

Comment on a planning application

Application Details

Application: 22/0902/FUL

Address: The Stag Brewery Lower Richmond Road Mortlake London SW14 7ET

Proposal: Erection of a three-storey building to provide a new secondary school with sixth form; sports pitch with floodlighting, external MUGA and play space; and associated external works including landscaping, car and cycle parking, new access routes and other associated works

Comments Made By

Name: Mr. Felix Obholzer

Address: 5 Little St Leonards East Sheen London SW14 7LT

Comments

Type of comment: Object to the proposal

Comment: Copy of Email to Council and Board, 25 May

To the Council,

OBJECTION TO DEVELOPMENT AT STAG BREWERY

I am writing to object to the proposed development of the site of the former Stag Brewery in Mortlake. As a lifelong Mortlake resident, I am gravely concerned about the impact this development will have on my beloved home, and I submit these objections in the hope of making development on this site compatible with the needs of local people, the environment, and conservation.

I am aware of other letters and comments that have raised issues concerning air pollution, traffic, and strain on local infrastructure from the proposed development, and I wholeheartedly support and commend these objections. However, my letter will focus specifically on the detrimental effect this proposal will have on the character of the riverbank between Ship Lane and Bull's Alley, which lies within the Mortlake conservation area.

This span of the Thames Path is currently one of the quietest and most beautiful places in Mortlake, and is of significant value to the community as part of a riverside walk reaching all the way to the traditional boundary between Mortlake and Barnes at the White Hart. Its characteristic privacy, which it owes to limited access from and exposure to development along the High Street to the South, is enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

This particular stretch of riverbank has enjoyed an undisturbed period of separation from development for at least two centuries, as evidenced by the attached image from the Panorama of the Thames (1829), which shows a long brick wall separating development on precinct of the former Manor House, East of Ship Lane, from the river. It is therefore imperative that the privacy and separation of this towpath area is preserved as far as reasonably possible, and to that end the current proposal must be revised.

A historically sensitive solution would be to use a brick wall and high planting to separate the proposed development from the towpath, and to restrict all development to the area behind this boundary, so as not to encroach on the riverbank and conservation area.

The height of the development is another unacceptable element of this proposal. With the exception of 'Vineyard Heights', which has been roundly condemned by local conservation experts and the community in general, and the Maltings, which is a protected industrial landmark whose dominance of the built environment is essential to the character of the local

built environment, there are no buildings along the river that exceed five stories in height. This should be taken as an absolute maximum for any development on the site of the Stag Brewery, to prevent compromising the privacy of the towpath, as well as to preserve the subordinate relationship of the brewery development to the Maltings, and protect the historical character of the riverfront. Ideally, development on this site would not exceed four stories, and would be set back a sufficient distance from the river that it was largely hidden from view to river traffic and observers on the far bank.

It would also pay to consider the historic layout of settlement on the site before the construction of the 19th century brewery compound, in particular the sites of the larger houses, and of Thames Street, Pembroke Street and Brewhouse Lane, in order to better link the area's future to its past. I am sure that local historians would be glad to be consulted on a revised proposal for the development of this site.

It is my sincere belief that a great deal of good could be done by a sensitive redevelopment of this site, and that high quality housing and amenity space can and should be provided. However, the current proposal fails to satisfy the requirements of conservation, the community, the environment. I look forward to reviewing an updated proposal that aims to preserve and enhance Mortlake's beauty, rather than efface and replace it.

Yours faithfully,

Felix Obholzer