

ent *letters*

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Fear for Hamilton fate

Sir - The future of Hamilton Electricity Works is at severe risk. The developer has appealed against the most recent decision by Richmond Upon Thames Council to refuse the latest planning application for 31 residential units, 1 live/work unit and 32 car parking spaces including part demolition.

This means that a man in Bristol will decide whether a company in Mortlake can ruin the lives of a community in Twickenham.

Worse still, the site with planning permission could be sold on to a bigger developer.

Residents have been fighting to save the Victorian buildings, which are buildings of townscape merit in a conservation area, for over eighteen months.

We are very fond of the buildings and do not want to see them destroyed and replaced by ugly architecture completely out of character with the surrounding

cottages.

Three planning applications have been submitted in the past two years, although the first one was so over-dense with a six-storey apartment block that it was refused by the council immediately.

The second plan included a five-storey marina style development and the current one is a four-storey block in an Eastern European style.

It's a shame that no plans have included all of the original buildings - they would make fantastic and interesting living accommodation.

There is also the former industrial use aspect to consider.

When the electricity power station was closed down in the 1960s, the buildings were put to use as storage units.

In time various small firms rented space on the site and over the next three decades there was a thriving industry of trades: a costume designer for Richmond Theatre,

an upholsterer, a crafts workshop, a motorbike repairer, a piano restorer, an engineering company, a composer, a graphics studio and more.

It must have been wonderful to work in these surroundings in such diverse trades.

When the site was sold off by EDF, the people renting the units were given notice to quit and it is now quite neglected.

The only life now is the abundant wisteria in full bloom, clinging onto the old brickwork and the wood pigeons nesting in the roof.

With care and attention, the cluster of buildings could be revived, put to good use and once again be part of the community.

This is what the people want. We don't want bulldozers ripping the old buildings up only to be replaced by modern ugly apartment blocks, which will not stand the test of time.

Residents in Hamilton Road will have to endure heavy construction plant travelling

up what is normally a very quiet road for possibly two years and then suffer a constant stream of traffic after the development is completed.

Residents in Talbot Road who have up to now enjoyed peace, quiet and privacy will be under a barrage of construction disturbance and the noise and light pollution of a densely populated housing estate that will eventually follow.

There are many complex issues relating to the development of this site but so far I have not seen a plan that is sympathetic to the buildings, to the people and to the borough.

If the planning inspectorate in Bristol agrees with the planning application, not only will a piece of history be destroyed but the heart of a community in a quiet backwater of Twickenham will be ripped apart.

Cathy Cooper