



Save Ealing's Centre

07 March 2016

The Rt Hon Greg Clark MP
Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government
Department for Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham Street,
London,
SW1P 4DF

Dear Secretary of State

**Request to call-in the planning application by BE Broadway BV
9-42 The Broadway, Ealing, W5. London Borough of Ealing.
Application No: PP/2015/3479.**

Save Ealing's Centre (SEC) is an alliance of 27 residents' associations and other community bodies in Ealing. We write to request you to call in the above planning application which concerns matters of significant national interest.

Ealing Planning Authority granted approval for the development on February 24th this year. In reaching its decision, the authority disregarded objections from SEC, Ealing Civic Society, residents' associations, local conservation panels, and at the date of writing, 1875 supporters on our online petition obtained over the last two weeks. Local MP Rupa Huq also objected (letter attached).

It also seems clear to us that the development does not comply with the London Plan. This is a matter we are raising separately with the Deputy Mayor.

The strong concerns of Historic England, the national adviser on the historic environment, highlight that this application also has wider than local implications. The Victorian Society and SAVE Britain's Heritage have also objected in the strongest terms on policy and conservation grounds (copy of final letter from HE attached).

You no doubt recall that when Minister for Planning you met the fledgling Central Ealing Neighbourhood forum (CENF) with our then MP, Angie Bray, and you urged us to get started on our Neighbourhood Plan. A draft Plan for the area, prepared at huge effort by CENF, has now been published, but its relevance was brushed aside by planning officers, both in their notes before the Committee meeting and in response to a Committee member's question. Their comments were completely at odds with Government guidance on Neighbourhood Planning which requires weight be attached to such plans even at their early stage. Your early support for CENF's initiative has left members of the Forum deeply aggrieved about the Council's disregard for the work they subsequently put in.

The proposed development also raises national issues about the conservation of heritage

assets. In their correspondence with the planning authority, Historic England raised in detail national legislation and planning policy guidance that the scheme conflicts with, but the officer's report supporting the scheme dismisses their comments almost out of hand. Astonishingly, as Historic England note, the Council's own conservation officer was kept out of the process apparently. This is extraordinary given that the development would be in a conservation area already on the 'at risk' register.

A particularly worrying aspect of the scheme is the proposed destruction of the iconic Carphone Warehouse corner building, which was only recently restored after Ealing was rocked by the 2001 IRA bomb. The Carphone Warehouse building stands as a testament to the strong local response in the Ealing community to those troubling times. It should not be carelessly swept away just to make way for a wider pavement and a cycle contra-flow lane. As Nigel Barker of Historic England says in his letter of the 19th February 2016, if we took this approach to every historic building in London none would remain.

Historic England explain that the Carphone Warehouse building also makes a critically important contribution to the Town Centre Conservation Area by providing the setting for the adjacent Grade II listed Natwest Bank (previously the town hall) and other important historic buildings including the neighbouring Metro Bank, North Star Public House and Edwards Terrace. Between them, these buildings stand at the centre of the Victorian suburb which established itself as the first of London's commuting suburbs: a town that by the end of the 19th century had become known as the 'Queen of the Suburbs'. The scheme is at such odds with the Town Centre CA Appraisal and Management Plan that Historic England warn that, with so much of Ealing's legacy having already been lost, it is likely to advise that the conservation area will no longer merit its status if the scheme goes ahead.

The scheme has many similarities to the Glenkerrin scheme. This was rejected by the then Secretary of State in 2009 following a long and costly public inquiry after the planning authority had granted it consent. Building heights are not so obtrusive as Glenkerrin's were, but the latter would at least have retained the important Carphone Warehouse corner. In this respect, at least, the present proposal would be still more damaging than Glenkerrin's.

It must be greatly disturbing to you and the Inspector, therefore, that at no point in the process has the Council made any significant effort to understand how it got things so wrong last time round. The officer's report to the 24th February planning committee barely refers to the Inquiry Inspector's very detailed and carefully considered comments. Very misleadingly and erroneously, it repeatedly refers to the Call-in Inquiry as an 'Appeal'.

In short, Historic England point out numerous ways by which the current proposals conflict with national and London legislation, policy and guidance. We submit that you should consider what they say. The appropriate way forward now is to call in this application for examination in public, prior to determination by yourself.

On behalf of all those for whom SEC speaks, may I request you please to do so.

Yours sincerely

SAVE EALING'S CENTRE

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Attachments

- Objection letter from Dr Rupa Huq MP,
- Objection letter dated 19 02 2016 from Historic England
- Decision letter on the Glenkerrin planning application from Rt Hon John Denham, Secretary of State for Communities