

Comment on a planning application

Application Details

Application: 23/3208/FUL

Address: St Catherines School Cross Deep Twickenham TW1 4QJ

Proposal: The proposed development is a new Music and Art Building, to improve the facilities at St Catherine's School. The existing single storey music building and 20th century extension to the Lodge are to be demolished, to make space for the new two storey building. The external areas will be improved, with new paving, planting and trees.

Comments Made By

Name: Mrs. M Gatland

Address: 7 Cross Deep Gardens Twickenham TW1 4QZ

Comments

Type of comment: Object to the proposal

Comment: I have now managed to review the latest planning application by St Catherine's School for a new music and art block after we received a consultation letter immediately before Christmas. There are a number of objections to the current proposal which are outlined below.

Risk of damage to heritage structure

The revised application, following a refusal earlier last year, has reduced the size and height of the proposed new building but it still is very close to the Grade II* listed Pope's Grotto and tunnel which raises concerns at the impact on that very vulnerable heritage asset which the application does little to allay. The Construction Management Plan refers to piling and mini cranes required to erect the proposed building but does not provide any information on how the methods or piling might be achieved whilst ensuring the risk of damage through vibration to the Grotto would be avoided. Such works must be carefully assessed in advance to ensure no problems would arise as it will be too late if permission is granted and construction goes ahead and damage then occurs. A report of a properly informed assessment of the method of construction and type of piling is required, and how damage would be avoided before the application is considered.

Construction impacts

The main concern as a neighbour very close to the site and directly affected by the year long (minimum) construction work as access is again proposed from Grotto Road is the impact on our property, and access and safety on Grotto Road. In addition I am again extremely concerned at the impact on protected trees through the proposed vehicle access which requires the removal of the existing wooden gates and a long section of fence on Grotto Road immediately opposite our and neighbours' properties. These concerns were raised by a number of us when the previous application was considered. Those concerns remain and have not been properly addressed in this revised application.

Vehicle movements and safety

It is not clear in the Construction Management Plan which Option for departing vehicles is intended. The peak number of construction vehicles a day is stated to be 3 with between 1 and 3 vehicles a day at other times (para 6.2), and it is stated that it would only take 30 seconds for vehicles to manoeuvre into and out of the site (para 3.7). That is simply unbelievable both from a practical point of view and from previous experience of construction at the school when Grotto Road was blocked for far longer periods than that with vehicles accessing the site. In reality there would be more and much longer periods when construction vehicles would prevent or inhibit access along Grotto Road, creating unsafe conditions for pedestrians, cyclists and other road users particularly residents who use the road to access their properties. Despite assurances during previous construction activities at the site promised banksmen and traffic marshals were not present all the times vehicles accessed the site and the safety of other road users was prejudiced as well as access for them. It is very unlikely to be any different this time. Any vehicles arriving at times not previously agreed are said to be sent to a holding area. Where is that? In itself such redirection would simply increase the number of vehicle movements to and from the site.

The proposals for construction vehicles leaving the site would also risk damage to a further Grade II* listed heritage asset, the underground passage to Radnor Lodge from Pope's Garden at the junction of Grotto Road and Radnor Road.

That high value heritage asset has not even been considered in the Heritage Statement. The impact of heavy construction vehicles passing over the cave would prejudice the stability of its fragile internal features and should be properly assessed.

THE WORD COUNT RESTRICTION IS INADEQUATE. SEE FURTHER COMMENTS