

As has already been discussed before I started this Statement of Evidence, the Trust is - as is the Inquiry - making a very clear distinction between matters CPO and matters section 19. There will be no discussion in this Statement of Evidence relating to Design and Open Space using the terms Exchange Land, Lost Open Space, Retained Open Space and so forth. Matters section 19-related form the 'agenda' for Days 8 and 9 of this Inquiry.

By way of a route map, I will be presenting the Trust's Evidence regarding Design and Open Space in the following way:

1. Firstly, an introduction, mainly to me. Other Trustees will be similarly introducing themselves before they bring forward the Trust's Evidence on other matters.
2. I will then bring forward the Trust's Statement of Evidence regarding OPEN SPACE by looking at, in detail, the Authority's document:

CD 4.07 Public Realm Strategy October 2022 (Parts 1 and 2)

In the course of this, I will be pulling up multiple documents, mainly plans and images, submitted by both the Trust and the Authority.

3. As well as looking at OPEN SPACE, we will be looking at SHADOWING, LOSS OF TREES, and, of course, the WHARF LANE BUILDING
4. We will end our journey through Twickenham riverside right next to the river, on Twickenham's Embankment promenade.

But before I address on behalf of the Trust matters relating to Design and Open Space, an introductory pause.

As Trustees we didn't, in the Trust's Proofs of Evidence, take the opportunity to fully introduce ourselves. Little potted bios of all Trustees are on the Trust's website, and it can be seen that we bring a variety of backgrounds and skillsets to our being Trustees.

When I speak further on in this Statement of Evidence, I will be doing so, obviously, for the Trust. I will be representing our collective position as Trustees.

However, I would like to take the opportunity to introduce myself in more detail. I am going to, for the moment, put on a personal hat.

I have been a trustee of the Twickenham Riverside Trust since November 2018. I first became involved with the Trust in Winter 2014, when I started helping out with Events that the Trust was hosting on the Diamond Jubilee Gardens.

Four years and many events later, I was invited by the Trust to submit a formal application to become a Trustee.

My personal journey to becoming a Trustee of the Twickenham Riverside Trust, however, is also to a great extent reflected by my involvement with and membership of various local societies and organisations.

I have been a resident of Eel Pie Island since Summer 2013. I am therefore also a shareholder in Tower of Power, which trades as the Island Bridge Company. When one owns either a property or a business on Eel Pie Island, one is allocated a non-transferable share in Tower of Power Ltd. Island costs - insurance, maintenance, Port of London Authority License fees - are divided amongst shareholders.

I am a member of both the Twickenham Society and the Richmond Society.

I am also a member of the York House Society, which concerns itself with the very building in which this Inquiry is taking place and its accompanying - partly riverside - public realm.

I am a member of the Borough of Twickenham Local History Society and the Richmond Local History Society.

Staying on the local history theme, I am a 'founding' volunteer at the Eel Pie Island Museum in central Twickenham. I help organise and host Group Visits to the Museum, as well as curating and presenting both the Museum's Guided Walks and off-site presentations, over 70 of which took place last reporting year. The same reporting year saw the museum directly engage with over 5,500 people. And visitors to the Museum truly come from far and wide. The borough. Wider London. Outside of London. Outside of the UK. Over 50 countries are represented in the Museum's Guest Books. For these visitors, Twickenham is already a destination. Interestingly, one of the most frequently asked questions, after 'Are you worried about flooding?' is 'Does Ocado deliver?' Two matters - flooding and vehicular movement - that are before this Inquiry.

Moving from land to river, I am on the committee of both the Richmond Yacht Club, based on Eel Pie Island, and the Middle Thames Yacht Club, based upstream at Sunbury Lock.

Staying on the Thames, I am a member of the River Thames Society.

Another Thameswide society that I have been involved with since about 2017 is the Thames Festival Trust. The Thames Festival Trust curates an annual, Londonwide month-long festival in September called Totally Thames. This year, the Trust - in collaboration with the Eel Pie Island Museum - is part of Totally Thames, with an exhibition and a series of Twickenham riverside Guided Walks on the theme of "Arcadian Thames". Totally Thames brings visitors to Twickenham from all over London and beyond. This activity will also form part of the Authority's annual September "Know Your Place" festival, which is promoted more locally across the borough.

