

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

TRT – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Authority addresses Consultation and Engagement in Section 3 of its Statement of Case including reference to the “extensive historic consultation” since 2010.

There has been, of course, historic consultation regarding plans for Twickenham riverside that predate 2010. Twickenham Riverside Trust was founded in 2011 directly as a result of one such ‘consultation’ that formed part of an extensive campaign in opposition to a 2009 proposal for a large-scale development on Twickenham’s Riverside. There had also been prior proposals for developing the ‘pool’ site, dating back to 1990. All had met with considerable local opposition.

A timeline of the history of the site (from the closure of the pool in 1981 to the engagement of RIBA Competitions in January 2019) provides further details (including visuals).

The Trust came into being in 2011 on the back of a cross-party, multi-group protest against the 2009 plans for development on the pool site.

See below for the 'mandate' the coalition of campaigning groups (from which the Trust was formed) sought from the public to represent its aspirations for the public land.

Petition wording presented to Downing Street October 9th 2009 with 8,650 signatures:

“We call on Richmond Council to honour the recommendations of the Government appointed Inspector asked to investigate the use of the Twickenham Swimming Pool site.

These included:

1. The provision of public open space as the predominant feature of any redevelopment scheme,

2. The provision of public toilets,
3. That the public open space should be immutable and that any development should have regard to the conservation nature of the area.

Results of Referendum conducted by the Electoral Reform Services 25th June 2009:

Question: "Should public land on Twickenham Riverside be sold to a property development company?"

Yes: 125 (6.5%)

No: 1785 (93.5%)

There was a change of Administration in 2010, and in 2014 the new Administration demised the newly created Diamond Jubilee Gardens to TRT.

TRT carried out its own survey over a period five days in May 2017. The survey (and a summary of its key findings) has been supplied.

This helped inform the Trust's December 2018 'Principles for Development' submitted to the Authority for inclusion in the RIBA Design Brief.

All of the consultation (creation of consultation materials, analysis of results, writing of reports) on the Authority's Scheme has been carried out in-house. This is in contrast to the previous Administration's 2017-18 scheme where all consultation analysis was outsourced.

JANUARY 2021 CONSULTATION

The January 2021 consultation coincided with the 3rd COVID Lockdown. It was therefore an online-only consultation. Whilst the Authority held two online 'consultation' presentations, the opportunity to view material and interact with officers was inevitably compromised, for certain sectors of the population more than others.

The Trust also raised concerns in March 2021 about consultation material not only being analysed in-house, but also authored in-house.

The Trust had requested sight (prior to its launch in January 2021) of questions regarding Open Space that the Authority would be putting to the public. After being chased the Authority's representative responded:

*Apologies I haven't sent it over before but **we have been receiving feedback from members** [Trust emphasis] and trying to sort logistics with the changing regulations. We are finalising the questionnaire today ideally so that this can go onto the website ready for the launch on Wednesday but **we've kept it as open as we possibly can so that people can tell us what they want.** [Trust emphasis] The question is regarding the open space in its entirety with reference to the Embankment, Gardens and Water Lane. Please find below -*

Open Space

One of the objectives of the scheme is to provide high quality open space for Twickenham, including:

- *The re-provision of the Diamond Jubilee Gardens*
- *A car free riverside where pedestrians are given priority*
- *Widened Water Lane*

Please tell us which, if any, aspects of the proposed open space you particularly LIKE:

.....

Please tell us which, if any, aspects of the proposed open space you particularly DISLIKE:

.....

Please give details on any other features you would like to see included in the open space:

.....

When the Consultation was launched a couple of days later, the above question (on which the Trust had had no comment) had been altered significantly:

Open space

One of the objectives of the scheme is to provide high quality open space for Twickenham, including:

- The re-provision of the Diamond Jubilee Gardens
- A car-free riverside (Embankment) where pedestrians are given priority
- A widened Water Lane
- Enhanced space for special events

8. Do you agree or disagree this scheme achieves that ambition?

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Don't know

A 'closed' question had now been introduced as a prefix to the previously exclusively 'open' questions.

