

Mr and Mrs Rafael and Barbara Carmona

24th March 2023

Environment, Transport and Compulsory Purchase
The Planning Inspectorate
3A Eagle Wing
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol
BS1 6PN

For the attention of: Ms Rachel Newman, Case Officer

Dear Ms Newman,

**The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames (Twickenham Riverside)
Compulsory Purchase Order 2021.**

**We are Twickenham residents who Support the Compulsory Purchase of Land and
New Rights in Twickenham Riverside.**

Following a thorough democratic process by Richmond upon Thames Council for the development of Twickenham Riverside over the past 5 years, full planning consent was granted in November 2022.

Starting in 2018, a detailed brief for the site was developed with, and agreed by 11 resident stakeholder groups (including the Twickenham Riverside Trust). The brief encapsulated the requirements of a majority of Twickenham residents, notably the removal of a car park from our Riverside and the creation of a fully pedestrianised public events space, park and gardens.

The brief informed a high-level architectural competition overseen by an independent body, the RIBA. The Assessors were carefully selected to include a wide range of expertise, local representation and knowledge. The competition attracted submissions from over 50 firms, many of high standing as reflected in the 5 short-listed proposals. Following a vote by Twickenham residents, Hopkins Architects and their team emerged as the clear winners.

Implementation of the winning scheme (and thus the brief) would require the inclusion of disparate parts of the site, including the Diamond Jubilee Gardens, to provide an integrated 'whole site' solution. A proviso by the Twickenham Riverside Trust, who have jurisdiction over the gardens on behalf of residents, was that an area at least equal in size to the current gardens to be provided with equivalent or better amenities.

This proviso has not only been met, but exceeded. The new gardens, children's play area and café/tea room are considerably larger and of a better standard than the existing. The area has been opened up to the riverside in a series of south-facing grassed terraces, planting and trees extending down to the riverside. Bio-diversity would be improved, a greater range of native trees introduced and grassed areas created that would replace the artificial grass currently employed.

A large, flexible multi-functional space would be provided for public events and markets at a scale that currently is not possible. Large events would need to be coordinated with spring and storm tides – but would still enable a considerable number of events to take place each year (and far more than have annually occurred to date). Considerable efforts have gone into planning the site to accommodate flooding requirements in accordance with Environment Agency requirements, working constructively with nature and the challenges of climate change.

Accessibility to the Gardens would be considerably improved for the less abled, including wheelchair users, with step-free access points from Wharf Lane, Water Lane and the Embankment. A considerable reduction in vehicle numbers, primarily as a result of removing the riverside carpark, would enable the entire area to be prioritised for pedestrians. A quality 'people-centred' public realm would thus be created, extending from the High Street and connecting a successfully pedestrianised Church Street via a broadened Water Lane to a revitalised Riverside.

The southerly aspect of the site has also been optimised in terms of its layout and massing, ensuring that overshadowing of the Gardens and public spaces would be within acceptable limits, and indeed of benefit on hot summer afternoons. The Wharf Lane Building is of a scale, size and design quality befitting its location and importance as a stand-alone 'signifier' building, defining the western edge of the public open space and contributing to the urban quality as a focus of our new town centre.

An inability over more than three decades to deliver a viable solution has left us with dereliction and a parking lot - a long-standing embarrassment to our community. This scheme offers a democratic solution by a leading architect delivering beneficial public use which has received overwhelming support. Richmond Council are delivering what the majority of Twickenham residents want – a new Riverside and heart for our town.

This community project requires an integrated 'whole site' solution which can only be achieved by bringing together the constituent parts of the overall site through a Compulsory Purchase Order, including the sub-optimal area currently occupied by the Diamond Jubilee Gardens. Without a CPO the approved scheme supported by a majority of Twickenham residents cannot be implemented. We thus appeal to you to uphold this CPO for the overall benefit of our community and our many visitors.

Yours sincerely,

Mr and Mrs Rafael and Barbara Carmona

