

Notes for my Statement of Evidence in support of the CPO

Introduction

My name is Graham Strudwick and I have lived in Twickenham for nearly 48 years. I am a Chartered Engineer, Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers and the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport and have been involved with planning, design, construction and maintenance of a wide variety of transport projects around the world for the last 50 years. I bring this experience as well as my love of living in Twickenham to support the riverside development and the compulsory Purchase Order for this development to proceed.

I have read through the letters of objection sent to the Planning Inspectorate and note that on the issue of vehicle movement and servicing although there are a good number of letters there appear to be significant repetition almost word for word with a limited number of points of objection directed at these issues.

I set out now the key objections raised in these letters with a response to show how in my view each of these issues have been dealt with in the planning and layouts of the site in total.

- The site is opposite Eel Pie Island a unique location with the only access via a footbridge falling within the site boundary.

Response

This statement is correct but misleading as it implies the access to the island is obstructed or reduced in some way. This is not the case, and the reality is that things are actually improved. The layout clearly shows the foot bridge on the Twickenham side of the river in the same position with good wide road access to the foot of the bridge for delivery of goods to the island for businesses and residents alike. The removal of the parking area and through road connecting Water and Wharf Lanes along the embankment does in fact improve safe access to the bridge as there would be no through traffic impeding such access as is currently the case. It should also be noted that the footbridge is not the only way that heavy goods are delivered to the island, as the bulkier items, particularly for boatyard use, are currently delivered via slipways and barge as this is more practical in some cases than wheeling heavy bulky items across a narrow footbridge on handcarts.

I have brought together here several comments as they can be addressed collectively.

- The exchange land contains the Embankment Road, which is our access and highway.
- The application contains a stopping up order of the Embankment Road.
- The road enables equality of access to the public of any ability to have direct access to the River Thames in Twickenham.
- This road closure will be detrimental to the public who use currently use this highway.
- This road gives safe access for all vehicles to circulate and load and unload and is essential infrastructure for our everyday life.

- The road gives safe access for all vehicles to circulate, load and unload and therefore essential infrastructure for my business and deliveries to other businesses and residents.

Response

The stopping up order is in place to remove through traffic from the area of land now used as car parking and through road. The creation of two-way traffic systems by the specialist transportation team in both Water Lane and Wharf Lane mean that the Embankment road is no longer required, and access is maintained for residents, businesses, and visitors to the area.

The removal of parking and the road means that there will be a limited number of vehicles that will require to access the riverside making the area safer. Vehicles exiting Water Lane can more safely access King Street without causing traffic holdups which is currently the case when large vehicles exit the more restricted bell mouth of Wharf Lane very close to the traffic lights at the junction of King Street and Cross Deep.

The specialist transportation team involved with the design has carried out extensive research and consultation and created a larger number of bigger bays than are currently available for parking next to the foot bridge to service the island. Access to and from this area and safe turning of large articulated or rigid vehicles is demonstrated with Computer Aided Design software Autoturn a proven design process. Having completed the turn these vehicles can retrace their journey up Water Lane to Kings Street via a much-improved wider bell mouth and therefore do not require to travel across this area.

Access to Wharf Lane off King Street allows residents and businesses who use the buildings on the south of King Street to reach the service road behind King Street and businesses and residents in the buildings on the east side of Cross Deep to reach the parking and garages behind their shops, offices, and homes.

The removal of the roadway provides a continuous open area between the river and the service road creating a dedicated space for the public to enjoy free from any traffic movements. It should also be noted that the wider street scape of Water Lane gives better views of the river from King Street, and that there are dedicated disabled parking and loading bays in both Lanes.

Twickenham Riverside Trust statement to The Secretary of State

4 Vehicular access –

- The raised area of the Red Land that is part of the existing Gardens is enclosed and inaccessible to traffic. This renders the area safe for members of the public of all ages to use the open space for its intended purpose.

Response

Within the proposed scheme, the area between Water Lane, Wharf Lane, and the service road to the north, will be inaccessible to traffic. This is a much larger area than is currently the case as the redundant car park and through road will be included. Controlled access is proposed for a limited number of service vehicles along the embankment.

- By contrast the Green Land is open with no clear visible boundaries and with large parts of it adjacent to and only in part raised above the level of the public highway.

Response

Barriers are shown on the main site plans which prevent vehicles accessing the non-traffic parts of the Embankment. This area is therefore safe for activities. Any vehicle movement in the vicinity will be limited to vehicles servicing Eel Pie Island businesses and residents.

- That part of the exchange land situated on the Embankment is also the main cycle route through the scheme.

Response

The cycle route is shown as being along Wharf Lane then along the Embankment to travel east down river or along Water Lane back to King Street. As with other paths shared between cyclists and pedestrians mutual respect and tolerance will be required and this area is no different.

