

UPDATE FOR TRUST APRIL 2008

## HAMILTON ELECTRICITY WORKS

People Power and a sympathetic local council have won another victory in saving an important landmark in the Borough's History.

Hamilton Electricity Works near Twickenham Green was again under threat in April 2007, when developer Hamilton Lofts Ltd appealed against the council's decision to refuse planning applications for a dense housing development and demolition of historic cluster of buildings.

The developer had requested written representation to decide the future of HEW and again, a massive letter writing campaign ensued to the Inspectorate in Bristol. I attended the HANDS Fair on Twickenham Green and had my own stand at the FORCE Annual Fair to publicise the importance of HEW. Our MP, Vincent Cable wished me good luck. I always find there is a lot of interest at these events and they are very valuable for spreading information to a much wider audience, and to those people who do not have access to computers or perhaps even read the local newspapers.

After the deluge of mail, the Inspectorate decided to hold a Public Inquiry over three days in September 2007. There were representations from local residents and Cllrs Clare Head and David Marlow. I attended two of the days and found the proceedings and debate extremely interesting and useful.

In November 2007, the long weeks of waiting for the decision were finally over and the Inspector dismissed both appeals on 4 main issues: the effect of the proposal on a Conservation area; the implication for neighbours' living conditions with particular regard to outlook, privacy, daylight and sunlight; the supply of employment land/premises and affordable housing; adequacy of proposed contributions towards social and community infrastructure including transport.

In his summary, the Inspector stated that:

Demolition will harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area due to the loss of the principal key landmark which forms the termination of the view north along Hamilton Road. The loss of the major part of the Hamilton Road electricity works will also undermine the strong spatial and historic relationship between the works buildings and the streets of terraced houses directly to their south. It would also undermine the value of the designated Hamilton Road Conservation Area identified in the conservation area statement and appraisal (January 2006).

The demolition of Buildings 2 & 3 will result in a loss of an exceptional example of industrial archaeology in the Borough which would result in harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The historic significance of the industrial buildings in the development of Twickenham is considered to be the main justification for designation.

This was a fantastic outcome to years of hard campaigning.

In January 2008, I was visited by Bill Bailey of the development team in order to show me an initial plan for the site. I was pleased to see that the plans incorporated ALL of the existing cluster of buildings. The facades and windows etc would be refurbished with an inner courtyard to let in light and give lift access to the second and third floors. The three apexes would be kept with new complimentary roofing. The eastern perimeter (backing onto Talbot Road), would consist of one single storey live/work unit, two 1.5 storey studio houses and a two storey house built on the end of

Hamilton Road. In total there would be 25 units plus 1:1 surface car parking spaces (including disabled) and a cycle park.

The only concerns I expressed were that the units were mainly one bedroom thus increasing the density and there were not enough work units. I said that if some of the units were two bedroom then the density could get down to a more acceptable level of 18-20 units for an area of this size.

On the whole the plans were refreshingly close to what I would like to see happen to the site. Bill Bailey has not contacted me since but the plan was to hold another public consultation in the near future.

More details on the campaign website - [www.hew.org.uk](http://www.hew.org.uk)

Cathy Cooper

25.4.08