

## 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:** Thomson House School Mrs. Amanda Letch

**Address:** The Old Court House 27 Sheen Lane Mortlake London SW14 8HY

### Comments

**Type of comment:** Object to the proposal

**Comment:** I represent Thomson House School, of which I am Head Teacher.

THS objects to this proposal on the following grounds:

1. Pupil numbers - the educational landscape is a changing one. Numbers of children applying for primary school places are declining (AfC's data shows a drop of 50 applicants for primary places across the borough from 2048 in 2021 to 1998 in 2022). The actual number of places taken up in Oct 2021 within Areas 7, 8 & 9 (Barnes, Mortlake, Kew, East Sheen) was 494 against 570 places available - 86% uptake. Achieving for Children state that the birth rate is also declining. Sheena Pooley (Director of Placement Planning Hounslow) has declared numbers of pupil places required across boroughs are far lower than AfC's stated numbers.  
LB Hounslow Pupil Projections - May 2022

#### Primary

Chiswick area data Year 6 Years R to 6

2022/2023 270 1923  
2023/2024 280 1926  
2024/2025 250 1883  
2025/2026 275 1863  
2026/2027 270 1806  
2027/2028 252 1760  
2028/2029 257 1728  
2029/2030 254 1693  
2030/2031 243 1661  
2031/2032 233 1640

#### Secondary

Borough level data Year 7 Years 7 to 11

2022/2023 3290 16066  
2023/2024 3302 16391  
2024/2025 3210 16254  
2025/2026 3138 16162  
2026/2027 3114 16090  
2027/2028 3162 15936  
2028/2029 3091 15719  
2029/2030 3042 15558  
2030/2031 2965 15406

We understand that AfC state that the recent arrival of families from Hong Kong (350 families) are increasing in-year admissions across the borough. This may be the case – but THS's experience is that 2 families have recently arrived at school. It would be worth exploring which areas of the borough these families have moved into and whether their arrival might impact demand for a secondary school on the brewery site. My understanding is that there are very few families from Hong Kong in the MKBES areas.

We also understand that there are several housing developments in the pipeline (Brewery site; Homebase site and Kew retail site) which will provide extra numbers of pupils and that this may be where the additional demand will come from – see point 2 below.

The Local Authority (LA) has changed the way it forecasts Year 7 numbers from a method that takes account of well-documented shrinkage of primary cohorts as some pupils move into the independent sector, to one that does not. This means that the Year 6 numbers it uses to forecast Year 7 are significantly larger than they would realistically be and leads to unrealistically large, predicted shortfalls in secondary places.

2. However, if we take AfC's predicted numbers as accepted – the 1200 places can be achieved via alternative, more flexible and less costly plans. Stamp Education Trust (which runs Thomson House School) has already proposed to Gareth Roberts, Leader of the Council, a through-school option of a 2 FE primary and a 3 or 4 FE secondary. This would mean less pupil numbers on the Brewery site and the potential of picking up additional places through local secondary schools expanding by 1FE. Richmond Park Academy and Chiswick School have both agreed to this plan. Christ's are willing to put this idea to their Governing Board. The 1200 total can be made available through 3FE on the brewery site and 1FE at RPA, Chiswick and Christ's; or 4 FE on the brewery site and 1FE at RPA and Chiswick.

3. Detrimental effect on existing local secondary schools – if the plan goes ahead there will, without doubt, be a detrimental impact on numbers of pupils attending existing local secondary schools.

In the DfE's document 'Securing Developer Contributions for Education – Nov 2019' it clearly states:

"It is important that the impacts of development are adequately mitigated, requiring an understanding of:

- The education needs arising from development, based on an up-to-date pupil yield factor;
- The capacity of existing schools that will serve development, taking account of pupil migration across planning areas and local authority boundaries;
- Available sources of funding to increase capacity where required