

Tim Russell
24 Upper Mall
London W6 9TA

22 September 2010

Mr Pallace
Director of Environment
London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
Town Hall Extension
King Street
London W6 9JU

Dear Mr Pallace

The proposed Town Hall extension and related development scheme

As you can see we live in Upper Mall near to the Dove Pub. As you will know this is a very busy area but also a beautiful one, not simply for the residents but for the many thousands of people a day who walk down the river. It is also an area full of history, and whilst history should never stand in the way of constructive progress, all our friends and visitors to the area are taken aback and appalled by the proposed development on the north side of the Great West Road.

There are a number of reasons for our objection. I cannot personally, for business reasons, attend the forthcoming public meeting due I think to take place on 13 October. I am therefore voicing my concerns to you in writing and I will be sending a copy of this letter to Mark Loveday who is, I understand, the councillor responsible for the development as well as other councils and our MP. My principal letter is directed to you as Director of Environment and my major concern with the development is that it is not in the interests of residents, workers or visitors and flies in the face of everything our planning department should be fighting to uphold.

Indeed my current view is that it has been approved through a conflict of interest and would never have received approval but for the benefit given to Hammersmith Council by the developer's assistance in ensuring the extension of the Town Hall. If this development goes ahead as planned, it is a shameful matter and whilst it is understandable that the old Town Hall be regenerated and whilst it is reasonable that a sensible development is approved in the vicinity (to take place at the same time) there is no justification whatsoever in the proposed scheme. These are some of the reasons why I and others object so much (other than the underlying problem of a clear conflict of interest between those making the decision to approve the planning and the scheme itself).

1. It is quite clear that the new buildings will, contrary to promises, be higher than the existing

Town Hall extension. Indeed, the new scheme will, as I understand it, include two towers at least 14 stories i.e. twice the maximum height originally proposed with an obvious increase in numbers of people as well as the fact that this will tower over all of the old buildings and look even more appalling than the huge “Day of the Triffids” like advertising structures by the Hammersmith flyover. Once this building has been completed there is clearly no way that any objections can lead to any satisfactory conclusion and it will set a precedent for future development throughout the borough, including along the river, which again cannot be challenged in the future. Put simply, the original mandate and the subsequent plans are wholly misleading as the artists impression (which you may have seen and which was initiated by local residents) illustrates quite clearly.

2. There is also going to be a foot bridge over the A4 which will be unattractive, costly, unnecessary (there is an existing subway under the road – indeed more than one) and will inevitably spoil much of Furnivall Gardens which is obviously a very popular small park. It will spoil the appearance of the river frontage and create even more foot traffic in this area, even though there is only a very small alley between the park and Upper Mall going past the Dove pub. It is likely, given the plans including a new (unnecessary) supermarket, shops, restaurants and 320 houses, there is also going to be considerable congestion to King Street which is a one way system around this point. It is already very congested and you and others will know how busy the roads around Hammersmith can be. Has no-one even considered this? The same is true of the parking spaces which are already over-stretched.
3. One of the tragedies of this scheme is that I understand that the cinema is to be demolished and not replaced. This means there will be no cinema in Hammersmith which is a great shame and surely wholly unnecessary and simply a reflection of commercial greed in that there is clearly no problem agreeing to yet another supermarket etc. All in all the scheme is ill thought out despite a long period of discussion and wholly inappropriate and it is unreasonable and unfair of the Council to ride roughshod over the views of all the local residents and visitors paying lip service to consultation. Only those with self interest believe the scheme has merit, and the first step that I would urge you and your colleagues to take is to ensure that at the public consultations a true and accurate design is shown of the planned development, including the views from up and down King Street and/or from Dowling Road and/or from across the park. A meaningful consultation cannot take place if it is uninformed or informed opinions ignored and the proposed development should be reduced in size and impact with more consideration given to the type of issues set out in this letter.

Yours sincerely

Timothy D Russell