

HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM HISTORIC BUILDINGS GROUP  
and  
THE HAMMERSMITH SOCIETY

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Charles Campion  
John Thompson & Partners  
23-25 Great Sutton Street  
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6<sup>th</sup> December 2010

Dear Charles Campion,

**HAMMERSMITH EMBANKMENT, W6 9SF**  
(formerly known as the Lyons and Distillers sites)

Thank you for arranging the pre-application consultation meetings. The Hammersmith Society was disappointed not to be invited to the first one on 4<sup>th</sup> Nov. Both Groups attended the consultation meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> November.

I now write to confirm what the Historic Buildings Group and the Hammersmith Society consider the key issues for this site to be.

**BACKGROUND**

There is a long history to proposals for this site. I attach details in an appendix at the end of this letter.

**OUR AIMS FOR THE SITE**

**1. Recognition of and respect for the historic nature of this site** (which has included a Saxon village as well as Brandenburg House). It is in the Fulham Reach Conservation Area and the Thames Policy Area (TPA) and its neighbours include the listed building on Hammersmith Malls and Hammersmith Bridge.

In practical terms this means

- The need to complete any archaeological work needed on the site, the river wall and the foreshore. A watercourse known as Parr's Ditch, the traditional boundary between the Hammersmith Parish and the Fulham Parish, ran through the site. As we understand it the route of the ditch has so far only partially been established by excavations.
- Sensitive restoration of the historic river wall which has interesting features including a parish boundary stone and a conical brick structure.
- The history of the site should be recorded and appropriately displayed and marked.

## **2. Recognition that this riverside development should respect and respond to its riverside setting and the surrounding area.**

- The *Thames Strategy - Kew to Chelsea* is recognised in the London Plan as an appraisal for the TPA. It refers to the stretch of the Thames from Kew Bridge to Vauxhall Bridge as ‘*the transition from the Arcadia of Kew and above to the Metropolis of Lambeth and Westminster and below*’. Hammersmith Malls, just upstream of Hammersmith Bridge contain many listed buildings and are an example of a strand development. Development on this site should extend Arcadia downstream rather than Metropolis up stream.
- In practical terms this means continuing and landscaping the riverside walk , retaining the mature trees that are on the site and planting more. Providing informal open space alongside the riverside walk as was envisaged the original 1886 master plan for the site so that riverside is ‘greener’, the hard edge to the river is softened and the riverside walk becomes part of a green chain and, with the encouragement of biodiversity, more of a green corridor alongside the river which has been memorably described by the Environment Agency as a ‘wildlife super- highway’.
- The buildings should relate to the existing street pattern and allow permeability through the site to the river. They should not crowd the riverside nor block off views of the river. The height of the buildings should relate carefully to the river and the surrounding streets. There should be no tall buildings
- The site is highly visible from Hammersmith Bridge and further upstream, and from the opposite bank of the river. These are key views in the UDP and the development should take great care to avoid damaging these views by massive and overbearing buildings close to the river.
- The riverside walk should be improved at the outset of development by moving the section by Chancellor’s Road back next to the river, where there is currently a blind corner in the riverside walk, improving sightlines at that point and ensuring adequate pedestrian/cyclist space. The reason for the creation of this temporary diversion away from the River has now gone.
- There should be provision of a water related use. The extant scheme included a water sports centre for young people with an associated pontoon which had been agreed with rowing and watersports interests. This provision should be retained in any new proposals.

**3. Building an Integrated Community.** This was an important issue for immediate residents at the meetings. Buildings should have an active frontage. The housing should be mixed tenure including key worker and family housing to ensure an active community and not a largely absent one. Walkway layout should encourage pedestrian permeability from Fulham Palace Road as well as from adjacent streets north and south. Ideally there would be glimpses of the river to draw people through the

development. There should be sufficient amenity space both private and public and public space should be near the river. Although there will clearly be private amenity space, the development should not be a “gated community”.

There is severe traffic and parking overload in the immediate area due partly to the proximity of the hospital. Thought must be given to ensuring service and underground parking access creates as little conflict as possible with local traffic. Residents should not qualify for on-street parking permits.

The aims of the two Groups have been consistent through the years. We hope that the new proposals will meet the aspirations of the local people and will reflect the policies that relate to the riverside and the conservation area

Yours sincerely

Angela Dixon  
Chairman  
H&F Historic Buildings Group

Melanie Whitlock  
Chairman  
Hammersmith Society

cc Nigel Pallace  
Paul Goodacre  
West London River Group

## **HAMMERSMITH EMBANKMENT BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **1.1 Planning Background**

Hammersmith Embankment is in the Fulham Reach CA, and near Hammersmith Bridge, one of the Borough's most distinguished listed buildings and an icon for the Borough. It is an element in important river views listed in the Borough's UDP and in views from both banks identified in the *Thames Strategy - Kew to Chelsea* (TSKtoC) pages 3.32 & 3.33. It is opposite MOL in Barnes and the listed Harrods Depository which is in the Castelnau CA. It is also in the Thames Policy Area. The River is a nature conservation area of metropolitan importance.

