



The Hammersmith Society

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Nigel Pallace
Director of Environment
London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
W6

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Dear Mr Pallace,

Town Hall Regeneration Scheme Proposals

1. I am writing with the Hammersmith Society's comments on the latest version of the regeneration scheme plans as shown to local groups on 8 June and subsequently at public exhibitions.
2. We understand the proposals have been well received at the public exhibitions. The planned demolition of the Town Hall extension is a significant planning gain, but the role of the amenity groups is to assess a scheme of this size and scale critically, and not to let one positive element obliterate the need to consider the detailed impact of the scheme on Hammersmith.
3. With this in mind we make the following comments.

Height and Density

4. We are concerned each time new details of the proposals are shown, they move further away from the original brief. The advice given to developers in 2007 states: "(the height of the proposed development) *should be considered carefully. The possibility of some elements rising to around the height of the existing Town hall extensionis not ruled out .. There is some benefit in height in land marking the civic site. Any height above the general level of the Town Hall and the buildings surrounding the site will need to be examined very carefully in relation to views from the river, and the relationship with the adjacent residential areas, particularly west of Cromwell Avenue. There would also be significant views of the site from the Mall*

An Amenity Group concerned with Planning and Conservation in Hammersmith since 1962

Patron: The Mayor of Hammersmith & Fulham
Member of the London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies Founder Member of The West London River Group
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Conservation Area and from the Grade 2 [now 2] listed Hammersmith Bridge. Development proposals that have an effect on those views should protect and if possible enhance them.”*

5. The height of the scheme now reaches 14 ½ stories for two of the buildings, despite the original brief linking the height to that of the existing Town Hall extension (7 stories) as an indicative maximum. The other blocks are 7, 8 and 9 storeys. The developers have added a further 30+ units to the scheme. The impact of the increased height and density over the original proposals is significant. A development of this size will have an unacceptable negative impact on its surroundings in height and mass, dominating and overpowering the immediate vicinity.

6. The two tallest buildings will affect the long views from the river and be visible from many parts of Hammersmith. The 8 and 9 storey blocks will also be very visible from the river.

7. The scheme as shown at the exhibitions did not clearly show the impact of the height of the proposed scheme: the selective views did not illustrate view from the river and from the middle distance along King Street in such a way as to make the height clear. We regard this as misleading in so far as the public were asked to comment on a scheme where the impact of its true height was not shown.

8. If built, the height of the two 14+ storey blocks will constitute a precedent for tall buildings between King St and the Town Hall. This will have serious and permanent consequences for the townscape of Hammersmith and should be taken into account when considering the planning application.

Traffic

9. The proposed scheme involves 320 residential units, new offices additional to the town hall offices, shops, cafes, restaurants and a large supermarket, and a car park from Cromwell Avenue. The scheme as a whole will generate very much more traffic than is currently produced by the Town Hall, cinema and Cromwell Avenue flats. Servicing these facilities alone will require a high level of traffic movement, before supermarket client traffic and residential traffic is included. There were no detailed illustrations of parking and access. No indication was given how traffic would be managed around the cramped one way system of Studland St and Dalling Road and no projections shown of how much more traffic would be generated. This is a source of concern. These issues need to be addressed before a planning application is made, and traffic impact assessments should be provided.

Introduction of a Supermarket / Loss of the Cinema

10. Although we accept that ‘a supermarket’ was included in the original tender scheme, we also note the Council has previously refused permission to two applications by Tesco. It is certainly questionable as to whether another supermarket is required or necessary. The proposed supermarket is bigger than the Sainsbury’s in Kings Mall but we were told it would entail more “basket” than trolley shopping. However at its proposed size it is bound to generate customer car traffic.

11. Many people have commented on the loss of a cinema in this part of Hammersmith, especially as no cinema is likely now within the NCP car park site development. We note that the existing cinema site is now owned by Tesco, and that CineWorld, the current cinema operators, seem to be doing everything possible to make their operation as invisible as possible. By contrast, if a new/refurbished cinema on the site was run by a dynamic operator with a vested interest in its success, it could make a very different and more positive contribution to the local area.

Setting of the Listed Town Hall

12. The demolition of the 1970s Town Hall Extension is offered as a planning gain to the public, in terms of the creation of a new public space which re-introduces the Town Hall to its rightful setting.

This is certainly to be welcomed. However we consider the raising of Nigel Playfair Avenue to first floor level will damage the setting of the listed building by crowding the west side of the Town Hall and taking away the possibility of seeing the building standing alone as it was intended to be.

13. The demolition of Cromwell Mansions, the mansion block on King Street facing Dalling Road, is a serious loss to the local streetscape, as it closes the vista from Dalling Road in a very satisfactory fashion. We would like to see the frontage preserved and incorporated in that section of the development.

Footbridge over A4

14. The Society's objections are well founded and can be summarised as follows:

- It would damage the setting of the listed Town hall (as above)
- It would have a serious and aggressive effect on Furnival Gardens by removing usable ball game and other recreational space in order to create the bridge's landing slope. We question whether the bridge ramps will take only 10% of Furnival Gardens' space, as claimed. It will damage the intimate and low-rise character of the Gardens and surroundings, which is part of what attracts people to enjoy themselves there.
- The noise insulation benefits claimed for the ramping will not extend along the whole extent of the Gardens, only for the part affected by the earthwork.
- A bridge crossing over a major road has safety implications, and we consider there is a significant possibility that in the future the bridge may have to be fully enclosed. It would become both an eyesore and a claustrophobic and unpleasant place.
- The bridge effectively rules out a grade crossing to Furnival Gardens. We maintain, based upon our own independent research, that the introduction of a carefully considered traffic management scheme between the Hammersmith Flyover and Hogarth roundabout could include safe grade crossings at several points, which would much more effectively re-unite Hammersmith to the river without loss of traffic capacity on the road.

15. In summary we believe the Council should take a more rigorous line with the developers over height and density of the proposed development. The height of the tallest buildings should be considerably reduced. No further increase in height or density should be endorsed. The preservation of the Cromwell Mansions frontage should be included. The footbridge, with its drastic impact on Furnival Gardens, should be omitted from the scheme in favour of a proper traffic management scheme on the A4 which would allow grade crossings to unite Hammersmith to its riverside.

Yours sincerely,

Melanie Whitlock

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 Cllr Lucy Ivimy
 Cllr Mike Cartwright
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 Hammersmith & Fulham Historic Buildings Group
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