

Highway land outside Gunnersbury Station, Chiswick High Road (00248/DB/AD1)

Comments from the West Chiswick and Gunnersbury Society

The West Chiswick and Gunnersbury Society objects strongly to the proposal to install a large, single-sided roadside display on public land east of Chiswick Tower/Gunnersbury Station on grounds of harm to townscape and amenity and on grounds of public safety.

Townscape and visual amenity

1. We consider the site to be unacceptable for such an advertisement as it would have a negative impact on the local context and character. The proposed display would be contrary to Local Plan policy CC5. The site is close to two Conservation Areas (Thorney Hedge Conservation Area and Wellesley Road Conservation Area) and would negatively affect the setting of a heritage asset, the Locally-Listed Gunnersbury public house. This section of the Chiswick High Road is the gateway to Chiswick town centre and is characterised by an important residential component. There are residential properties close to the site and those to the west are within the Thorney Hedge Conservation Area.

2. While the massive presence of the Chiswick Tower building gives its immediate surroundings a commercial character, this is currently countered and softened by the trees of the beautifully landscaped entrance to the Chiswick Business Park and the mature street and other trees lining the Chiswick High Road to the east of the railway bridge (see applicant's images).

3. WCGS is proud of the heritage assets within its area including the Conservation Areas which it helped to establish and acts to protect and enhance them. For example, the Society has recently nominated over 20 buildings for Local Listing. More generally, we seek to improve the environment within our area and maintain a balance between its residential and commercial elements.

4. Following permission being granted for a change of use for the 2-storey extension to Chiswick Tower (see Annex on page 3 below) the Society is in dialogue with the owners and managers of Chiswick Tower with a view to working together to improve both the private and the public realm in the vicinity of the building. Installation of the proposed advertisement would compromise the potential improvements and jeopardise such collaborative ambitions.

5. The applicant's photomontage clearly shows that proposed advertisement would serve to increase the commercial character and large scale at the expense of the residential character and domestic scale. The overbearing "alien" presence of the Chiswick Tower requires mitigation rather than reinforcement.

Public safety

6. East-bound drivers approaching this section of the Chiswick High Road need to negotiate a complex of heavily-used pedestrian crossings, junctions and bus-stops. Any additional distraction could result in a serious accident.

7. There are current safety issues arising from the very high numbers of people using the pedestrian crossing nearest to Gunnersbury Station at peak times. Accidents and near misses have occurred. Potential solutions have been suggested by the Gunnersbury Station Action Team (GSAT) but to date no improvements have been made.



People crossing against red light during am peak

WCGS August 2018

Annex on page 3

Annex

Background The change of use application (00248/389/P3) was granted permission in June 2017

Extracts from the application Design and Access statement

1.2 The brief for this project is to provide a new public facing retail unit addressing Chiswick High Road. The ambition is to provide greater activity, visibility and streetscape activation to this popular and highly trafficked area of Chiswick. The existing two storey annexe building directly to the east of the main Chiswick Tower will be altered to create a more permeable facade and improve the provision of public realm.

2.1 drawing shows "new public space"

2.3 New public realm for potential outdoor seating to the east of retail unit will be provided to activate the external pavement area. The current brick wall will be reduced in length to open up this new outdoor space.

Note: the WCGS comments on this application are provided as a separate attachment accompanying these comments.