Most significantly, the powerful 'nudge' of a "car-free riverside" (already present in the original question) was now one of the four elements that informed a response to whether the "ambition" has been achieved that can only be responded to by a single response.

It is also worth noting that a car-free riverside and a widened Water Lane (two of the above manifestations of the Scheme's "high-quality open space") are deliverable entirely independent of the Wharf Lane Building on the Lost Open Space.

The 'closed' question regarding Open Space (one of the very few 'closed' questions in the Consultation) has been relentlessly mined by the Authority in reporting support for its Scheme. Percentages that relate to a response to this 4-part proposition are reported as being in relation to just a single aspect (the re-provision of Diamond Jubilee Gardens, for example) or to use one aspect to 'underpin' a support for "high quality open space" as a whole, ignoring that one has been a powerful driver to the other.

Para 3.9 in the Authority's Statement is a prime example of this:

"73% of the consultation respondents agreed that the Hopkins design achieves the ambition of high quality open space and pedestrianised priority on the river frontage"

Whether a mistake by an inexperienced member of an in-house team, or a purposeful change to intentionally introduce a powerful 'nudge' of a car-free riverside (except, of course, it's not "car-free" per se, but that's another matter) into a 'closed question', the end result is 'market research' producing questionable/unreliable statistics.

RIBA COMPETITION CONSULTATION (September 2019)

As per the January 2021 Consultation, the earlier RIBA Competition Consultation results were analysed by the Council's Consultation Team.

Para 3.7 refers to the consultation with children and young people.

The Trust has had sight of the original "Engagement Report - Children and Young People". See attachments:

(final - for general public) RIBA 2019 Children and Youth

(original - Design Panel ONLY) RIBA 2019 Children and Youth

When the report was issued to the public, very disturbingly the section reproduced below had been removed.

At the end of each session the Programme Team asked each class to take a blind vote on their preferred schemes (keeping their eyes closed). Some individuals refrained from casting a vote and therefore the total number of votes cast is 239, the results are as follows;

- Architect 1: 49 20% /,
- Architect 2: 19 8% /,
- Architect 3: 159 67% /,
- Architect 4: 0
- Architect 5: 12 5% /

Most children and young people were drawn to scheme 3 as they saw it to have the most engaging activities, including a swimming pool, whilst scheme 4 was the least popular and many children felt it was not green enough and/or lacked activities for children.'

Architect 1 is Hopkins, with 20% of the votes.

It is worth at this point returning briefly to para 3.1 of the Authority's Statement: "The Council's Corporate Plan puts an emphasis on creating a borough for everyone and ensuring residents have a real say over issues that affect them." [Trust emphasis]

The Trust has repeatedly asked the Authority for information regarding the removal of this section of the original report from the published version of the report, which represents the removal of 300 young people's votes.

Ahead of an "edited" report being made public, the original report was given to members of the RIBA Design Panel, to inform their deliberations ahead of selecting a competition winner.

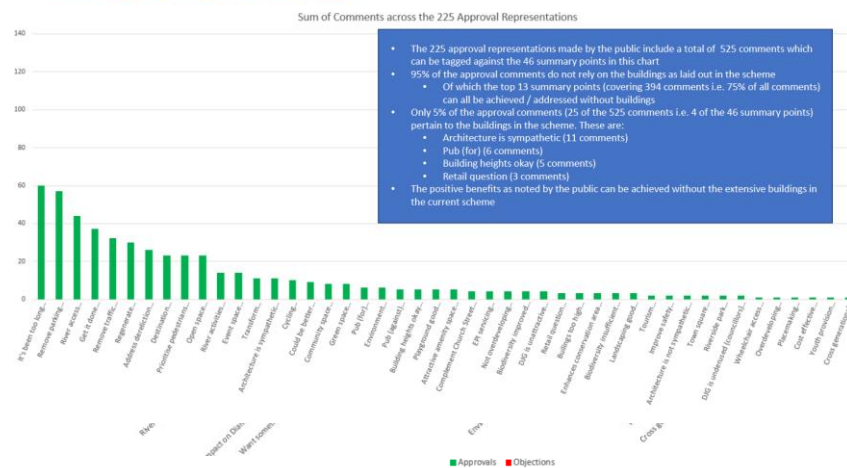
PLANNING APPLICATION (August 2021)

The planning application represents the first time the public had the opportunity to comment without the filter of the Authority's in-house analysis of their responses.