On Day 2 of the Inquiry, as a response to Ms Purton's very heartfelt Statement of Evidence focussing on the Scheme's provision of affordable housing, which the Trust supports, I mentioned my involvement with the Brooklyn YWCA, the largest provider - with some 300 units - of housing to low income women in Brooklyn.

I lived in New York City, in Brooklyn, for 7 years, from 2006 to 2013. During that time, literally at the end of the street on which I lived, the 85-acre Brooklyn Bridge Park stretching along over a mile of prime waterfront, was created on the site of derelict docks. Docks that had lain "largely barren, decrepit, and abandoned" since the 1970s. The Port Authority, who owned the docks, had wanted to sell them for commercial development. This sparked a community movement to reclaim the waterfront area for public use. And the Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy was established to campaign to do precisely that. (Whilst not on the same scale, there are nevertheless strong echoes of Twickenham Riverside and the establishment of the Trust in 2011 to be heard.) Several of my Brooklyn friends were founding funders of the park and I knew the Director of the Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy personally.

Brooklyn Bridge Park is a superbly designed collection of interconnected spaces able to host a variety of activities simultaneously. A series of outdoor rooms, if you like. Whilst the new build residential development limited to one edge of the park most certainly did not constitute affordable housing, the public space is very much "affordable" open space - and it was expressly designed to be so. There is very, very little "pay-to-play" on Brooklyn's new community waterfront.

I followed the Park's gradual, phased opening over several years and saw how the socio-

economic profile of visitors crossing through the expensive neighbourhood where I lived changed, as the Park became used by more and more people, many of them from the large social housing buildings, the projects, within walking distance of the Park to all sides, including across the Brooklyn Bridge in lower Manhattan.

Again, the Trust would draw parallels with Twickenham Riverside and the increasingly broader socio-economic profile of the people coming to benefit from the public spaces available to them.

It was from living alongside the East River in Brooklyn that in 2013 I moved from Long Island to Eel Pie Island. Which brings us back to now.

Close of play Day 3 at the end of this Inquiry's first week saw me, as I mentioned at the time, jump on a train to the City and have a restorative cocktail.

Which took place in a restaurant in the Bloomberg Building. As a regular visitor to the City, I watched the construction of this building take place over several years. I do like the Bloomberg Building. A strong architectural vision, in my opinion, successfully realised. And with the London Mithraeum - the Roman temple museum - having been created underneath, it also represents hugely strong place making.

Staying with place making, something which Cllr Neden Watts referenced in her Statement of Evidence to this Inquiry, just around the corner from the Bloomberg Building is one of my favourite oases of public realm in the City of London, created some 10 years ago. Any creation or retention of public realm in the City is a huge challenge, working in that incredibly tight, incredibly valuable - in both financial and wellbeing terms - urban environment.

The public realm I am referring to is St Pancras Church Garden. It's a tiny space. I first came across it about 8 years ago. I can remember so well sitting there for the first time, in a very clearly contemporary space, and yet simultaneously being transported back some 350 years in a time-travel vortex of incredibly imaginative, creative place-making to when St Pancras Church last occupied that site. It's so beautiful. Elegant. Simple. Modern. Moving.

St Pancras Church Garden was designed by an architectural practice called Studio Weave. And here's where, accompanied by Studio Weave, we now leave the City of London and

return to Twickenham's Riverside. And this is because Studio Weave was part of the winning Hopkins' RIBA Design Competition Design Team.

I am now removing my personal hat and putting my Trustee hat very firmly back on my head.

To quote from the Hopkins RIBA Design Competition "Team Structure" outline:

"Je Ahn of Studio Weave will bring the Studio's distinctive but complementary interdisciplinary approach to the project, uniting architecture, public realm, community engagement and artists together in interventions which tease out the special, possibly hitherto undiscovered, qualities of the site and brief."

