
RIVERSIDE RESIDENTS NEWSLETTER

22 February 2025

LITTLE PROTECTION FOR STAINES CONSERVATION AREA AND RIVERFRONT or 'locally listed' buildings

... time for candour and commitment from the Council ...

THE GOVERNMENT PLANNING INSPECTOR completed his public examination of Spelthorne's Local Plan earlier this week. He is expected to approve it next month for further consultation in the summer and then adoption by the Council in the early autumn. Residents will be surprised to learn that the Plan offers very little protection from high-rise developments in sensitive areas (eg Conservation Area and riverfront) or for existing 'locally listed' buildings. No defined height limits for new developments in the Plan has resulted in higher housing allocations for sites in the Staines Conservation Area. Removing protection for 'locally listed' buildings like Debenhams puts them at risk.

The decision to remove protection for locally listed buildings from the Plan was apparently taken during the examination in recent weeks. The Staines Development Framework was withdrawn a year ago, and its defined height limits for new buildings in sensitive areas disappeared with it. A Council officer told the Local Plan Inspector 'Now there is no zoning we can go higher'. The Framework had been the product of extensive community consultation, and residents were given a clear commitment from the Council that it would define the development of the town in the Local Plan. However, with the Framework withdrawn, and unlike other local authorities in the UK including along the Thames, the Council chose not to include defined height limits for Staines in its Local Plan. (For more detail [click here](#).)

"These are all choices the Council has made, not had imposed on it. The Council says it will consider zoned height restrictions as part of a Design Code for the borough now under development. However, as we understand it new legislation will be needed to make any such restrictions enforceable rather than aspirational, and even then they will need to be consistent with site allocations in the Local Plan," says a spokesperson for the Riverside Residents (Staines) Coalition. "Residents need candour and above all clear undertakings on what we have already asked the Council for relating to what zoning and specific height restrictions it will commit to, and what it will do to ensure they are enforceable. Staines must absorb more than half the borough's entire housing target leading to a 50 per cent population increase. The town's character as well as its appearance will be dramatically transformed. Residents need to know what the Council's vision is for Staines as a place to live, work and visit."

Riverside Residents (Staines) Coalition – a working group of six residents' associations serving the interests of residents on both sides of the river.

Supported by other residents' organisations across Staines.

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