

The Hive, Multimedia House, Lionel Road, TW8 9QR Ref: 00505/U/AD19

Comments from the West Chiswick and Gunnersbury Society (WCGS)

WCGS objects to the installation of two internally illuminated digital media screens on the east and west elevations of the proposed building granted under planning permission reference number 00505/U/P27. The Society strongly endorses the reasons given by the planning officer for recommending Refusal.

We are concerned with the negative impact such media screens would have on the surrounding **public open spaces, especially Gunnersbury Park**. The Society is actively supporting the current regeneration project for Gunnersbury Park being managed jointly by the London Boroughs of Hounslow and Ealing. We welcome the real attempt to restore it to its proper status as a valuable public amenity and realize the full potential of its unique combination of historic buildings and landscape, its natural habitats and its municipal park and sports facilities.

The proposed massive media screens would be harmful not only in terms of the setting of the surrounding historic parklands (visual impact both outlook from and gateways into the parks) but also in terms of their natural assets and biodiversity (light levels at night which would be detrimental to wildlife, especially invertebrates, bats and birds). It is recognized that there are already lit structures along the M4/A4 corridor; their negative impact should not be intensified. The Hive will be tall and close to a very sensitive area - the south-western part of Gunnersbury Park. The regeneration plan for the park recognizes this area, around the Potomac Lake and southern boundary mature trees, as one of the most important in terms of biodiversity. The maintenance of "dark corridors" is an important aspect of bat conservation.

From the planning officer's report for the building itself (00505/U/P27), it is clear that the unusual "iconic" Hive building was meant to be its own "message". The quality of design was seen as being essential to ensure that the building would transcend the image of being an advertising structure focused on the motorway. Any future advertising applications were expected to be confined to specific tenant branding, that is, signage showing company name and logo. The minutes of the meeting of the Sustainable Development Committee at which planning permission was granted for the building record "that there were no advertisements proposed for the building and any proposals for branding at a later stage...".

The current proposal is for a blanket permission to convert the end glazed elevations (windows) into media screens "larger than the current largest advertisement located along the M4 / GWR corridor" for advertising for future occupants. We believe that this will seriously impact upon the architectural quality of the complex "smooth and sculptured" organic form of the building. The building's prime function as office building will be illegible and its ecological credentials severely compromised.

For all the above reasons, we request that permission is refused.

Extracts from the applicants Technical Note are appended for information

WCGS, March 2013

Appendix: Extracts from the Technical Note assessing public safety aspects of the proposal

1. The building has been actively marketed (as a 'branded building' suitable for a headquarters or a 'flagship satellite office').
2. The Hive constitutes a 'signature gateway' building intended to form a high specification, unique and iconic contemporary architectural statement fit for its location at the western entrance to the UK's capital.
3. Whilst it is reasonable to consider the size of display as having relationship with potential amenity impact (Circular03/2007, Appendix E), ...