

Summary Statement

Twickenham Riverside has been a political football for many years. However, this time I have seen a new level in the game.

Unfortunately, the current proposers of the plan have sent out incorrect information to residents. I received an email addressed to me personally although I had not given out my email for this sort of use, so I wonder how many others have been sent photographs of the derelict Council-owned car park with the implication that it is the highly prized Diamond Jubilee Gardens, the site to be developed.

Of course, the old car park is part of the overall site and "affordable housing" will be built there. The Council has left it in a terrible state for a long time, collecting rubbish, and closing off the much-needed service road which is needed by many vehicles. This has been especially a problem in the last few years when the area floods and cars become stuck in the water, having driven down Water Lane and finding themselves in dire straits.

The destruction of the Diamond Jubilee Gardens will not be forgiven by many local people. It is a haven away from the drab high street and the fume filled roads; the destruction of so many trees will definitely destroy the Council's "green credentials". We will not only lose an historic site (many famous people have lived there) but we will lose most importantly the "lungs" of Twickenham as the seventy or so trees that will be destroyed will result in carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere when they are chopped down and dug up – and we have councillors who are supposed to care about climate change!

This prime site with a wonderful view of the Thames will not provide "affordable homes" but homes that few in the area will be able to afford. Overall, it will be a disaster for Twickenham and I should think that a cost-benefit study into the Council "scheme" would be very negative.

The key points are:

1. The council's proposal does not re-provision the Diamond Jubilee Gardens in a as good as or better way. The council's proposal does not provide a new garden in "a single form" as required, nor does it provide "that the minimum surface area of the Gardens that needs to be re-provided (c.2250msq) is positioned so as not to be affected by flooding". These were both requirements of the Design Brief.
2. The CPO not being granted does not prevent the development of Twickenham Riverside proceeding. The Water Lane buildings, which include all of the affordable housing, commercial and retail space, can proceed without the CPO. The removal of parking and improvements to The Embankment can proceed without the CPO. The land between the Diamond Jubilee Gardens and Water Lane can be improved and landscaped without the CPO and access to the gardens improved.

In summary, the CPO should not be granted. The development and improvement of Twickenham Riverside could still proceed without the CPO.