

Comment on a planning application

Application Details

Application: 22/3139/FUL

Address: Thames Young Mariners Base Riverside Drive Ham Richmond TW10 7RX

Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings and construction of replacement buildings with associated residential accommodation, changing block, replacement staff accommodation and outdoor activity equipment including high ropes, climbing wall, coasteering course, supporting pontoons with associated hard and soft landscaping and parking.

Comments Made By

Name: Friends of Ham Lands Mr. Matthew Rees

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Comments

Type of comment: Make a general observation

Comment: Introduction

Friends of Ham Lands wish to comment on this application as the site sits in the middle of Ham Lands and so has a significant impact on the flora and fauna in the Local Nature Reserve.

It is worth noting first that Friends of Ham Lands was created in early 2010 in response to substantial land clearance on the Thames Young Mariners site in the autumn of 2009 and while the site is not formally part of Ham Lands it is of great interest to us, the wildlife does not know that there is a boundary there and nor should they.

Our response is limited by the lack of information on wildlife on the site with surveys either not done or done at the wrong time. Because of this there are risks that their might be impacts on wildlife that use the site

Opportunities

This proposal presents the opportunity to unite Ham Lands as a single nature reserve by designing and managing the TYM site as an integral part of this significant area of riverside open space. The Neighbourhood Plan policies on Protecting Green Character (C1) and Open Spaces (G1) are relevant here.

Both Friends of Ham Lands and Thames Landscape Strategy have been in discussion with TYM about developing critical collaboration to support biodiversity, wildlife corridors and natural flood management. TYM are fully supporting of this collaboration and we want to see this continue under the control of Richmond Council's environment team.

The proposed planting looks pleasingly "green" and environmentally correct, with native plantings, green roofs etc. Our only concern here is whether sufficient allowance has been made for ongoing maintenance.

We would like consideration to be given to developing a reed bed in the lagoon to create a different habitat.

We also welcome the inclusion of a small swale to help to treat runoff to reduce pollutants.

Risks

The increased activity on the site will mean more movements and more lighting both of which will cause some disturbance to wildlife.

This site is within a dark area in both the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan (Policy G2) and the planning permission should be conditional on the necessary design of lighting meeting the standards in the Neighbourhood Plan.

We think the proposed hedge should extend along the whole of the southern boundary with Ham Lands nature reserve and that the hedge should be managed as the boundary / security line rather than a dominant fence. All boundaries need to be permeable to wildlife, particularly on the northern bank of the lagoon.

The proposals increase the built footprint of the site and so reduced the space for flora and fauna.

Waste from construction will enter the lagoon, and hence the river, unless appropriate measures are taken.

The frontage of the site is part of natural boundary to the area and so the signage there should respect that. Unsightly banners attached to the fence detract from the absence of the nature reserve.

Next steps

A condition of granting permission should be the full involvement of the environment team at Richmond Council to agree which further studies are required and to agree detailed plans.