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Subject: Twickenham Riverside/Diamond Jubilee Gardens CPO
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Statement in Support of the Compulsory Purchase Order of Land and New Rights in Twickenham Riverside

Why land currently occupied by the Diamond Jubilee Gardens should be incorporated into the overall site development to enable a greater number of better quality trees, greening and improved biodiversity

My name is Brigitte Pickersgill. My husband & I moved to Twickenham 42 years ago in 1981, only a few months after the pool's closure. The site has laid derelict, unloved & uncared for until the Diamond Jubilee Garden (DJG) was built on its rubble, i.e. concrete, as a temporary solution in 2012.

Over the years and with aging family staying for long period of times with us, we found DJG not only difficult to access in the first place but nothing more that a plain, sad concreted area with fake grass, often used as a football pitch!

The plans for the redevelopment of the Twickenham Riverside is a long awaited scheme and a unique opportunity for the residents of Twickenham to finally enjoy the beautiful "green heart" they voted for.

Garden means beautiful trees, shrubs, real grass lawns & flowers.

In its presents state the DJG offers a very sad version of this.

According to the Arboricultural Reports submitted as part of the planning application, a total of 72 trees/groups of trees have been identified on the overall development site and perimeter areas, including some in the DJG compound.

- 29 trees (40%) are sycamores that are largely self-seeded, some 80% of which are described as being of 'low vigour' and 'suppressed' with 'sparse canopies' mainly due to being constricted within the concrete rubble on the site.

- 9 pin oaks are also described as being of 'low vigour' and are dying back.

Of the remaining trees,

- 8 are listed as poor or dead and recommended for felling.

The other 32 trees (birch, willows, hornbeams etc) are classified as 'fair' to 'good' by the arboriculturists.

- 12 are to be relocated; however, sadly, 7 of these 'trees of value' will have to be removed to accommodate the new proposals.

Therefore together with the addition of 35 selected new trees, a total of some 60 healthy 'trees of value' will be included within the overall site and peripheral areas - almost double the current number.

Thorough research by the landscape architects and arboriculturists has identified a wide variety of new tree species which have been carefully selected to suit the different environmental conditions around the site, improving overall greening, amenity and ecological value - bringing about a biodiversity net gain of 19% (exceeding the 10% requirement by the Council).

Several short lengths of species-poor hedgerow on the site are described as "an extremely poor example of this habitat type" in the Ecologist's report and considered to be ecologically insignificant.

The removal of the concrete and redundant structures that limit the growth of trees and any attractive vegetation will allow a considerable increase in the required soil volume, rooting medium & quality of planting.

As well as enabling more future tree planting, the existing

concreted area with fake grass will be totally removed and replaced with lawned terraces, shrubs & flowers beds over a much larger area (+50%), and of a much higher value than on the present site.

The ultimate aim of this redevelopment is to provide a safer, green, attractive, & publicly accessible new Riverside for the public.

The large numbers of healthy trees & the lack of cars will also contribute to a better air quality for all to enjoy.

All this can only be achieved if the substandard area, currently occupied by the DJG, is incorporated into the overall development of the site which will ultimately enable this programme of vast ecological improvement to be implemented.

Brigitte Pickersgill

