also benefit from this development. It is a social enterprise that works to give young people not in education or training some experience of working in catering. They are currently not able to operate this scheme in the winter due to limited profits.

3. Pocket Park on within housing development of Greggs site

The development should include a new pocket park for the local area freely accessible to the general public, this should be substantial enough for local leisure activities such as dog walking. This proposal would give a new open space for the residential area between Twickenham Green and the River Crane.

4. Richmond Green Gym

This volunteering scheme is based in Kneller Gardens. The members provide environmental improvements to local open spaces. The scheme requires ongoing funding.

5. Environmental Improvements to the River Crane corridor

We support the request of the Friends of the River Crane Environment for improvements to the River Corridor as part of a restoration project following a feasibility study currently being undertaken. This is an opportunity to link the proposed riverside walkway to a wider project improving the value of the river corridor for people and wildlife.

Conclusions

The Friends of Kneller Garden objects to this proposal as we are concerned about the negative impact that increased local housing will have on the impact of local open spaces and the lack of mitigation by the developer to address this. We believe that development would lead to further pressures on open spaces and that there is only very limited provision to mitigate these impacts in the developers proposals. We believe that the development will compound problems in already overused public open space and that the developer should mitigate against this to improve the local facilities for both the new residents and those who currently make use of the park for sporting, leisure heath and learning of skills.

Yours sincerely,

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