- In addition, this part of the Green Land is also to be made subject to vehicular rights of way for servicing, refuse and recycling. Whilst this access route is intended to be controlled by way of demountable bollards, the vehicular rights will have a detrimental effect on the character and features of the land and this area can in no way be considered to be as equally advantageous as the amenity provided by the Red Land.

Response

In terms of vehicle access to this part of the Embankment the two-way traffic system on Water Lane and the proven auto-turn Computer aided design showing vehicles turning at the river end of the Lane will mean that even the larger vehicles delivering goods to Eel Pie Island businesses and residents will be able to retrace their journey up Water Lane to Kings Street and not require to travel across this area.

Eyot Lodge Leaseholders' Association

Their comment on traffic and vehicle movements reads as follows

- removes c65 parking spaces adjacent to King Street and Church Street which makes shopping more difficult where King Street already has many empty shops and with more retail units to be added as part of the scheme.

Response

The carparking issue was dealt with by the Council two years ago and is generally not an issue for this CPO. Parking elsewhere near the centre of Twickenham was identified in the response and the provision has been assessed as exceeding the anticipated demand.

McInnery – not opposed to development

- It is wrong to suggest or infer that LBRuT consulted the public prior to 2021 about removal of parking and/or traffic on The Embankment and adjoining roads. The proceedings of LBRuT's Finance, Policy and Resources Committee on June 28th 2021 included a remark [by] a solicitor from Pinsent Masons, acting on behalf of LBRuT, regarding the design competition for selecting the architect to be appointed for the Twickenham Riverside scheme. He referred to the winning design with removal of parking and traffic from The Embankment as chosen by the public in preference to designs based on the status quo and suggested that LBRuT's Counsel was briefed accordingly in relation to settling the terms of the CPO. In fact, the design competition was held under rules requiring that the short-listed architects' submissions comply with design requirements (referred to as the design brief) set out in the Invitation To Tender, June 2019. The design brief states the requirement very clearly that parking is to be removed from the riverside. The design brief also assumes that a road link between Water Lane and Wharf Lane will provide access for east-west service and commercial traffic allowing for removal of (east-west) motor traffic from The Embankment. (Sections 3.2 and 4.3 of the ITT 2019)

Response

Water Lane and Wharf Lane would only need to have a road link were there to be a one-way circulation route through the site. By achieving two-way access along Water Lane and Wharf Lane, the need for a road link between the two becomes redundant.

P J Edmunds

- The service road adjacent to the playground and open areas will be accessible to all vehicles including delivery lorries refuse lorries as well as other vehicles servicing Eel Pie Island and the site itself. The large vehicles will need to do a 5 point turn which will be both dangerous and unpleasant for people using the open areas as well as children using the playground

Response

Correct, the service road will be available to serve properties and businesses on the South side of King Street as well as in the new riverside development. A large vehicle accessing this area off Wharf Lane can drive down the Lane from King Street pass the service road and then reverse into the road to reach its delivery point. There will be a fixed boundary between the service road and the development area to prevent the public using the new park and other facilities from wandering onto the service road and encountering any road traffic.

Dwan – Eel Pie Island Slipways

- As a boatyard owner, it is essential to have parking and unloading near to the footbridge. Most of our deliveries come on transport of all sizes including flatbed trucks and articulated lorries bringing supplies of steel plate, paint engines etc Parking is also essential for visiting boat owners' surveyors and engineers as they need to carry heavy equipment onto the island.

Response

The scheme shows 6 large parking bays at the foot of the bridge suitable for larger vans to park to allow for visitors to Eel Pie Island. Parking and unloading flatbeds and larger articulated HGVs can be accommodated at the river end of Water Lane with departing vehicles turning and exiting onto King Street as indicated in the response above.

Conclusion

In conclusion I would like to emphasise the major traffic safety improvements that the scheme provides which would not be possible if the CPO was not approved.

The creation of two-way systems for Water and Wharf Lanes gives improved egress onto King Street with a wider bell mouth at the north end of Water Lane and reduced numbers of vehicles exiting Wharf Lane onto King Street near the traffic lights at the junction of Kings Street and Cross Deep so reducing congestion.

The removal of traffic and parking from a large part of the embankment area provides a much larger traffic free open space for the public, both pedestrians and cyclists to use and enjoy in central Twickenham, without having to be continually aware of traffic moving along the embankment.

The removal of this through traffic eliminates significant vehicle fumes and so improves the air quality in the area for residents and visitors to enjoy, as well as a place of safe access for water sports.

For these reasons I support the CPO and urge you to uphold it for the benefit of residents and visitors to this part of the Borough.