
THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY
The champion for Victorian and Edwardian architecture

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Your reference: HGY/2015/3000
Our reference: 2015/10/018

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Dear Sir/Madam

RE: Proposed demolition of and comprehensive phased development for stadium, including the demolition of 3 locally listed buildings.

Thank you for consulting the Victorian Society on this application. We strongly **object** to the revised proposals concerning Tottenham Hotspur's new stadium, which now includes the demolition of three locally listed buildings on High Road.

We are supportive of the exciting new development in Tottenham, and we are appreciative that the applicant has kept us well informed throughout the development process. We are however dismayed to see that the demolition of 746-750 High Road is once again proposed. The Society, along with SAVE, opposed the demolition of the three buildings in 2010, and the subsequent revision of the scheme was welcomed. Most of the buildings this side of the High Road have already been demolished to make way for the stadium; the three locally listed buildings were supposed to be retained because they are worthy of retention, and are recognized as such. The current application is therefore now little different to the strongly opposed initial planning application in terms of its destructiveness and consent should therefore be refused on the same grounds.

The Tottenham & Edmonton Dispensary, the Red House and the White Hart Pub make an important contribution to the streetscape, the history of the area and indeed the history of the football club. These qualities have long been championed by other conservation groups such as the Tottenham Civic Society, and we support the comments made by Matthew Bradby on 13th October from the Tottenham CAAC.

Dispensaries are a quintessential feature of Victorian and Edwardian streetscapes, having an important presence in towns fortunate enough to be provided with one. Without a comprehensive study of this building type available, it is not possible to understand the extent to which the loss of such a building would be regretted – particularly when it is such an accomplished design as this one. They are incredibly important in illustrating the administration of health care before the creation of the NHS. The Red House was originally a coffee house or temperance inn, and has had

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strong links to the football club as the offices of Bill Nicholson (1919-2004), regarded by many as Spurs' greatest ever manager. Finally, the White Hart Pub, which if retained would represent the last remaining fragment of the stadium development that Spurs undertook from 1899, when the pub was built in anticipation of the massive increase in football. The establishment was opened by the brewers Charrington, who leased the land upon which White Hart Lane was built on. With both buildings so integral to the club's past, their demolition is therefore a curious aim. Spurs wouldn't want to end up a club with no history.

Furthermore, it is impossible that their demolition will enhance the character of the Conservation Area as suggested. The High Road Historic Corridor Character Appraisal (March, 2009) refers to the red and yellow stock brick buildings which make up the general identity of the area; 746-750 being some of the best examples of this trend, and are locally listed for their architectural and historic interest. It must be remembered that the Conservation Area was designated to preserve the character of the High Road, and therefore buildings which make a positive contribution to it. The current planning application could only be considered a detractor to the Conservation Area, in that the proposed demolition obviously disrupts the prevailing street pattern. It would also be difficult to suggest that the new stadium is in keeping with the scale and character of the area. Retaining and refurbishing the locally listed buildings would represent an enhancement of the Conservation Area, which is a requisite of the NPPF, and would go some way in mitigating the dramatic impact the new stadium will have on many other heritage assets.

The importance of the urban context to an urban football stadium has been brought to light before. Without the historic townscape, the stadium might as well be a suburban destination with no links to the Tottenham community whatsoever. The new complex should be visually rooted to the area, not at odds with it. Failure to integrate with the historic setting would be a failure for the scheme; an oversight in design that could only be regretted. The dispensary, house and pub have been present for over a hundred years, and are likely to outlast the new stadium as pieces of celebrated architecture. Therefore, it would do well to cause as little impact on the area as possible, and politely integrate with elements of the built environment that are already appreciated, rather than ousting them. To plan such a large intervention as though it is designed on a blank canvass is careless and unsophisticated – the area deserves better.

A strident stadium design has been chosen which is intentionally unsympathetic to this end. Presumably the real reason why the demolition of 746-50 High Road is sought is to allow the new stadium to be more visually prominent. The advice on crowd safety is there to give this desire more legitimacy. If crowd safety is as serious an issue as implied, then it would have been one of the first considerations to have been worked out in the initial planning, not a worryingly late afterthought as it is here. The telling options appraisal is presented as though they are the only options and this is the only one of twelve that is any way viable. If a space as continuously wide as 9.5m is sought (the width of the pavement in the Populous scheme), then this should be achieved in the space or 'canyon' between 746-750 High Road and the new stadium. A width greater than this is actually provided by most of the area behind the retained locally listed buildings in the consented scheme. It is also not clear that the Populous scheme presents a pavement wide enough to discourage anyone from walking on the road either. Surely this is inevitable if the principal thoroughfare is the pavement and therefore safety gains are limited.

A minor change to the consented scheme could be to prohibit access to these buildings as food outlets (or otherwise hitherto unexplored uses) from the street on match days and allow entrance only from the rear. This would also serve to discourage fans from using the pavement. The concept of 'desire lines' is used as a justification as though it is a forgone conclusion when it is by nature unpredictable. Fans will be arriving at an almost unrecognizable site. Appropriate signage, barriers

and policing, which would be present on match days anyway, would surely prevent the foreseen charge up the High Road.

In short, we believe that the retention of these three buildings need not and should not prevent the construction of the new stadium from going ahead. We are not placing the preservation of heritage above human safety; both of these can and should be achievable with feasible alternatives. There is absolutely no reason why these historically important buildings cannot be incorporated in the realisation of the proposed stadium design. Only this would represent an enhancement of the Conservation Area's character. It should be an aspect of the new design which is ceded, which is surely not so difficult a solution given that the new stadium does not yet exist. This would be fairer than razing the irreplaceable heritage assets.

We therefore recommend that consent for this application is **refused**. I would be grateful if you could inform me of your decision in due course.

Yours sincerely

Alex Bowring
Conservation Adviser