The Trust prepared analysis of the c.600 (Support, Object, Observation) comments on the planning application (as per April 2022).

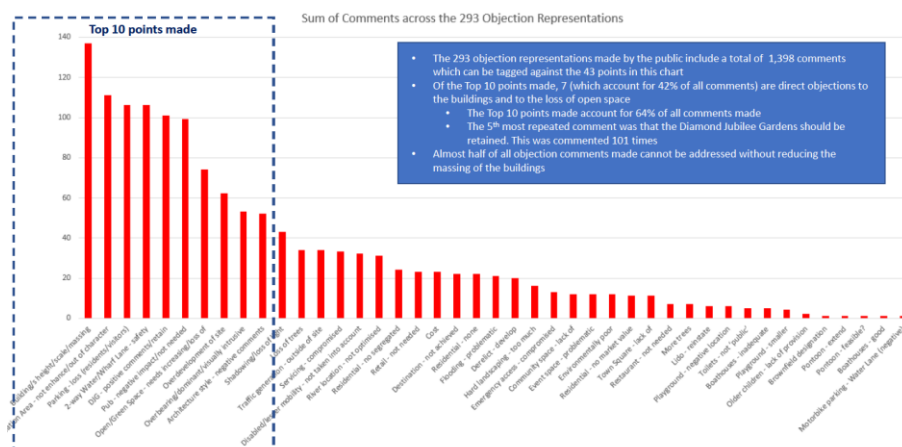
These were incorporated into a series of bar charts (supplied)

APPROVAL ANALYSIS



See above and below for indicative screenshots of the bar charts:

OBJECTION ANALYSIS



The above analysis clearly indicates the path for an 'elegant detour' (remove the cars, remove the Wharf Lane Building) that would receive pretty much universal public approval AND realise the ambitions of the widely supported RIBA Competitions Design Brief.

PETITIONS

The Authority's Statement of Case refers to a public petition in support of its Scheme.

This is factually incorrect. The petition the Authority references (on more than on occasion) was a 2017-18 petition in support of "ParkNotCarPark." Once again

The Petition Scheme had underground parking for 150 cars, and showed a swimming pool constructed on the Embankment. It was entirely unfeasible but nevertheless clearly demonstrated the public's desire to see car parking removed and a park put in its place.



0 10 20 30 40 50 100 METRES

9 6

#ParkNotCarPark



What do you want to see on
Twickenham Riverside?
A park or a car park?

1. The Trust, in contrast, launched a petition specifically about the Authority's

Save Diamond Jubilee Gardens on Twickenham Riverside **STOP THE LAND GRAB !**

===== CPO inquiry June 2023 ===== CPO inquiry June 2023 =====



- ❖ Historic open space on Twickenham Riverside to be bulldozed for luxury flats.
- ❖ Richmond Council wants to erect a 21m high-rise building on the Gardens, using more than £35mn of public money.
- ❖ A much-loved children's playground gone – and just one tree left.
- ❖ Council is aggressively using Compulsory Purchase powers to seize the Gardens.
- ❖ All derelict areas are on Council-owned land – they can be rejuvenated, other improvements made, and views of the river enhanced – without this building.

JOIN OUR PETITION

I support:

Improvements to Twickenham Riverside that will see the existing footprint of Diamond Jubilee Gardens remain free from development, the withdrawal of the Wharf Lane proposal, and the trees retained – so as to preserve and protect the Public Open Space on the Riverside for the benefit of the Public.



With thanks for your support,
www.TwickenhamRiversideTrust.org.uk



Scheme

The Trust's petition, which calls for the removal of the Wharf Lane Building from the Scheme, currently has more than 3,000 signatures of support.

In exactly the same way as the Authority's consultations show strong support for the removal of car parking and the Trust's analysis of the planning application comments shows strong disapproval of the Wharf Lane Building, so the ParkNotCarPark petition shows strong support for the removal of car parking and the Trust's petition shows strong disapproval of the Wharf Lane Building.