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9th May 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.**

I am a Twickenham resident who supports the compulsory purchase of land on, and for the redevelopment of, Twickenham Riverside.

The land on Twickenham Riverside has been semi-derelict for more than 30 years, comprising one private and one public car park, derelict buildings, a small playground with adjacent cafe, and an under-used patch of AstroTurf. Over this time, a number of proposals have been made for redevelopment of the land, comprising chiefly proposals for private housing, which have never had widespread public support. With the aim of breaking this long deadlock, Richmond upon Thames Council have conducted a 5 year long program, commencing in 2018, of engaging with local residents and interested parties, with the aim of bringing forward a development plan which carried community support. Steps in this process included resident and stakeholder engagement, work-up of a design brief, call for proposals via an independently overseen architectural competition, selection of a shortlist for consultation, selection of a preferred design, and submission for planning permission, which was unanimously granted in November 2022 carrying support of politicians from all political parties represented on the council.

The mixed-use proposal, containing elements of private housing, public space, and retail units carries wide-ranging community support as the best brought forward in the last three decades, both in its innovative use of the space and in its architectural consistency with surrounding buildings, to create a much needed focus-destination in Twickenham, transforming the Riverside into an attractive public space. While no-one had every wish granted with this proposal, the community of overwhelmingly supportive of the both the concept and design implementation. The design, both

commercially, and to make best use of the riverfront location, requires redevelopment of the whole block, including the Astrourfed space leased to the Diamond Jubilee Gardens Charitable Trust in the dying days of the preceding council administration.

There are of course a small number of objectors who wish to block the development, for either their own personal or (party) political ends: chief amongst these are those who seem to believe the borough council has an obligation to provide them car parking at a site of their choosing. No-one should be misled: while objections are dressed up in concerns for protection of the public space, which is currently whoefully underused (despite the Trust being purposed with organising regular community events there), and is in fact expanded in the proposed scheme, they are in fact a coalition of private interests, seeking only to frustrate improvement of this public space.

Maximisation of community benefit can only be delivered with a whole-site solution, and the whole-site solution can only be achieved by granting this Compulsory Purchase Order: without it, the site will remain a riverfront car-park and patch of windswept Astrourf for the next 30 years – the people of Twickenham deserve better, and have overwhelmingly voiced their support for the current proposal to be implemented. I hereby call on you not to accede to special interest groups, but to grant the communities democratic wishes and uphold the Compulsory Purchase Order.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Stephen Laughton
(by email)