

Comment on a planning application

Application Details

Application: 21/2758/FUL

Address: 1-1C King Street, 2-4 Water Lane, The Embankment And River Wall, Water Lane, Wharf Lane And The Diamond Jubilee Gardens, Twickenham

Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings and structures and redevelopment of the site comprising 45 residential units (Use Class C3), ground floor commercial/retail/cafe (Use Class E), public house (Sui Generis), boathouse locker storage, floating pontoon and floating ecosystems with associated landscaping, reprovision of Diamond Jubilee Gardens, alterations to highway layout and parking provision and other relevant works.

Comments Made By

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Comments

Type of comment: Object to the proposal

Comment:

The submitted proposals represent a tragically missed opportunity by the Council to secure a development of this highly significant riverside site of outstanding architectural and landscape interest or quality offering potential major benefits to the amenity of Twickenham and its community for years to come. Instead, we are confronted with proposals lacking any real coherence or delight in urban design terms and failing to offer any meaningful enhancement of the Twickenham Riverside Conservation Area and this stretch of the river, other than reversing the disgraceful dereliction of the Council-owned buildings and land extending down the south-western side of Water Lane. Above all the proposals run counter to the interests of sustainability through the needless destruction of the relatively modern, well used and very attractive landscaped riverside walk between the lower end of Wharf Lane and the slipway at the lower end of Water Lane (matching the landscaped walk extending from Water Lane to The Barmy Arms) and the relatively modern Diamond Jubilee Gardens public open space with their much used and well protected children's playground and attractive raised terrace and modest café overlooking the river, and through unjustifiably excessive and costly works of demolition, excavation and construction across a substantial part of the site.

It is difficult to see how the replacement of the present children's playground within the existing public open space with a vastly over-scaled, five-storey block of twenty-four apartments for sale to the private sector and a pub/restaurant of up to 444 square metres, extending down the length of Wharf Lane on a raised podium, contributes to the amenity of Twickenham and its community. Importantly, there appears to be no recognition that the proposed block will overshadow a significant part of the proposed new open space to its immediate north-east for much of the day. Interestingly, too, no allowance appears to be made in the schedule of areas given in section 19 of the application-form for the notional boat-storage below the podium. Little if any information is provided about the access to the proposed floating pontoon from what remains of the presently attractive riverside walk, or the true nature of the 'floating eco-system' close by.

What has happened to the several laudable objectives set down in the original 'brief' issued to prospective architects in March, 2019 and in the more detailed 'brief' issued to the short-listed architects in June, 2019 – the financial criteria of which have been kept secret despite requests for sharing with the public.

To quote the Leader's 'vision' as referred to in the 'briefs' – 'This is a great opportunity to deliver real change through an exciting, energising and inspiring design'.

Despite the many months spent in 'consultation' with representatives of the local community; late negotiations with the Environment Agency leading to substantial changes to the original proposals on which Hopkins Architects were first selected and subsequently appointed in February last year; and justified debate about the significant consequences of removing most of the existing car-parking from the riverside (and its being displaced into other parts of the Town) and how existing businesses and homes as well as the development itself are to be adequately and safely serviced, we are left with proposals which fall far short of being 'exciting, energising and inspiring'. Even one of the few potential benefits of the

proposed development – encouraging and increasing riverside activity – is ill-defined and unclear'. - continued on next page