



TWICKENHAM
FILM
STUDIOS

Twickenham Studios

Planning Application - 21/0094/FUL

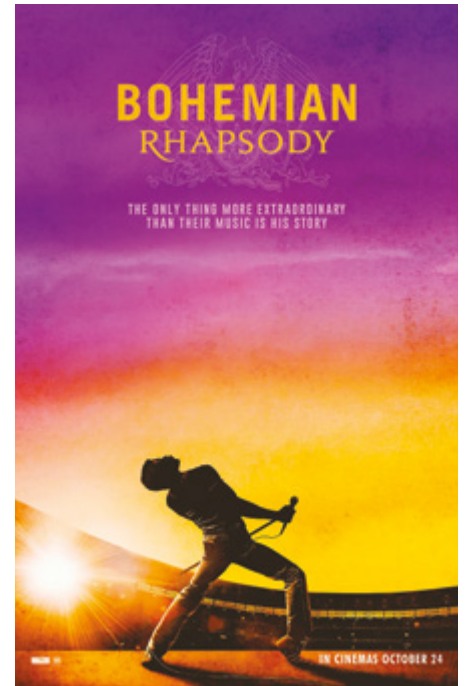
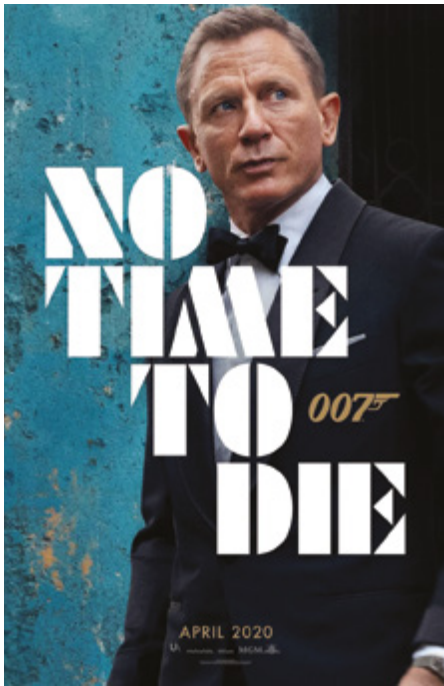
This briefing is being presented to members of the planning committee to support proposals to enhance and expand the industry-leading Twickenham Studios in St Margaret's. Twickenham Studios opened in 1913, and is responsible for the production of classics including *A Hard Day's Night* and *The Italian Job* and more recently blockbusters *Bohemian Rhapsody* and *1917*.

The studio was saved from demolition in 2012 and according to the E Twickenham SPD is considered 'important to the character of the area' and during the pre-application discussions with London Borough of Richmond it was described as 'important for the creative industries'. Twickenham Studios is an industry leader in post-production sound, but the increased use of technology means that space needs to be used differently. The wider changes in film and TV create the opportunity to future-proof the facility and ensure that the Borough retains this creative organisation for years to come.

If you have any queries in advance of the planning committee please contact

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The main proposals are:

- Build a new entrance building to complete the high street view
- Create a co-working space for local people, café, Wi-Fi lounge as well as a single screen cinema
- Remodel Blocks C and D to upgrade offices and art department, improve access and create prop store
- Develop a studio theatre to host live audiences
- Build rooftop extensions to Blocks E and H
- Install solar panels, green roofs and planting to improve the visual and environmental impact

Engagement and Responses

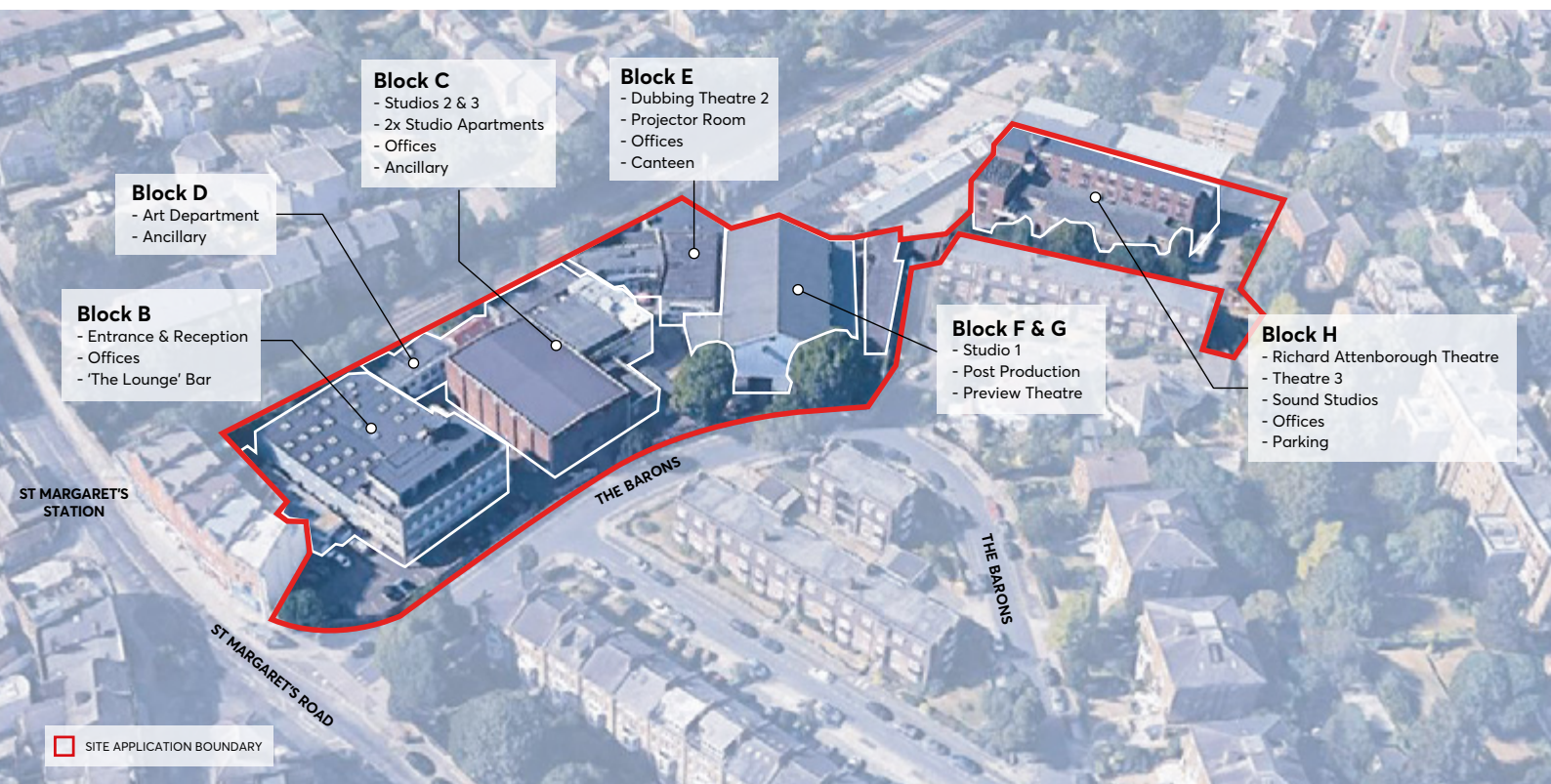
Twickenham Studio has engaged with the council and local community throughout the process.

