

IAN TAYLOR, M.B.E., M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt. Hon. Hazel Blears, M.P.,
 Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government,
 Eland House,
 Bressenden Place,
 London, SW1E 5DU.

Minister	Jh
Secretary	Planning Matters
Office	GOSE

30 October 2008.

Dear Hazel,

Hampton Court Station Site Redevelopment (Jolly Boatman)

GOSE has received a long commentary on the proposed development from John Barnes, Director of Historic Royal Palaces. As Mr Barnes and I have been in discussions about this site since 1998, he was kind enough to send me a copy.

HRP have requested that GOSE asks you to issue a Section 14 Direction. May I indicate that as the local Member of Parliament, I would not welcome such a move. In my view, the decision on the planning application for redevelopment of the above site in East Molesey in my constituency should now be taken by Elmbridge Borough Councillors. The Borough's officers have issued an extensive report recommending the classical design which was also approved by English Heritage. In turn, the GLA has written to say that the Mayor of London is content to rely on the expert advice of English Heritage. The Elmbridge planning sub committee supported the classical design this week, so the decision goes to full council on 18th November. As the MP, I am content to leave the decision to councillors. So I should not be content if the application was called in.

I have a file a yard thick going back to 1998 on this site within my constituency with which I will not bore you. Suffice it to say that the site in its current condition is a disgrace and a carbuncle.

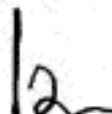
I have had endless meetings with the principal interested groups, including English Heritage and Thames Landscape Strategy over the years. The preferred application complied with both local and national planning policy and the design had the support of the CABE - the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment. All but Historic Royal Palaces now appear to be aligned in favour of this development on the site subject to planning conditions.

Only John Barnes of HRP remains opposed because he claims damage to the aspect across the Thames from Hampton Court Palace. For the life of me, I cannot now see the justification for his objections to the preferred current scheme. I could give you chapter and verse.

I regard development of this site, including the associated traffic and transport improvements, in the overwhelming interests of my constituents and tourists. The scheme is set back from the river and indeed opens up river frontage to the public. It will allow improvements to the railway station which are overdue. The proposed Star and Garter home will be welcome. The retail and other features will improve facilities for my constituents and tourists alike.

If you wish to consult me further about this, or for me to set out in greater detail the reasons why I favour development of the site, I should be happy to have a meeting.

Yours sincerely,



Ian Taylor MP