



RIVERSIDE RESIDENTS NEWSLETTER

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SPELTHORNE COUNCIL MAKE SHOCK CONFESSION ON ARORA HOTEL SCHEME

RESIDENTS PRESS FOR BINDING MORATORIUM ON NEW TOWER BLOCKS

Spelthorne Borough Council Officers say they believe the proposed 14-storey riverside hotel and apartment scheme for the Bridge Street Car Park and Hanover House site is compatible with its location in the Staines Conservation Area. The development for a 342-room hotel and 200 flats would be two-and-a-half times higher and several times the mass of any other building anywhere near it. The shock confession came in a three-hour meeting earlier this week for Riverside Residents Coalition partners to air their concerns with Council Officers and Ward Councillors about the Arora scheme and plans to turn Staines into a mini-Woking of tower block flats. More than 2,000 new flats in several high-rise developments up to 15-storeys are in the pipeline, up to eight at or close to the riverfront.

"The provenance of the Arora scheme and the contract the Council signed with the Arora Group is highly controversial. Apart from other considerations the contract binds the council to 'co-operate' with the developer in their pursuit of planning permission." says a Coalition spokesperson. "Council Officers admitted to us that they had taken the view that this monstrous development would meet the requirement to 'preserve or enhance' the Conservation Area."

The Coalition is pressing the Council Cabinet to deliver the moratorium on all new tower block developments voted for unanimously by the full Council last month. The Cabinet meets to decide this issue next Monday.

"A clear and binding moratorium is essential and not to impose one would destroy the credibility of the Task Force reviewing the overall scheme to turn Staines into a ghastly high-rise hell for its residents," says a spokesperson for the Coalition. "We have called for a phased approach to a moratorium such that within the next six months:

1. Non-controversial sites for high-rise developments could be identified and progressed. Non-controversial status would need to be clearly defined and could perhaps be based on their limited impact on residents and infrastructure as well as the appearance and amenity of the town.
2. Controversial sites, such as those on or close to the riverfront, could be identified for further review and consultation (including with affected residents).
3. An initial assessment of the whole scheme by or with Surrey County Council in relation to overall infrastructure impact (roads, parking, water supply and sewage disposal, schools, medical services, etc) should be undertaken to assess whether the whole scheme is viable without an unaffordable or otherwise unacceptable need to modify/improve/renew any of the infrastructure.
4. A 3D visualisation or model of the whole scheme should be produced and made available for Councillors and the community to view as part of the consultation and decision process."

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