



Legal papers for the Jolly Boatman are still unsigned

by Oliver Florence

A VITAL legal agreement between the developers of the Jolly Boatman site and the council remains unsigned just weeks before the six-month deadline.

Planning permission for 66 apartments, a 46-bedroom hotel and a care home for service veterans was granted in December but Elmbridge Borough Council (EBC) has warned it could lapse if the agreement is not signed.

Final approval is dependent on developers Gladedale handing over more than £300,000 to pay for infrastructure improvements – with the deadline now just five weeks away.

If planning permission is withdrawn, the future of the site, which has laid derelict for more than 20 years, would once again be up in the air.

Joint co-ordinator of the Hampton Court Rescue Campaign (HCRC) Brian Rusbridge said the current economic situation meant there were now doubts about the development.

“There’s a question mark where they stand with the recession,” he said.

“We want to assure the public that the HCRC is

extremely active and pressing for the whole thing to be rejected and started again.

“We think the whole thing should be brought back and if planning permission lapses, then that would be the right conclusion.”

Gladedale however insists that despite the apparent delay, the development is still on track and should start “early next year”.

Land and planning director Paul Lemar said: “There’s always an inevitable delay but it [the agreement] should be signed by June.

“The amount of money is set so there’s no reason for it not to go ahead.

“If it is not signed then we have to go back to the planning committee to get an extension of the deadline.”

He also rejected claims that the recession would make it difficult for the development to go ahead.

Mr Lemar said the company was considering a number of possible partnerships with hotels, although he admitted that a deal could not be signed until final approval was granted.

He added: “It’s difficult to say when building will start but I imagine it will be the early part of next year and I would imagine that it will take two to three years.”

The Royal Star & Garter Home, which hoped to move

61 service veterans from Richmond Hill to a new home on the site in 2011, now admits it will be at least three years before the move can take place.

Director of PR Patsy Willis said: “Gladedale, the developers, and Network Rail are working towards the completion of the Section 106 and other agreements before work can begin.

“It is a complex site and the car park has to be built before work can start on our home.

“We now anticipate it will be late 2012 before we can move.”

A spokesman for EBC said the applicant had until June 18 to sign the necessary Section 106 agreement.

He added: “This agreement will include a financial contribution of £330,000 to Elmbridge Borough and Surrey County Council towards such items as improvement to Cigarette Island Park and Hampton Court Bridge.

“If the agreement has not been provided by the June deadline the council will need to reconsider the resolution to grant planning permission.

“This will happen either through a new application or an amendment to the time restrictions of the current decision.”