

Tottenham Conservation Area Advisory Committee

Haringey Council
Planning and Regeneration
River Park House
225 High Road
Wood Green
London
N22 8HQ

13 October 2013

Dear Sir or Madam

HGY 2015/3000 – Tottenham Hotspur Stadium Proposals

We are writing to you formally to object to the above application.

The arguments set out in this letter relate chiefly to the demolition of three listed buildings in order to predominantly widen the pavement and extent of landscaping to give additional space for football supporters to assemble.

Whilst we support the scheme in principle and recognise that this will bring much needed regeneration to the area, we believe that the scale of loss to the historic streetscape is both unacceptable and unnecessary for the construction and successful future of the new stadium.

This letter makes reference to the Heritage Statement by Donald Insall Associates and the paragraph numberings we have used are theirs.

Introduction

There are some welcome points in the Heritage Statement by Donald Insall Associates but also significant points on which we differ, and therefore different conclusions that we reach. We do not believe that the Heritage Statement makes a convincing case – in summary:

- Adequate efforts have not been made to find alternative uses for the heritage assets,
- Adequate efforts have not been made to work those assets into the proposals
- We do not believe that the open space proposals for the site are good enough to warrant the loss of the heritage buildings.

We have serious concerns about the public realm space proposed to the Tottenham High Road elevation and feel that this not only does not put the new plots created to optimal use, but completely neglects to preserve and enhance the character of the local area or to make a positive contribution to the conservation area.

Tottenham High Road is one of the most pivotal historic routes into central London; it is absolutely crucial that the buildings here are preserved and cherished for future generations.

Maintaining the listed buildings would not only enhance and improve the overall quality of Spurs development, but would also soften the impact of the large industrial stadium in Tottenham's streetscape. The current juxtaposition of these charming historic buildings is fundamental in achieving this.

Tottenham and Edmonton Dispensary,

Paragraph 3.3.1: Whilst the appearance of the Dispensary (built 1910) has been recently altered by the demolition of the early 20th Century infill building previously located at the South return elevation, this '*awkward gap*' can easily be made good to avoid detracting from the beautiful and decorative brick and Portland stone façade. Using the '*awkward gap*' created by the demolition of an infill building to then try to justify the demolition of the Dispensary itself is not a rational argument and in fact completely absurd. Dispensary buildings in England are very rare and this example is both unique and exceptionally well preserved. It was designed by a local architect, H. Seymour Couchman, but is of national quality in terms of its architecture. All of the original fenestration is intact behind the current boarding.

Paragraph 3.3.2: Contrary to the report, it is an exaggeration to say that '*the building currently has no meaningful setting*'; the building makes a vast contribution to the High Road streetscape and forms an important part of Tottenham's past. Its stone entablature fascia inscribed 'Tottenham and Edmonton Dispensary' is particularly charming. Whilst the building is not currently actively used, it can easily be restored and converted to a retail/café/restaurant use to enhance the proposed stadium plans. Looking at recent precedents of large-scale developments in the London conurbation, these have all been more valuable additions when built to work synergistically with London's rich heritage and history.

The building internally: The committee of Tottenham CAAC has been unable to gain access to the building. Whilst it is noted in the heritage report by Donald Insall Associates that many significant Edwardian interior features such as mosaic tiles, decorative metal covers, chimney pieces, staircases, balustrades, cornices, dado rails, picture rails, skirting, doors remain and that some rooms are even described as being "*originally highly decorated and some evidence of the mouldings survive*", it is a shame that the report does not include photographs to reveal the true splendour of these historic decorative and ornate features.

We are disappointed by the regrettable decision of English Heritage not to grant national listing to this building.

The Red House

Paragraph 3.4.1: The Red House, like the Dispensary was built for commercial use – it was originally a coffee house, built in 1878-1880 by a teetotal local philanthropist.

Paragraph 3.4.2: As per the Dispensary, it is an exaggeration to say that '*the building currently has no meaningful setting*'; the building makes a vast contribution to the High Road streetscape and forms an important part of Tottenham's past. Again, whilst the building is not currently actively used, it can easily be restored and put back to a class of use which will complement the stadium development.