This was something that I, as a trustee - and I shared this with my fellow trustees as part of our decision-making process in selecting the Hopkins' scheme as the Trust's "preferred" scheme - was very excited about. I had read the Financial Times' full-page profile of Je Ahn. The potential for enhancing Twickenham's riverside that Studio Weave could bring was surely an opportunity not to be missed. The exceptionally creative Studio Weave was coming to Twickenham's Riverside.

Except that Studio Weave was to make only the briefest of appearances. Two appearances, in fact - a meeting with the Eel Pie Island Museum and a meeting with the Port of London Authority. A matter of months after Hopkins started work in April 2020, Studio Weave was gone. No explanation offered. Just gone.

'Teasing out the special qualities of the site' was clearly no longer a priority. 'Getting it done', accompanied by 'sticking to our timetable' (both refrains much repeated by the Authority, the former to the public, the latter to the Trust in emails), was the Authority's clear direction of travel pretty much out of the gate.

The Trust contends most strongly that this approach - further compounded by the need to address Environment Agency requirements - had a negative impact on the design of the Scheme that is before this Inquiry, to include its provision of Public Realm.

So let's explore in more detail the Public Realm within the Scheme, taking as our guide the Authority's document **CD 4.7 - Public Realm Strategy October 2022.**

I am now bringing this Statement of Evidence to a close, but I would like before I do to pick up on a question asked of the Trust last week.

At the close of play on Day 2 of the Inquiry, Mr Rose, you asked a clarification question regarding something my fellow trustee Mark Brownrigg had said earlier that day regarding the Wharf Lane Building.

Mr Brownrigg had said: “The Trust can accept everything except the Wharf Lane Building.”

Mr Brownrigg had left the Inquiry for the day when you asked me if that accurately reflected the position of the Trust. I replied that it didn’t. And that a more accurate representation of the Trust’s position would be that, whilst the direct impact of the Wharf Lane Building should not be understated, a whole sequence of design decisions were to impact the Scheme as a whole. These arose in part from the need to accommodate the Environment Agency’s requirements around placing a building in this location next to the River Thames but also very largely from the Authority’s absolute refusal to countenance any changes whatsoever to the built element of its Scheme except in response to the Environment Agency’s requirements. These constraints, some imposed by the Environment Agency, some imposed by the Authority itself, compromised and impacted the Scheme as a whole, most specifically the provision of public realm both in terms of its quantum and its quality.

Some of these I have touched upon in my walk through of the Authority’s Public Realm Strategy.

Returning to the Wharf Lane Building. Ironically, the Trust’s early enthusiasm for the concept Scheme was in part linked to the Wharf Lane Building.

LBR 2B (O2) VIEW OF COMPETITION SCHEME

As an architectural handshake, so to speak, as a concept, as ‘the start of the journey’ as the Authority referred to all the competition schemes in its September 2019 consultation, the Wharf Lane Building was not without its merits.

The Winter Gardens, for example, provided internal public realm, open ended at both ends, with the potential to interact with outdoor public realm, the two seamlessly flowing into each other. There were interestingly articulated spaces that resulted from this.

There was also the sympathetic and elegant use of materials - something for which Hopkins as a practice is recognised - the wood, the glass, the delicacy, if you like, of the juxtaposition of these two materials, the wood very much referencing nearby riparian structures. All of this was very positively received by not only Trustees, but also the wider public.

Wider on the concept scheme, there were community spaces - in both the Water Lane Building, the Wharf Lane Building and the Pavilion Building. All of these spaces were not without potential wider benefits to the riverside. None of these remain in the Scheme before the Inquiry. Public toilets remain. A public inquiry to provide public toilets.

Also, a completely vehicular free Embankment was being proposed. However, the Trust (as will be explored in Mr Cremin's Statement of Evidence) was sceptical that this was achievable.

So, did the Hopkins competition concept scheme, of which the Wharf Lane Building was part, represent, therefore, an interesting start? Of course it did.

