

BATTERSEA POWER STATION COMMUNITY GROUP

16 DRCA WORKSHOPS CHARLOTTE DESPARD AVENUE LONDON SW11 5JE

17th February 2006

Mr Steve Kennard
Parkview International London
188 Kirtling Street
London SW8 5BP

Dear Mr Kennard,

BATTERSEA POWER STATION

I am writing further to your presentation at the Building Centre on 8th February. A lot of this was already familiar to us in BPSCG, for instance from the presentation you gave at the public meeting we organised in Battersea in June 2004. However it was surprising to see the designs of the Power Station itself changing yet again, and to hear you say these are "*just ideas at an early stage*", given Parkview's 13 years in control of the site.

As I mentioned during the question and answer session, you and your colleagues have given many similar presentations over the last ten or twelve years describing your plans for the site. These presentations always have two things in common. First Parkview's representatives always say the works will shortly go ahead, usually the next year or the year after next. Second, Parkview is always in "*ongoing discussions*" with potential backers and partners.

Despite these assurances, Parkview has never actually carried out any conservation work or new construction in its 13 years in control of the site. (On the contrary, the site remains derelict and the listed buildings have been neglected, as evidenced by their presence on EH's register of buildings at risk.) Nor has Parkview succeeded in attracting any partners or investors, which would be essential if Parkview International London (a small management company with a £7m turnover) is ever to make any progress.

In the presentations we have seen over the years, a common element is that you always report some impediment to your commencing operations: a minor land ownership issue, a wayward underground pipe, or a protected species of bird nesting on the building. For many years, you said that ownership of a small strip of land next to the railway lines prevented you from going ahead. Then the presence of the Dalkia plant was an obstacle and nothing could proceed until it was moved, at Dalkia's expense of course. Then it was peregrine falcons nesting on the building, in response to which you staged the elaborate diversion of erecting a nesting tower, which as far as we are aware remains unused.

The statement you gave at last Wednesday's presentation - that you had to await gaining full possession of the 'B' Station switch house in 2004 before you could start planning the works - appears to be another of these contrived impediments. It may have been believable to people attending the talk who know little about this issue. But, having heard many similar justifications for the lack of progress over the years, I felt I had to raise a note of doubt.


In any case, if Parkview was serious about conserving Battersea Power Station and redeveloping the site, it would adopt a phased approach. This is what has happened at other historic sites around the world: Dean Clough mills at Halifax, Lingotto (the former Fiat factory) in Turin, and Ellis Island in New York Harbour, to name a few. But you don't do this at Battersea Power Station, despite the fact that the 'A' Station turbine hall and switch house could easily be converted in the first phase of the project. Your insistence on a multi-billion pound single phase project flies in the face of established good practice.

A phased operation would allow you to work around the local obstacles that you claim are always delaying you. Without a phased operation, you will always be able to find something to hold you up. So it is clear to us that there is no prospect of any serious start at Battersea, nor will there be while Parkview remains in control of the building. Sadly, Parkview's expensive graphics, and undoubted skill in PR (the one area where you have been truly effective) will continue to persuade Wandsworth Council, English Heritage and the press of the viability and seriousness of Parkview's leisure centre proposal.

Unfortunately the only actual work we are likely to see in the coming years is the demolition of the chimneys. So I was also disappointed to hear you say last Wednesday that the demolition of the chimneys is necessary for "health and safety reasons". As you know, the engineering report commissioned by the Twentieth Century Society, World Monuments Fund and Battersea Power Station Company proves beyond serious doubt that the chimneys can be repaired, and I was sorry to hear you misrepresent the situation as you did.

Whilst on the subject of the chimneys, we have recently obtained a copy of the legal document in which you undertake to rebuild the chimneys within three years. Our advice is that the Council has insisted on a strong legal agreement, although it could be varied in the future. We will of course oppose any move to vary the terms of the undertaking. Should you choose to proceed with the work, we know you will expect us to be concerned that the terms of the undertaking will be carried out so that the future of the building is ensured.

Yours sincerely,



KEITH GARNER
for Battersea Power Station Community Group

cc	Mr Victor Hwang	Parkview International
	Mr Andrew Biggs	Parkview International
	Mr Michael Roberts	Parkview International
	Mr Colin Amery	World Monuments Fund
	Ms Catherine Croft	Twentieth Century Society
	Mr David Lewis	Battersea Society
	Mr Marcus Binney	SAVE
	Ms Vicky Richardson	Blueprint
	Mr Peter Murray	Wordsearch
	Ms Isabel Allen	Architects' Journal
	Mr Simon Jenkins	The Guardian
	Dr Gavin Stamp	Gonville & Caius College
	Dr Simon Thurley	English Heritage
	Ms Sheila Stones	English Heritage
	Mr Philip Davies	English Heritage
	Councillor Govindia	Wandsworth Council
	Councillor Belton	Wandsworth Council
	Mr Robert Erskine	Wandsworth Council
		Wandsworth Borough News
		South London Press