



THE TEDDINGTON SOCIETY

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FAO. Mr Derek Tanner,
Planning Department, LBRuT,
Civic Centre, Twickenham TW1 3BZ

Dear Mr Tanner,

PLANNING APPLICATION 14/3732/FUL - TEDDINGTON AND HAM HYDRO

At a meeting of our Executive Committee on 30th October 2014 the question of this Society's position in respect of the above application was considered in the light of the very large number of comments which you have received and are available on the relevant website. We regret adding now to their number, but it was felt of considerable importance that, having already received a number of comments both from two of our specialist groups and a number of our members individually, you should be made aware of our updated and fully considered opinion as a leading local Amenity Society.

The Society has, over several years, supported the desirability of attempts to harness unused water power as a source of electricity. This remains our position. However, the current question now to be decided is whether the detailed scheme proposed by the Teddington and Ham Hydro CIC (THH) in their above application should be approved or whether it is unacceptable as submitted.

We are in full agreement with the concerns raised in the letter to you of 10th October from our Planning Group. For ease of reference these were:-

1. NOISE LIMITS

The need for the imposition of strict noise limits. In view of the conflicting advice offered by experts in this area, it would appear necessary to examine further this question, hopefully to reach a consensus on environmentally acceptable levels. It is important to recognise noise levels for significantly different installations may not be a sound basis for comparison.

2. NEED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The consideration of the need for this was made in 2011 and should surely be reviewed with reasons provided should a similar view continue to be taken. Given the sensitive nature of the site we believe that such an Assessment is essential.

3. FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The financing of the scheme and possibility of its foundering, leaving a disused and derelict structure in a prominent position at the weir requires the completion of a watertight Step-In Agreement (as referred to by the Environment Agency). We strongly support that position on the advice of Society members who are experts in this field.

4. FLOOD RISKS

Differing views have been expressed as to the possible increase of risk resulting from the proposed scheme, among them statements from the Environment Agency which we believe may be over optimistic. This is such a crucial matter that it is only wise to err on the side of caution, possibly by the installation of extra sluice gates over and above the single by-wash proposed, as the design does not allow for the additional volume of water that will be arriving under the proposed Lower Thames Flood Relief Scheme. In addition to the above, several serious concerns and objections have been raised subsequent to the Group's letter of 10th October. These seem to us, to carry considerable weight and militate against acceptance of the application

The letter to you of 13th October from our Flood Working Group raising objections is detailed and speaks for itself. We support the arguments it advances in favour of further serious consideration of numerous questions on the issue of flood risks.

The Proposal describes in rather sketchy terms the construction techniques which will be used. When the first application for planning permission was made in 2011, the Lensbury Club objected and made it clear that Ham Hydro could not use their land for construction, operation or maintenance. Consequently all these operations will have to be done from floating platforms and a very large gantry crane grounded on the river bed. A loading wharf, whose position has not been defined, will be needed. We think that the wharf and gantry crane will degrade the local environment to an unacceptable degree. We consider that drawings of both these facilities should have been submitted to the Council as part of the Planning Application.

SUMMARY

Whilst we remain committed to the aim of harnessing the currently unused power of water to produce carbon neutral electricity at Teddington Weir, **we are unable to support the acceptance of the Planning Application as submitted** and would require the above concerns to be satisfactorily resolved before reconsidering our position.

A WAY FORWARD

While not strictly relevant to the main thrust of this letter, we would wish it to be known that we are more than willing to participate in any efforts to seek proposals that found broad acceptance among those with similar long term aims. We consider that a positive, pro-active approach is required and would not wish it to be felt that we are basically negative in this matter.

Despite the lateness of this submission we should be grateful if it could be added to the documents on your website and given due consideration before any decisions are made in this most important and contentious matter.

Yours sincerely,

Sheena Harold
Vice Chairman – Publicity & Promotions
THE TEDDINGTON SOCIETY

