

Denis Browne, Chairman
Chatham House
15 The Butts
Brentford
Middlesex TW8 8BJ

020 8560 7548

To BCC. This a draft for discussion on Thursday April 28

Dear.....

Ref: Q27 dmb

**Thames Side Centre (former Kew Campus site)
And the former Scottish Widows Site,
Kew Bridge Road: Draft BCC Comments.**

The BCC prepared comments on the first application for the Scottish Widows site, contributed to the appeal which led to its rejection, continued its involvement with the second application now under construction. It is in the light of this history that we have adopted these views which we would request you to report to members.

The BCC has also had the benefit of meeting with the development team on this application and seeing the scheme as it emerged through the design state presentations.

The BCC request you to reject this application for the following reasons:

1. **Pre-maturity.** The Council is about to re-consider its policies on Employment Strategy/the BAAP and school sites, but these reviews will not surface before 2012. All are pertinent to this site.
2. **Over- development** of Brentford. The BAAP does not include this Site. The BAAP has recently included the Commerce Road site which was also not in the BAAP. Further development at Thames Water, SSHS and Lionel Road will put further strains on the BAAP. All are origressively contributing to unplanned and unquantifiable over-development.
3. **Employment.** Kew Campus is an employment site. Governement policies encourage start up enterprises, We understand that there is a continuing market for well run serviced premises. We have recently lost employment sites in their original form at Commerce Road, Alfa Laval and Wallis House, We should retain Kew Campus at least until the forthcoming review of employment sites a change of use.

4. **Schools.** Brentford has a classic shortage of school places. Kew Campus, if not required for employment, should be considered. It may be possible to convert the existing buildings to form at least part of a two site school. There are so few alternatives that this opportunity should not be missed.

5. **Splitting the Brentford Community.** It is clear from the sales literature for the former Scottish Widows site that that scheme is not adding to the vitality of Brentford, but is seen as a river-side extension of Kew. It is virtually a gated community. Doubling the development will only give weight to this division. If the development was postponed until the town centre (SSHS) was established the new money brought into the area might support the renaissance of Brentford. This is a further reason for deferring this project.

6. **Over-Urbanisation.** Most of east Brentford, Strand on the Green and Kew Green, across the river, are domestic in scale. The roof lines of most of the buildings are three or four floors or less. The inspector at the Scottish Widows inquiry considered that the impact the buildings immediately around the site would be prejudiced by the 3/8 floor building then proposed. The effect of adding the Kew Campus site to the Scottish Widows site extends the building mass.

7. **Permeability.** The BCC has continuously argued that the High Steet should not be cut off visually from the river. This was ignored at Scottish Widows and we consider that the 2 floor gap cut into the proposed wall of buildings on this site does not provide the openness required. We request that the 7 floors of buildings over the gap be removed.

8. Setting of **Listed** Buildings. At the Scottish Widows inquiry and in the second Scottish Widows design views of the Campanile were major issues. We consider that views of the Grade I campanile opposite this site should be opened up in any development proposal. A much freer design is required.

9. **Height.** Height has always been an issue. The present proposal has the effect of creating a cliff of buildings from the roundabout to Regatta Point. This further emphasises the over-urbanisation proposed and emphasises the feeling that the scheme further excludes residents living to the north from their river.

10. **Design.** We can now begin to see the effect of the design of the Scottish Widows design on its location. It is already apparent that the final effect may be out of scale and out of character with its context. The design for this site only repeats this error and magnifies the effect.

11. **Co-ordination of River side Plans.** The Thames Landscape Strategy has now employed the Landscape Architect who is engaged on the Master Plan for Kew Gardens. We consider that the TLS should be involved in discussions on this site which has a larger river frontage than the Scottish Widows site, before any schemes are finalised.

12. **Riverside Development.** We object to the two buildings sited close to the river. The first Scottish Widows site design was modified many times to reduce its impact on the river. Even the final design was rejected by the Council and by the Inspector. The proposals for this site repeat the errors which were repeatedly rejected on earlier schemes

The BCC asks you to reject this application on all of these grounds.

Yours sincerely

Denis Browne
Chairman, Planning Consultative Committee
BCC