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Neil.McClellan@haringey.gov.uk
By email

20 November 2015

Dear Mr McClellan,

Planning application: HGY/2015/3000 - Proposed demolition and comprehensive phased redevelopment for stadium with hotel, Tottenham Experience, sports centre; community and/or offices; housing; and health centre; together with associated facilities including the construction of new and altered roads, footways; public and private open spaces; landscaping and related works.

SAVE Britain's Heritage writes to **strongly object** to this application, which would result in the demolition of 746-750 High Road, three locally listed buildings within the North Tottenham Conservation Area.

It is with great disappointment that we are once again faced with an application that proposes to demolish these three buildings. SAVE led a campaign against similar demolition proposals in 2009-2010, commissioning architect Huw Thomas to produce an alternative scheme showing how these three buildings could be retained. We subsequently entered into negotiations with Tottenham Hotspur Football Club, leading to a redesign which accommodated these buildings as part of the stadium rebuilding and expansion. This revised scheme received planning permission in September 2011, and remains valid.

Since it has been demonstrated that these buildings can be retained as part of the stadium expansion we consider there is no justification for their demolition, and request that planning permission be **refused**. We note that strong objections have been received from

the Victorian Society and the Tottenham Conservation Area Advisory Committee, and our letter supports these objections.

The site & its buildings

The site in question covers almost 9 hectares, but our comments in this letter relate solely to the four buildings on the south west corner of the site, fronting the High Road. These are Valentino's public house and nightclub (formerly the White Hart public house), the Red House, and the former Tottenham Dispensary, each locally listed, and the Grade II listed Warmington House. The latter is to be retained and restored as part of this application.

All four are located within the North Tottenham Conservation Area, sub area 4, and are noted for their architectural and historic interest and for the contribution they make to the streetscape. The Conservation Area Appraisal describes each building in detail, and they warrant a short description in Pevsner.

SAVE visited the site on 12 August 2015 to get a better understanding of the buildings and their settings. Taking each building in turn, Valentino's is a late nineteenth century public house with attractive decorative features including mullioned windows, double gables, and granite pilasters. Its establishment directly relates to the growth of the football club, with the club renting land for its first pitch from the brewery, and this marks a long history of association with Tottenham; players and managers were known to frequent Valentinos, and there are instances of silverware being brought into the pub following successful campaigns.

The Red House dates from the late 1870s and is a handsome Queen Anne building of three storeys with pitched gable ends and oriel windows. It was originally a coffee house built as part of the temperance movement, but from the 1920s it became part of the football club and used for offices. Bill Nicholson, one of the most important figures in the club's history, is but one previous occupant of the building.

The former Tottenham and Edmonton Dispensary is a particularly interesting building of 1910. In red brick with Portland stone dressings, it features an Ionic doorway beneath an inscribed stone entablature, with dentilled cornicing, window surrounds and tall chimneys, creating a well proportioned and aesthetically pleasing building. Its use as a dispensary provides further historical interest for its role in the administering of healthcare before the creation of the NHS.

Finally, Warmington House dates from 1828, and is an important survival of the type of house that once lined Tottenham High Road. Built in stock brick, it has a rusticated stuccoed ground floor, window pediments, and internally retains its original plan form. It was listed Grade II in 1974.

All of the buildings are in a reasonable condition and could be restored and adapted for new uses. They were until recently still in use. They all make a positive contribution to their surroundings and the wider Conservation Area, and all efforts should be applied to retaining them. On these points we disagree with the applicant's heritage statement, which we consider to be overly dismissive of the quality of the buildings, overstating minor points such as later additions and their current condition.

The applicant is equally dismissive about the buildings' group value and their contribution to the Conservation Area. The Conservation Area Appraisal notes that two of the predominant characteristics of the area are the use of red and yellow stock brick, and that buildings front directly onto the High Road creating a sense of enclosure. These four buildings are noted as being some of the best examples of these characteristics, and it is clear they contribute positively.

Taken together, the buildings have considerable group value. This point is particularly noticeable looking down Bill Nicholson Way, with two of the buildings framing the view of St Francis de Sales church on the opposite side of the High Road, and also when looking north on the High Road. Their loss to the Conservation Area would be substantial.

The presumption within a Conservation Area is to refuse applications which seek demolition of buildings which contribute positively to the area. It is clear that these three buildings do, and their loss would cause great harm. This harm would also extend to the Grade II listed building, which would lose its context. Their retention and reuse, by contrast, would enhance the Conservation Area and, as the Victorian Society point out, go some way towards mitigating the dramatic impact the new stadium design will have.

It has become increasingly common that football clubs, as a result of comprehensive stadium redevelopments, now find themselves alienated from their surroundings and their history. Particularly bad examples from the Premiership include Stoke's Britannia Stadium, Swansea's Liberty Stadium, Norwich's Carrow Road, and to a lesser extent Manchester City's Etihad Stadium, which is mitigated somewhat by a high quality stadium design. Tottenham's desire to remain on its historic site is to be welcomed, but this need not come at the expense of surrounding historic buildings.

Many examples exist where football clubs have enhanced surrounding buildings, strengthening the bond between the club, its fans, and the local and wider community. Perhaps the best example in the context of this application is Aston Villa's Holte Hotel, a Grade B locally listed Victorian building which the football club applied to demolish as part of a proposed stadium redevelopment. Planning permission was refused, and instead the club restored and reopened the hotel in 2006 as an events space. It is now a much loved venue for fans of the football club, well used on match days and available for hire at other times. We would encourage Tottenham to adopt a similar approach with regard these three locally listed buildings.

Crowd Safety

We note the applicant has submitted a document on crowd safety as justification for demolition. Whilst public safety should be a primary concern, we do not agree that demolition is the only way to facilitate this. As pointed out in the Victorian Society's letter one solution is to utilise the canyon between 746-750 High Road and the proposed stadium, a feature of the consented scheme. Alternatively restrictions on how the buildings are used on match days, and the location of their entrances, is another possible solution for addressing crowd safety issues.

Conclusion

SAVE has had a long term interest in this site, and we are committed to ensuring the best possible solution is achieved. We therefore request that this application be **refused** planning permission so as to facilitate the retention of these three buildings as part of the wider development. Were this to happen we would withdraw our objection. This is not a case of having one or the other – a new stadium and associated facilities can be achieved whilst retaining, reusing and enhancing these locally listed buildings. Indeed the applicant has already demonstrated that it is possible and achieved planning permission for such a scheme.

Should this scheme be approved we consider that there are strong grounds for it to be called in for full public inquiry, and we would push for this to happen. Additionally, SAVE would consider a judicial review of this proposal if planning permission is granted.

I would be grateful if you could inform me of the decision of the planning committee in due course.

Yours sincerely,



Mike Fox
Caseworker