

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

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Comments

Type of comment: Object to the proposal

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Mortlake Level Crossing

Objection on ground of Highway safety

Given the risks for users of the level crossing, the question must be addressed whether these without adequate mitigation preclude adding a 1,200 pupil secondary school to Mortlake

High risk to safety at the level crossing is not addressed adequately in the application

I have lived in East Sheen for 28 years, 300 metres from the crossing so I know it well. The risk to those using the crossing is very high and currently when children from Thomson House arrive and leave school the crossing is jammed. No separation of pedestrians from traffic which passes inches from the pedestrians. Children pulling away from their parents risk straying into the path of cars. The application for the new school would bring 1,200 children to the area and many of these would need to cross the level crossing to reach the school or return on trains. There would also be children cycling to and from the school. There is no cycle lane on the crossing.

A very high risk crossing

The ABC Railway Guide rates risk of level crossings and its Collective Risk Rating is the most important rating when prioritising safety measures at level crossings. In 2020 it rated the level crossing at a Collective risk of 2, Very High (this is the overall risk of any incident involving any person or vehicle on the crossing, including train staff and passengers as well as users of the crossing. It is presented as a number, with 1 being the highest risk and 13 being the lowest.

Network Rail identified high risks at the level crossing

"With associated congestion and by virtue of the development's proximity to the crossing, pedestrians are likely to be forced into the path of vehicles on either side of the crossing when the barriers are lifted. This conflict will also arise from the congestion caused by the extensive barrier downtime at this site and the inability to provide more waiting space and pavement width. This concern arises despite the presence of a suitable bridge at Mortlake. It is the recommendation of this assessment, with an impending development looming that closure with diversion or, via a road Rail Bridge remains the best option. However, whether this is achievable remains to be seen and will requisite complex modelling, feasibility studies, in depth census analysis as well as collaboration with Richmond authorities and possible developers."

Mortlake Level Crossing Risk Assessment, Network Rail, 2017
www.mbcg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/levelcross.pdf

The crossing is risky now because:

- A high number of pedestrians cross at key times during the day of school times and rush hours
- The pedestrian paths across the railway lines are narrow and are separated from traffic by only a marked line.
- Thomson House School is situated next to the crossing and also has a school building in nearby Vernon Road with movement frequently of pupils across the line in the class day and then movements from parents taking children to and from the school buildings
- Frequent trains causing queues to build up while the gates are down and thereby exacerbating the crowding for those using the crossing
- The planning applications do not address the mitigation of risks adequately
- People and children face risks crossing the road – heavy traffic and often speeding to avoid the crossing gates descending, there are no pedestrian crossings by the level crossing gates, the nearest is beyond Thomson School going north..

Complacent: The developer's survey found traffic risks to be insignificant

Remedies: The additional risks presented by the level crossing by adding the secondary school could only be mitigated by significant investment such as a new pedestrian bridge and lifts. None is provided in the developer's application