And several Trustees were concerned - and raised those concerns very early on, even before Hopkins was appointed - that this building was too tall for its location, in respect not only to the neighbouring public realm, but also the riverside village of Twickenham. The scale of the nearby high street had been brought to the riverside. "It's only a concept," was the Authority's refrain.

PLANNING COMMITTEE LOW RES PAGE 6 (compare with Comp Scheme in terms of comparison with Thames Eyot)

And then, very rapidly, rather than evolving, the design of the Wharf Lane Building devolved.

By September 2020, the Winter Gardens were lost and what had been a light and airy building became - as various iterations emerged and the building shuffled and compacted - a solid block, a large, hunkering presence looming over the riverside was all that remained. The elegant materials were similarly lost. The building is now to be built using brick panels.

To accommodate all of the above, a 2.5m podium was introduced on to the Embankment.

SHOW MORE IMAGES FROM PLANNING COM PRESENTATION DOCUMENT

And in order to accommodate not only the podium but also the Embankment road - reintroduced in December 2020 when the cut-through service road was removed from the Scheme - the Embankment promenade was narrowed.

I would like to end the Trust's Statement of Evidence down on the Embankment Promenade, as close to the river as it possible to get without being aggressed by geese or getting one's feet wet (well, depending on the tide...)

The existing Embankment promenade is very important public realm on Twickenham's riverside. Indeed it is listed as a "park" on the Authority's website. And yet the first week of this Inquiry has seen very little mention made of it. When the Authority's witnesses have variously described the existing site, the promenade is mostly conspicuous by its absence from their descriptions. The Embankment, as far as the Authority would appear to be concerned, consists of a road and car parking.

And yet it is the Embankment's promenade to which visitors make their way, along the entirety of Twickenham's riverside, from Wharf Lane all the way to Church Lane. It is prime riverside amenity space. And it's free. No 'pay-to-play' on Twickenham's Embankment promenade. Go to Kingston. See how the riverside promenade is dominated by 'pay-to-play' riverside restaurants, the very benches intended for public use virtually subsumed into the terraces of the riverside restaurants. There is very little pausing to enjoy on Kingston's town centre riverside. Unless, of course, you have money in your pocket to purchase a place at a riverside restaurant table. In contrast, the existing promenade at Twickenham is very much a place of relaxation. With space for different users to co-exist. And - most importantly, we reiterate - is free to use.

As already outlined, the need to accommodate the Wharf Lane Building's podium has pushed the Embankment road closer to the river, and in doing so resulted in the Embankment promenade losing some 25% of its width across the whole development site.

At present, there is plenty of room to sit, plenty of room to walk, plenty of room to lean against the Embankment railings and enjoy the river. During the various lockdowns - and this continues - people brought extra seating down to the riverside, bringing their picnics, such that some people could occupy the benches, whilst others sat closer to the river. And there was room for both. As well as for people walking. The existing Embankment promenade is relentlessly labelled by the Authority as 'highway', which whilst that might be

correct in 'planning terms', is nevertheless to ignore its function, its usage. And it has been similarly undervalued in the Authority's Scheme's provision of public realm.

A reduced width promenade resulting from a development supposedly championing and celebrating Twickenham's riverside location? Surely the ambition should have been to if anything increase this, and allow the public to enjoy even more public realm close to the river? A simple piece of public realm. Remove the car parking and it is directly realisable. Bring some of the design features from Champion's Wharf and Twickenham's riverside can be bookended by public open space rather than overbearing buildings.

Next week of this Inquiry will see the Trust making its s19 case. In which we will be examining Open Space in detail with respect to usage, function, amenity, advantage. Some of which we have touched on today.

In the meantime, other objectors, most notably Mr Paul Velluet, Chair of the Richmond Society when the development of Richmond Riverside took place, have written from a position of knowledge and expertise regarding the impact of the Scheme on the riverside Conservation Area. We would direct you, Mr Rose, towards those Objections. And my fellow Trustee Mark Brownrigg will also be addressing these matters before the Inquiry tomorrow.