

12A Spring Grove
Chiswick
London W4 3NH
020 8994 4772

30 June 2009

Brendan Tinney
Development Control
London Borough of Hounslow
The Civic Centre
Lampton Road
Hounslow TW3 4DN

Dear Mr Tinney

Re: Planning Application 00657/2/PZ - 2 Kew Bridge Road TW8 0JF

History

Although the address of the above building is given as Brentford it actually lies in the Chiswick Conservation Area of Strand on the Green. The TW8 post code is an anomaly created for the benefit of the post office.

When the old coaching inn, The Star & Garter, was sold for offices in the 1980s, the local residents were pleased to see it rebuilt on the same footprint, in the same style and to a high standard. The garden at the rear of the inn became a car park, but the Spring Grove edge of the site was replanted with trees and shrubs to provide a screen. After more than 20 years of growth those trees have matured and now provide a welcome and dense area of green which will be lost if this development goes ahead. At no time, historically, has there been a building on this site, other than a low shed, and anything except a low building is likely to encroach upon the visual space of cottages 4-12 Spring Grove and upon the lower storeys of Rivers House.

Scale

It is now proposed that a 4-storey (including ground level garage) block of flats should be built on the car park with balconies and roof terraces overlooking the row of small two bedroom cottages (4-10 Spring Grove) on this narrow 4.3 metre road. This would constitute a serious invasion of their privacy. It should be noted that when the Parsons office block, which is some distance away from Spring Grove, was rebuilt as Rivers House permission for balconies on the south side was refused on the grounds that they would overlook the properties on Spring Grove.

Spring Grove consists of small Victorian cottages and Council built town houses with the exception of The Maltings old people's home which is 4-storeys. It could be argued that this provides a precedent for a further building of that size. However, The Maltings is built in a discreet warehouse style and does not overlook any of the surrounding residential dwellings. Where it verges on overlooking 12 Spring Grove it is reduced to 1-storey only.

Clearly planning regulations at that time were more stringent than they are today when it would seem that any available piece of land, regardless of its suitability and the affect it could have on the environment, is available for development even in a Conservation Area. I think this is a major cause for concern.

Design

This is a mini version of all the blocks of flats blighting our riverside. The design would do just as well for a factory or an office block and the materials, i.e. smooth red brickwork, dark red render and yellow multistock brickwork, relate to nothing on Spring Grove. It is aggressive and bulky and the corner structures are reminiscent of prison camp observation towers,

It would appear that the boundary wall between the car park and Spring Grove is to be taken down to accommodate this building. Is this permitted?

Parking

This plot is referred to as an under used site which is not the case. On average there are between 25 and 30 cars parked on the site daily.

Reducing the number of car parking spaces for the office block to 20 will only increase the pressure on Spring Grove and Strand on the Green which is already under stress from commuters taking up residents' spaces, and there is no guarantee that CPZ will be introduced at the west end of Strand on the Green, since residents at the east end of The Strand may reject it.

Access/Exit for Vehicles

At the moment most vehicles enter AND exit the car park via Strand on the Green because it is too difficult to get out on Spring Grove. It is suggested that in future vehicles relating to both the offices and the flats would enter and exit on Spring Grove opposite number 12. I should like to point out that vehicles relating to numbers 12, 12A and a council garage also exit (backing out) from the private road at the side of number 12 opposite the proposed entrance/exit to the flats. This conjunction would seem a recipe for disaster.

In order to accommodate these vehicles it is proposed that the entrance/exit on Spring Grove should be widened to 5.5 metres, with double yellow lines for 5 metres on either side, thus taking up more valuable parking space needed for residents.

Since there would be no parking provision for visitors or commercial vehicles on site, and that includes dustcarts, furniture vans, delivery vans, fire engines, ambulances and other services, all of which could be stationery for some time, they too would be taking up road space and could make passage impossible. Blockages of this kind could be a major handicap for ambulances and hospital transport visiting the Maltings old people's home, and in an emergency could lead to catastrophe. There could be further aggravation from cars waiting for the security gates to the flats to open. It should be noted that the cottages 4-

12 already have to be protected from heavy vehicles by a row of bollards.

Amenity Space/Air Pollution

Because there is no back garden to number 12 Spring Grove children play in the front garden immediately opposite the proposed entrance/exit to the flats. They will either be exposed to the fumes from the vehicles or be deprived of an outside play area.

Kew Bridge Junction

Much is made of the fact that there are extremely good transport links close to the site. This is also used as a justification for the vast proposed St George development by Kew Bridge and for the even bigger development at Lionel Road. As a result Strand on the Green, one of the few remaining riverside villages in London and one of the oldest designated conservation areas, is being crushed by overdevelopment and consumed by traffic problems. This one may be smaller, but it can only add to the destruction of an area that should be treated with sensitivity.

Disruption

During construction the residents of Spring Grove, particularly cottages 4-12 would have to put up with the noise and blockages caused by building works and a constant flow of lorries churning up the road a few feet from their doors.

Neighbourhood

Previous experience has shown that residents of gated properties never really integrate with the community, but remain behind closed doors. Spring Grove is part of the 'village' of Strand on the Green. The residents know each other and there is a strong community spirit. This development would change the whole character of the area.

Strand on the Green, including Spring Grove, Utell House and Rivers House, is supposed to be a Conservation Area and this development will certainly not enhance or benefit the neighbourhood in any way. English Heritage has recently drawn attention to the fact that our Conservation Areas are at risk and this is an example. I therefore object most strongly to the development of 2 Kew Bridge Road car park on the grounds given above and I sincerely hope that Hounslow Planning Department will refuse this application.

Yours sincerely

Sonja Leadlay

c.c. Paul Lynch
Felicity Barwood