

32 Tersha Street

12th August, 2024

We want to take the opportunity to object to certain aspects of the redevelopment of Avalon House, as outlined in the planning application - Planning application number: 24/1554/FUL.

Height and capacity of building

Avalon House is located in a residential area, surrounded almost completely by houses and flats which do not rise above three stories (apart from one exception). The increase to the height of the building outlined in the plan is both significant and would take the building itself above the level of any surrounding properties. The height increase and extension are being done to increase the capacity of the building which seems to be unwarranted given that it has always appeared to operate below existing capacity in the last decade. The increase in capacity of the building by an estimated 32% (992m² internal floor area gained on an existing 3076m²) will clearly also result in more noise as well as additional vehicle movements which do not take place today.

Terraces

The plan for the building includes the provision of two terraces, one at the rear and one on the rooftop. As far as we can determine, this would give office workers a direct line of sight into our back garden and would therefore destroy the privacy we currently enjoy. Since this is an office building and not a residential development, this would not just be an occasional intrusion, but would be continual and by many people.

The Richmond Local Plan 'The best of our borough' (9 June 2023 draft for consultation) states the following in Policy 46 – Amenity and Living Conditions, point 22.35: 'New buildings and extensions need to take careful account of the amenity and living conditions of neighbours, with particular regard to natural light, light pollution, privacy, noise and disturbance. Adverse impacts on neighbouring properties and their occupiers, including on the most well-used part of residential gardens, can include loss of light (including to solar panels), loss of outlook, sense of enclosure, overlooking and loss of privacy (both actual and perceived), alterations to micro-climates and pollution from noise or light. Impacts could be from the new development itself or from associated development and uses such as ancillary buildings, parking areas, access ways, gardens, communal open space and hard and soft landscaping.'

This excerpt very much supports our objection bearing in mind that the rooftop terrace would result in a loss of privacy in the most used part of our back garden.

Additionally, the Planning Statement posted on the planning application states the following under 'Noise Management' 5.43: 'Approval is sought for use of the new roof terrace between the hours of 0800 and 2200 hours Monday to Friday and via other times by exception only.'

Even if the previous point of lack of privacy did not occur, the proposed extended use of the terrace sought (0800 to 2200) would be inappropriate from a noise perspective in an environment that is entirely residential and we therefore object to this as well.

Noise and Dust

Outside of our objections to the increase in height and the inclusion of additional capacity and terraces, we are highly concerned about noise and dust occurring during the period of construction which end to end including commissioning seems to run for nearly 14 months (although we note there are two different sets of dates which differ – one in the planning application and another in the construction plan). We urge Richmond Council to ensure that there is an appropriate noise reduction plan put in place during construction which ensures that noise is minimised through the application of best in class measures, and also aims to provide some quiet periods during the day so those of us who work from home are able to do so uninterrupted for some of the time by construction noise. We would also expect a similar plan to be put in place to control dust and dirt from the construction process so that residents are not caused expense through dust and dirt that emanates from the site.

In summary, we object to the height increase of the building, the capacity extension as well as the implementation of terraces. However, we are supportive of the idea of refurbishing the building and improving its aesthetics and environmental sustainability.