

Kew Bridge Road ex-Scottish Widows site alongside the north end of Kew Bridge, Brentford
Conclusions based on the Inspector's report dated 1st December 2005 which, with the Urban Design Brief and its Aukett appendix, form the basis of community evaluation of schemes

Planning & Urban Design Brief

- a) There should be no shortcomings in the application drawings, in order to conform to PPG15 for a site in a conservation area. (Inspector's report paragraph 9.3)
- b) The Aukett Report and diagrams, as an appendix to the Site Brief, "serve as a useful 'yardstick' for what could be achieved and by which to measure other proposals. Consequently, it is reasonable to compare proposals with the schematic solution illustrated in the report and, if proposals do not measure up to the quality anticipated in the report, it is quite proper for proposals to be criticised for that reason." (9.6)

Kew Bridge Conservation Area

- c) By implication, if a scheme projected several metres forward from the Waggon and Horses and rose to five storeys, "this would be an unremitting expanse of plain elevation bearing down on the pub forecourt and standing well forward of any historic building line." and " . . . the effect on the streetscene would change from the disadvantage of being too open next to a derelict site, to the opposite extreme of being dwarfed by a slab of building. Consequently, not only would an opportunity to enhance this vista within the KBCA be lost but the result would be worse than the existing situation." (Inspector's report paragraphs 9.20 & 9.21)
The Inspector's criticisms in his paragraph 9.24 of the scheme he was considering are extensive and indicate what design elements should be avoided for this site in future:-
- d) Any development should not present a facade from the west, should not diminish the forecourt of the Wagon & Horses, should not be uncomfortably overpowering from the north side of Kew Bridge Road, should not present 'bulk' when viewed from the north-east, should not present "massive monotony" when viewed from the east, should not obscure important views of the Campanile and should not involve destruction of the foreshore, which would emphasise the volume of the building from the south. There should be elegance, sculpturing and human scale within the development. The proximity of the listed bridge should be recognised and the extent of replacement landscaping should be certain. (These are the inverse of the issues that the Inspector found with the scheme, as in his para. 9.31).
- e) The Inspector stated in his paragraph 9.32 that "benefits could equally be provided by an alternative development which was more closely aligned to the requirements of the Brief."

Strand on the Green Conservation Area

- f) Views out of the SotGCA towards the site are referred to in the Brief [2.37] as important to its character and appearance. The Inspector wrote about those views that " . . . the weight to be given to the policy guidance should be comparable with that for the statutory test." [under s.72 LB&CA] (9.35)

The Thames Riverside

- g) The Inspector opined that a boardwalk to replace the tow path would " . . . urbanise the river frontage and harm it." (9.41) He observed and noted " . . . the southern part of the appeal site providing a home for two houseboats, screened from the bustle around by self-sown willow trees and other undergrowth." (9.26) It would seem that the conditions of the houseboat occupiers should have received more attention in the Site Brief.

Listed Buildings

- h) "Views of the Campanile from Spring Grove and the river frontage in the SotGCA are important to its setting: reducing the ability to see the tower would diminish its special interest." (9.43)
- i) Proximity of a building to the bridge and the effect upon its setting, particularly at its northern approach, are important. (9.42)

Sunlight

- j) The public square should not be shaded. (9.48)

Daylight

- k) All flats should receive good levels of daylight to BRE standards to avoid "greater use of artificial lighting and electricity consumption than might otherwise be necessary, contrary to policies encouraging more sustainable forms of development." (9.51) "The BRE Guide considers that dwellings with no main window wall within 90° of due south are likely to be perceived as inadequately sunlit [4.30]." (9.45)

- l) ". . . the site is almost unconstrained . . . there would appear to be little reason why all the housing could not be provided with better than minimum levels of daylighting, some sunlight or a reasonable outlook." (9.52)

Outdoor Amenity Space

- m) There should be useful outdoor amenity space of a total size to meet the LPA's standards. (9.53/9.54)
No courtyard should be a "rather gloomy space " (9.47) and "options for soft landscaping would be restricted by the lack of sunlight." (9.46)

Existing Neighbours - Daylight and Outlook

- n) All flats on Green Dragon Lane, facing Kew Bridge Road, should have daylight to habitable rooms that meets the BRE Guide for daylight. (9.55)

Traffic

- o) It would be "wrong" [wrote the Inspector] to consider any other PTAL figure for transport accessibility than that set at 3 by Transport for London as it "is determined by a precise formula set by TfL". (9.56)
- p) ". . . banning right turns out of the site [using the entrance of the ex office block] would lead to U-turns further along Kew Bridge Road and . . . these could pose a significant risk to highway safety." (9.60) and "some dangerous U-turns would be likely and reasonable weight should be given to this concern." (9.61) and ". . . the risk could be avoided. The access through the Thameside Centre is protected by a s52 Agreement and is unrestricted. While the one-way system around the Thameside Centre is narrow, the appellant considers it good enough for large vehicles and refuse trucks. The Brief requires access from Kew Bridge Road away from the junction with Kew Bridge. Given a largely unconstrained site the design could have provided all access further along Kew Bridge Road from the junction, via the Thameside Centre, or at least allowed right turn exits that way. Consequently the risk to highway safety would be largely avoidable and this adds to the weight this concern should carry." (9.62)

Housing Density

- q) The site is in an 'Urban setting' and **should have a housing density " . . . towards the lower end of the range of 450 - 700 hrha."** (9.64)
This should be based on the net area (Inspector's Report, paras 2.5, 2.17, 4.44, 4.48).
- r) The affordable housing units should be 50% of the total and 70% rented and of a type and size that meet the Council's requirements for family housing (9.72)
- s) The Inspector wrote that the scheme would "offer less than the maximum reasonable proportion of affordable housing " and "While the proposals would produce additional housing, a better balanced scheme would accord with the Mayor's SPG and be more likely to meet the identified housing needs of the borough. No suggestion has been put forward that the site would be uneconomic if it were required to offer a 50% affordable provision of which 70% was rented, or that this site has any peculiar development costs. Indeed, given that it is a vacant site on the riverside, the reverse could be argued. The provision would therefore fall short of the UDP aim to secure the highest achievable provision [2.32] in terms of the number of units, size of units and the proportion and certainty of rented accommodation. " (9.72)

The Boat Club

- t) There should be a boat club ("Support for the Chiswick Pier Canoe Club, while welcome, would not be a substitute for provision on the site ") and there should be improvement of the steps within the appeal site and the slipway to the east of the bridge. (9.74)

The Aukett sketches - **see also the endorsement by the Inspector in b) above**

- u) The Inspector recorded in his paragraph 4.9 the evidence of the LPA that "It is artificial to divide the Brief between the Aukett work and that text drawn up by officers. All formed part of the SPG adopted by the LBH following the decision of the Council in September 2001. It is wrong to suggest that substantial weight be given to the text and yet limited, if any, weight be given to the Aukett work. The Council's decision to adopt was on the basis of the totality of the information placed before it".
- v) The Inspector wrote: "The Aukett sketches show a building rising through even steps towards a climax at the junction before cascading down on the other side. While devoid of detail, this would be an appropriate response to the site that would highlight the junction and respect the lower buildings along either side of Kew Bridge Road and Kew Bridge itself. Following the Aukett report would have the potential of producing good design." (9.88)
- w) The building should not be ". . . stretched out against every boundary" (9.89)