Paragraph 3.4.4: The building still retains its original charm, even if the recess in which it originally bore its name is now 'just red brick'. One would have thought that owing to the historical links to *THFC*, there would be benefits in keeping this building. This link, which adds to the significance and value of this building, will be lost forever if the building is destroyed.

The former White Hart Public House

Paragraph 3.5.1: To claim that owing to the demolition of the adjacent terraces that this building has now '*lost its original terraced setting to the north making it appear incomplete as an architectural composition and exposing its plain northern return elevation which detracts from the character of the street*' is bold and equally irrational. This again demonstrates a complete lack of understanding of the importance of protecting the unique character of listed buildings from developments such as this.

Paragraph 3.5.2: As per the above buildings, it is an exaggeration to say that *'the building currently has no meaningful setting'* – all these buildings make an extremely positive contribution to the conservation area and would only enhance the development.

The building internally: It is noted in the report that *'original joinery and decorative architectural mouldings survive... A number of Edwardian chimney pieces also survive to the upper floors, consisting of painted timber mantels with decorative tiles to the cast-iron fireplaces'*. Again, disappointingly, no photographic record of these was included in the report.

Conclusion

In our view the applicants' most recent proposal is extremely detrimental not only to the preservation of significant historical heritage within the Borough of Haringey, but also in terms of complementing other recent significant developments in London. We consider that these listed buildings help frame the new stadium in a meaningful way and added context and scale and historical grounding. We also feel that these added balance to the High Road both from a north south and east west point of view, adding to the local conservation area. We consider that if the northern group of listed buildings could be retained, the southern group could be equally.

We strongly disagree that the club's proposals would greatly improve the setting and townscape of the area. It appears that the heritage statement is not impartial has clearly been written to fit in with the ambitions of Spurs to build the largest stadium in London. Every football team these days wants an 'icon', competing with rivals for a 'bigger' or 'better' stadium. We are confident that a new stadium can be built, whilst successfully managing crowd flow and associated egress, without the need to demolish this significant cluster of historic listed buildings. The master plan (Drawing reference POP-4494-PLN-GA-0121-00), demonstrates that there are multiple egress routes designed in scheme within the South-West corner and the comparison drawing (POP-4494-PLN-GA-0140-00) substantiates that the width between the listed buildings is in fact greater than the width of the egress route being created by their demolition. We further disagree that they lie within a poor setting or one that cannot be reconciled with the proposals. As highlighted above, recent precedents of large-scale developments in the London conurbation have been more successful when built to work synergistically with London's rich heritage and history.

We disagree that the buildings of the southern cluster are necessarily rendered meaningless and isolated in the new proposed context. Whilst it is fantastic that Warrington House is being retained, we believe that the new development would better complement Tottenham High Roads townscape if the remaining listed buildings were retained and properly absorbed into the design of the development. All of the detached buildings, presenting three storey facades to the High Road, are of a size and importance that they can stand up to a challenging context. In addition they could be linked together by the use of wrought iron work, trees, if it was sought to do so. This would not be beyond the imagination and ability of a talented Architect. One would have thought that something to this effect would be preferential for Spurs.

We would argue that the public realm area proposed in the place of the listed buildings is a damaging strategy that will not improve with time. Enough local and national examples exist of similar public spaces that do not live up to their original aspirations. One example, also by Populous, is Olympic Way, leading to Wembley Stadium. This is an insipid, empty and dark public space during non-match day, only to be filled with hot dog stands, litter, counterfeit goods and ticket touts on match day – does this really fit with the regeneration strategy for the future of Tottenham High Road?

Regeneration is something that the area needs, but this needs to be balanced, considered and not at the expense of losing some of our heritage. Once these buildings are gone, they

are gone forever, as was the case with the demolition of Fletcher House last summer. We have not only a conservation responsibility but also a social responsibility to ensure that buildings such as these are cherished for future generations to enjoy and learn from.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Bradby
Chairman of Tottenham CAAC