



RIVERSIDE RESIDENTS NEWSLETTER

2 JUNE 2022

COUNCIL REJECTS "CLEAR HARM" OF PROPOSED DEBENHAMS REDEVELOPMENT ... community must now support extending Conservation Area ...

THE UNANIMOUS REJECTION by Spelthorne Borough Council Planning Committee of an application to demolish the Debenhams building in Staines to replace it with ugly twin towers of flats will delight Staines residents. All ten Committee members at last night's hearing spoke, and none of them had a good word to say about the proposed scheme: 226 tiny one- and two-bedroom flats in two hideous 14-storey towers on top of ground level and mezzanine floors, all of the flats only for rent and too few qualifying as "affordable".

The Council's Planning Officers had recommended rejection of the scheme on grounds of its design, height, scale and bulk within the setting of listed buildings and close to the Staines Conservation Area. The Officers' report said the scheme represented an "unacceptable overdevelopment" of the site which they said would be "out of character with and have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area". The respected and authoritative English Heritage had said the development would create "clear harm" to the area.

"It's hard to imagine a less appropriate use of the site, or accept that any use of it should involve demolishing the existing iconic building at the head of the town's High Street," says a spokesperson for the Riverside Residents (Staines) Coalition. "Last night's decision doesn't mean the developer won't appeal and try to have it overturned by a government Planning Inspector; but the case against the scheme is overwhelming. A couple of months ago the Planning Committee decided to 'locally list' the building as a heritage asset. All of this adds to the importance of the community supporting the Council's proposal to extend the Staines Conservation Area to include the site. This would give the building greater protection from predatory developers."

The Council's public consultation on extending the Conservation Area is on this now (until 24 June). We hope you will want to participate and give your views ... it is simple, quick and easy to do. Just click on spelthorne.inconsult.uk and select 'Staines Conservation Area Consultation'. This gives information and a map on the proposed changes. Once you have registered to participate, there is just one question asking for your comments on what is proposed.

Riverside Residents (Staines) Coalition – a working group of six residents' organisations serving the interests of residents on both sides of the river. Supported by other residents' organisations across Staines.

www.riversideresidentsstaines.org.uk

email riverside.residents.staines@gmail.com

FB Riverside Residents Staines