### **1.2 Historic Background**

The site is a historic part of the Riverside. Excavations have revealed that it is on the site of a saxon village part of which was discovered in 1988 at the time of the phase 1 excavations and part in 2001 and 2005 at the time of investigations related to the phase 2 consent. Hammersmith Embankment is the site of Brandenburg House, the great house on the Riverside originally built by Sir Nicholas Crisp in 17<sup>th</sup> century, and later lived in by and named after the Margravine of Brandenburg-Anspach. As well as the house, the Margravine had a private theatre next to the house. Parr's Ditch, the historic boundary between the parishes of Hammersmith and Fulham, ran through the site and flowed into the River through a culvert which can be seen in old pictures. There is still an overflow into the River today near the upstream boundary of the site. The house became the home of Queen Caroline, estranged wife of George IV. Finally the site became an industrial area with factories for Lyons and the Distillers Company.

### **1.3 Policy Background**

The following policies are of particular relevance to this site.

#### ***The London Plan*** (LP)

*Blue Ribbon Network Policies* (pages 267-286)

#### ***UDP Policies***

*EN 31-39 River and Canal policies* including EN31 Views

*EN 22-29 Open Space and Nature Conservation policies*

particularly EN23 New Open Space Provision in connection with development which includes 'the creation of new habitats for wildlife' .

***The Thames Strategy - Kew to Chelsea***, (TSKtoC) adopted as SPG by the Borough  
Page 6.11 lists 2 indicative projects related to this site:

*4.1 Fulham Reach public realm and access improvements including interpretation of heritage/industrial archaeology, feasibility of new moorings*

*4.2 Hammersmith Embankment phase 2 public open space and access improvements to Broadway.*

Page 3.32-33 list the following views and prospects

- *Hammersmith Bridge from Upper and Lower Mall*

- *Hammersmith and Fulham skyline from the elevated hides in the Wetland Centre*
- *The view from Hammersmith Bridge downstream along the Fulham Reach and to Barn Elms*

Page 3.7 – 3.9 Riverbank Improvements and Retired Defences

**Policy RC3 states;** *Riparian owners and developers of riverside sites should be encouraged to improve the visual appearance and ecological value of existing metal-piled and concrete slab river walls, in accordance with relevant guidance including riverbank design guidance for the tidal Thames provided by EA in their ‘Partnership in Planning’ document*

**Policy RC5 states:** *Developers of Riverside sites and local authorities responsible for parks and open space adjoining the riverbank should be encouraged to consider the potential for full or part retired defences in accordance with appropriate guidelines such as the riverbank design guidance for the tidal Thames provided by the EA in their ‘Partnership in Planning’ document. Consideration should be given to the potential for full or part retired defences at an early stage in the preparation of proposals for open space on the riverside.*

**The Conservation Area Profile (CAP) for Fulham Reach states para**

*5.1 ‘The main feature within the CA and the principle elements in defining its character are the river itself, the river bank and views along and across the Thames. Its prominence along the bend of the river and its potential impact make the Fulham Reach CA of strategic importance to the Borough and London. The current waterborne uses of the river itself are important elements in the character and appearance of the conservation area as are the foreshore and the riverbank’*

*5.23 ‘...The area is part of a rowing course of international importance, it provides a long established sailing course and it is a recreational and educational facility, used all the year round by many people including sea cadets, sea scouts and other youth groups’*

*6.27 ‘Hammersmith Bridge is a landmark along the riverfront. The former Harrods Depository on the other side of the river is a prominent landmark from much of the CA’*

*6.32 ‘...development along the riverfront should respect its context in relation to adjoining property, the river walk, the residential property in the Crabtree CA to the east and the view from across the river.’*

*6.60 ‘Redevelopment should be judged against criteria suitable for a conservation area, in which new buildings should contribute positively to the visual quality of an area, respecting the dominant pattern of development in terms of plan form and townscape and river views’*

#### **1.4 Planning History of the Site**

By the 1980s the Lyons and Distillers sites had been cleared and amalgamated into the site now known as Hammersmith Embankment. In 1988 Norman Foster designed an outline plan for what was an ‘office park’ but which provided a major area of public open space next to the River, with buildings set back from the river. Many of us have been involved with the various schemes for this site since then and have

looked forward - and still do - to the opening up of the Riverside and a new generous area of public open space next to the River.

There have been a number of applications in the intervening time. Phase 1 is built but sadly for reasons that have never become clear the public open space in front of the offices was railed off and privatised. There has been much public criticism of this enclosure over the years as it is entirely contrary to the original concept of the master plan which had a generous riverside public open space.

Planning permission granted in 2001 for the rest of the site, known as phases 2 & 3, a largely office development with a café and a small amount of social housing facing Winslow Road. The Group, and the Hammersmith Society objected to that scheme as a wasted opportunity. The scheme was approved but with conditions attached, a number of which we had suggested.

There was a section 106 agreement which included landscaping work to Frank Banfield Park and subsequent maintenance. Permission for changes to the design of the park, which the Group objected to, was granted.

In 2007 permission was given for a revised office led scheme but it has not been built although landscaping work has been done to Frank Banfield Park.

Angela Dixon 6.12.2010  
Chairman  
H&F Historic Buildings Group