



21 March 2022

Dear Ms Thatcher,

Planning Application 21/2758/FUL

With reference to Documents:

'Design and Access Statement', part 4 of 13, pp70-74 Design: Town Square (3456754.pdf)

'Response to Additional Officer Comments' p.3-4 with reference to the Town Square/Event Space in the sections on Diamond Jubilee Gardens and Town Square (3446988.pdf)

'Applicant Response Covering Letter' p4 Landscape (3446987.pdf)

In the covering letter, the Applicant states:

Landscape

Existing artificial lawn in Diamond Jubilee Gardens (DJG)

An existing area of artificial grass in the DJG adjacent to the astroturf is currently used flexibly for outdoor gatherings and events. This space is 216sqm and has no connections to either power or water. The loss of this space in the proposed development is offset by the provision of 720sqm of flexible event space on the Embankment which will have power and water connections. The submitted Landscape Design and Access Statement identifies how this space can also be used for smaller-size activities. Plans showing the existing and proposed provision are enclosed.

The Trust would like to offer clarification regarding the above statement, and also further clarifications made about the existing event space provided on Diamond Jubilee Gardens (DJG).

- I. The area of artificial grass referred to above is indeed used 'flexibly for outdoor gatherings and events.' However, it is not the only area with the existing DJG to be used to host events. The wider Gardens are used, too. This provides for a much larger space than the 216m² quoted above.

If one includes the hard standing area (457m²) adjacent to the above mentioned soft-scaped areas, this event space extends to 218m² + 457m² = 675m².

Additionally, the petanque courts (125m²) are also used.

These three contiguous areas within the existing DJG therefore create a flexible event space area of c.800m².

It should be noted that:

(b) the existing flexible event space is on a single, contiguous, enclosed level.

(d) in contrast to the proposed event space in the Embankment-level Town Square, it is not bisected by either the main cycle route through the development or a controlled highway.

The Trust supplied DJG event layouts and photographs to inform the 2019 RIBA Design Brief, some of which are reproduced below. If planning officers wish to see more detail, this can be made available.



Borough's Best Banger event photos:



Brass on the Grass event photos:



Dog Show event photos (showing tents in place on petanque courts and the artificial grass):



The Gardens have also hosted events of the type described on p.71 of the Design and Access Statement, namely markets, outdoor cinema evenings and concerts. The latter as recently as September 2021, when one of the main stages of the High Tide Festival was located in the Gardens.

Please see photographs below. Note how the contiguous spaces within the existing Diamond Jubilee Gardens of the artificial grass, the hard standing and the petanque pitches were all used to deliver this event.



It is important to also note that the artificial grass area and the hard standing are not just used for “outdoor events and gatherings”:

- I. For the most part they are used extensively for the informal and more formal play, to include ball games (football, cricket). The proximity to the river of the Embankment-level proposed replacement area would not allow for this type of activity. Nor would the proposed areas of lawn with sloped sections connecting them.

2. The artificial grass areas and the hard standing, and the wider Gardens themselves, are also used for bicycle riding, scootering and roller skating. Whilst these activities would be possible on the Embankment-level proposed replacement area, the area is both the main cycle route through the proposed development and also a controlled highway.
3. Several nurseries make use of the year-round artificial grass area, too, both for informal play and for more organised activities. Please see below for a photograph taken on Friday 4th March 2022 for an example of one such organised activity. Additional photographs of such activity are available should planning officers require them.



4. The artificial grass also provides year-round amenity for general leisure i.e picknicking and general relaxation. The artificial surface drains well and dries quickly, especially given the orientation of the Gardens ensuring that the surface is able to benefit from sunshine all year.

With my best wishes,

Luke Montgomery-Smith
Chair, Twickenham Riverside Trust