- Pre-application discussion 2019 focusing on the broad application and contribution to the wider economy.
- Pre-application discussion 2020 focused on the evolving design and materials for Block A to reflect the architectural design of St Margaret's and, the cultural opportunities offered
- Design Review Panel recommendations reflected in the final submission alongside changes to the planned use of signage
- Site visit with Leader of the Council and Senior Officer
- Ward Cllrs virtual meeting to consider likely concerns of neighbours and community groups
- Two meetings with community groups representing residents and traders
- Information leaflet sent to 1294 local addresses
- Public Webinar on 30th November uploaded to Twickenham Studios website

The public response has been overwhelmingly positive.

This is reflected in the 46 comments of support for the application submitted to the local planning authority (compared to seven objections). Main issues we have addressed have been:

1. Construction traffic and noise - the studio recognises construction concerns locally and therefore most of the new buildings will be prefabricated off site to minimise disruption to local people and to support business continuity.
2. Impact on hospitality - concerns that the additional cafe/bar might reduce trade to existing businesses. However, increased staff onsite, co-working and customers for cinema and studio theatre are likely to increase both daytime demand and extend business opportunity. No issues raised by Traders Association.
3. Traffic/Parking - the site has sustainable transport links being adjacent to St Margaret's Railway Station and bus routes. Should Richmond Council require an extension of the existing (CPZ), the applicant is willing to contribute to the consultation costs via S106 contribution. In addition, events at the site will be promoted with no available car parking and links to active or public transport options. The new co-working space will be locally promoted and is designed to attract people living in the local area rather than travel further afield for creative workspace in the city or outside of Twickenham.



Planning Policy

Close attention has been paid to planning policy in terms of the NPPF, London Plan, Richmond Local Plan, and neighbourhood SPDs and Conservation Areas of St Margaret's in which Block A will sit and the adjacent Twickenham Park Conservation Area. The site is designated as Mixed Use in the Local Plan and as 'locally important industrial land' (LP42). This notes a presumption in favour of development as is the London Plan when referring to 'good growth' under policy GG5 and in relation to the development of creative industries under policy HC5.

In terms of economic benefit, this scheme represents an investment of £10m with an additional:



£2.26m in GVA,



60 new jobs post-completion and



44 construction jobs,



an annual spending uplift in the local economy from audience visitors of around £2.5 million.



In terms of heritage, the application satisfies the requirements of Local Plan policies:

- ✓ LP1,
- ✓ LP3 and
- ✓ LP4 in terms of its high-quality design - 'the property is in keeping in terms of building height and results in a contextually appropriate and functional studio site'.

It also delivers enhancements to:

- ✓ the Crown Road Conservation Area
- ✓ and the setting of the Twickenham Park Conservation area through the enhanced architectural quality and improved streetscape.



Benefits

We strongly believe that this application will benefit the community of St Margaret's as well as London Borough of Richmond as a whole. This application, if approved will:

- Create new jobs for local people in the creative industries
- Improve the street scene on St Margaret's Road incomplete since the fire of 1934
- Introduce measures such as green roofs, solar PV and additional planting that will improve the efficiency of the buildings and increase biodiversity by at least 10%
- Improve public realm for the residents of The Barons
- Enable local businesses to access creative co-working space close to home
- Improve the local cultural offer with a cinema, café, and audience theatre
- Secure the future of film production at the Studios via the expansion of technology
- Spending uplift in the local economy of £2.5m annually from additional site visitors
- 60 jobs created

Recommendation

Your officers have recommended this application for approval.

The engagement with and support of the community demonstrate that there are significant benefits to the community alongside the importance of this site to the creative industry and we respectfully ask that you consider your officer's recommendation and grant consent for this application.