The Gardens Trust



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Research - Conserve - Campaign

22nd January 2021

Ms Jennifer Margetts

Planning Department

Elmbridge Borough Council

Civic Centre

High Street

Esher

Surrey KT10 9SD

tplan@elmbridge.gov.uk

Dear Ms Margetts,

**Ref : 2018/3810 – Development to provide 97 dwelling units, a hotel (84 bedrooms) and retail units (within use classes A1, A2 and A3) together with access, station interchange, car parking, servicing, new public realm, landscaping and other associated works following demolition of some existing buildings and structures on site including Hampton Court Motors. Jolly Boatman and Hampton Court Station Redevelopment Area, Hampton Court Way, East Molesey, Surrey KT8 9AE**

The Gardens Trust (GT) has checked on progress with the above application as it is now nearly 2 years since the GT originally objected in February 2019. Environment Agency issues seem to have delayed the decision-making process. In reviewing the case we make the following three additional comments and requests for further information.

1. In comparing this application with the 2008 application, this revised application is taller than the original as now only one of the two parking levels is underground. The VIA accompanying some assessments of key views from the Palace grounds is only a wire frame one which is inadequate and taken in summer. We request that the applicant provide full photo montages of views 2-5 in both winter and summer and from the upper rooms of the Palace, particularly from the Kings Apartments on the first floor of the Wren block, overlooking the Privy Garden and sunken garden, and also from the Banqueting House, the views from which elevate the viewer over hedges and undergrowth and give a clearer line of sight from one of the most significant rooms : murals and ceiling by Verrio (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yy_yVm_tyjE>) which is at the heart of the Grade I landscape as a garden building, as none have been provided. This we believe will present a more realistic demonstration of the impact and the consequent damage to the setting and views of the Palace and grounds.
2. The Arboricultural Report was written in December 2018, now over two years ago. It states that even then ‘*a number of’* horse chestnuts were affected by Horse Chestnut Leaf miner (para 2.6) and one by bleeding canker (Para 2.7). The canker in particular is infectious and can seriously damage trees, leading to their removal which is especially likely for health and safety reasons in this public park. It is likely that this has spread since the report was published, and the loss of any mature trees will increase visibility of the application site from the Registered Park and Garden and seriously damage the impact upon the setting and significance. We request updated information on the state of the trees and their likely longevity in view of their crucial role in partial screening (albeit inadequately to achieve full screening).
3. In the period since our response in 2019 we have become aware of the South Western Railway Act of 1913 which prohibits the erection of any building on the property of the railway owner (i.e. Network Rail) which exceeds the height of fifty feet within half a mile of Hampton Court Palace without the approval of the DCMS. While this is a material consideration in its own right in assessing the building height, this is also relevant with regard to the setting of the Palace and its grounds in indicating the high significance it has been accorded for over 100 years.

We would be grateful if your officers were able to request this information and images as it will be necessary for them to gain an up-to-date assessment of the harm when deciding this information.

The GT continues to strongly object to the above application.

Yours sincerely,

Margie Hoffnung

Conservation Officer

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