



Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities,
Planning Casework Unit,
5 St Philip's Place,
Colmore Row,
Birmingham, B3 2PW

Dear Sir,

I am writing to support the Compulsory Purchase Order placed by the Council of the Richmond-upon-Thames on parts of the Twickenham Riverside.

The Twickenham Riverside has been semi-derelict forty years. During that time various Councils have proposed no fewer than six solutions, one including a supermarket another a cinema, none involving an architect of any standing. All were abandoned because judged inappropriate by the people of Twickenham. The embankment, of what many would agree is the most beautiful south-facing site on the Thames between Kew and Hampton Court, has been used as a car park.

The present scheme differs from all previous proposals in that the present Council ceded control of the development by putting it to an international architectural competition supervised by the Royal Institute of British Architects. The winner, Hopkins Architects, is one of the leading British architectural practices. Their design, as well as opening the town to its Riverside and removing the cars that have long disfigured and polluted its embankment, provides attractive open space and a high proportion of social housing.

The Twickenham Riverside Trust, of which I was a founding member, voted unanimously in favour of the Hopkins design, as did a majority of residents.

Unfortunately, a small number of residents, motivated it would seem by political considerations or personal inconvenience, have been working tirelessly to reject Hopkins. If they were to succeed in delaying the planning process indefinitely it is unlikely that a scheme as suitable as the Hopkins plan would be built on the Twickenham Riverside for a great many years to come.

Yours sincerely,
Sheila Hale

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Joanna Vincent](#)
Cc: [Newman, Rachel](#)
Subject: : LETTERS OF SUPPORT FOR THE CPO FOR THE TWICKENHAM RIVERSIDE SITE [GATELEY-GHAM.FID85841]
Date: 27 February 2023 13:35:51

Dear Ms. Vincent,

The founding Trustees of the Twickenham Riverside Trust, of which I was one, framed our charitable objectives as follows: "to protect and improve for the benefit of the public the riverside and its environs in Twickenham." There was no mention, and no intention, of preserving unaltered the rectangle of land above the embankment known as the Diamond Jubilee Gardens on which we were granted a 125-year lease by the Richmond Council in 2011. On the contrary, the original purpose of the Trust was to protect that part of the riverside for the time being from further attempts at unsuitable commercial developments as proposed by successive Councils but rejected by the public over the previous 30 years. We were well aware that the DJG, situated above an embankment used as a municipal car park and otherwise derelict, was nothing more than a temporary partial solution to what we hoped would one day be a whole-site development that would benefit the town as well as the public at large.

The DJG is not an inviting or attractive space, and it does nothing to reconnect the town with its riverside. It allows only two points of access. The steep and roughly paved flight of steps from the embankment is impossible for the disabled and mothers with prams, who must enter from a gate on the north corner of Wharf Lane, which is often obscured by cars and delivery lorries. Because it is built on rubble the ground cannot be planted with grass or shrubs.

The Trust was therefore unanimous in our support for the Richmond Council's initiative in commissioning the Royal Institute of British Architects to deliver a design competition for the development of the whole of the Twickenham riverside and to help devise a brief for bidding architects. This was the first time in the, by then, nearly forty years since the closure of the swimming pool, which had previously occupied part of the site, that a Richmond Council had addressed the development of Twickenham Riverside in a professional, disinterested and democratic way. The conditions of the brief included the removal of cars from the embankment, the provision of social housing as well as improved connections of the town to its riverside. The five short-listed winners were put to public consultation. The winner was Hopkins Architects, for which the Trust also voted unanimously because we believed that Hopkins best fulfilled its charitable objectives.

The new cohort of Trustees which replaced us in 2021 has reversed these objectives in favour of retaining the Diamond Jubilee Gardens and the highway that runs along the embankment. They were not, however, unanimous in this decision. The two professional architects who had joined the new board resigned in protest against what they, rightly in my view, saw as a policy that would prevent a whole-site solution designed by a world-class firm of architects. They were followed soon afterwards by the chairman.

I believe that the Council has tried its best to negotiate with the Trust over this crucial matter and that it is fully justified in imposing a CPO.

Yours sincerely,

Sheila Hale

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