

Responses to questions from the Twickenham Riverside consultation online event

London Borough of Richmond

6 January 2021

Responses to questions from the Twickenham Riverside consultation Zoom event held on the 6th January 2021.

The below provides responses to all the unanswered questions in the chat function. If you believe your question has been missed please email: ProgrammeTeam@richmond.gov.uk

Is there any way to reduce traffic flow in the new development?

The removal of parking spaces from the Embankment will reduce traffic coming down to the river. A very small number of delivery and waste collection vehicles which are unable to turn at the bottom of Water Lane would need to progress along the Embankment, but they will only be granted access at very limited times of day, so that pedestrians and cyclists will have priority.

Is the design sensory friendly for example for people with dementia?

That level of detail has not yet been considered. There is a disability consultant as part of the wider project team, and this will be discussed going forward.

Can retail space be used for non-retail usage such as leisure, community group work?

Planning policy means a minimum amount of retail is likely to be required to replace the existing retail on the site. However, the retail units are being flexibly designed and so future use changes could be accommodated. The Council is retaining control over the units and so will be able to carefully consider the social value of end uses.

Only one of the new buildings is going to be brick - both should be? Also isn't 3 stories far too high for the scale of the site?

The exact materials have yet to be finalised, but the current proposal is for brick on Water Lane and metal and terracotta on Wharf Lane. Three storeys are acceptable from a planning perspective and in keeping with the rest of King Street. The questionnaire asks about the design and so gives a further opportunity to comment.

Is there a proposal to service the King Street shops from King Street?

Yes, a loading arrangement on King Street is being explored.

Have you considered renovating the river path from Richmond Bridge all the way to Twickenham therefore making it more attractive for people to walk /cycle rather than use cars to connect these two spots on the river?

The river path falls outside of the scope of this project however we can consider potential improvements.

Question re the office co-working space

Unsure what the question was, however, it is envisioned that the office space at ground floor level of the Wharf Lane building might be co-working space. The exact details and end users need to be worked out, but the Council is likely to conduct a soft marketing exercise.

Why no proper boathouses?

We are not ruling out the inclusion of boathouses, but this needs to be carefully considered in relation to flood storage on site, which has to be replaced like-for-like at all levels and so further conversations would be needed with the Environment Agency. Currently we are suggesting boat storage and the possibility of a mobile boathouse structure (detail still to be worked through). There is a feasibility study being conducted as to whether the Thames Eyot boathouse, which borders the site in the

southwest corner, can be brought back into active use and the Council will look to complement and react to any proposals that come forward.

Move farmer's market from Holly Road car park?

Discussions have been held with the operator of the farmer's market at Holly Road, which is happy with its existing arrangements for what is a successful and well-established market. However, the Council is considering different types of regular markets that could be a good fit for the site (e.g. freshly prepared food markets).

There are already a lot of empty void retail units in Twickenham in part because there is insufficient parking - this has a poor parking plan and will only exacerbate this? How many parking places are being lost in total?

We do not agree with the premise of the question that the number of empty retail units in Twickenham is closely related to parking availability. Twickenham town centre is well-served by bus routes and has several car parks operating below capacity. A key objective of the proposed development is to improve the attractiveness of Twickenham town centre for visitors and residents, benefiting existing business, who have expressed support for the approach.

The report to the Council's Transport and Air Quality Committee on 5 November 2020 (link: <https://cabnet.richmond.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=47424>) states that approximately 82 parking spaces will be removed from the area, with 29 spaces created across the controlled parking zone (CPZ). This results in a net loss of spaces of 53. This does not include the plans to create more shared bays that will result in better bay utilisation.

As part of the parking proposals, a number of measures will be progressed to implementation including the change in designation of existing CPZ spaces and encouraging better use of the town centre car parks.

Why not make the car park under the new buildings larger and payable by those who wish to use it?

There are no plans to create a car park on the site, under buildings or otherwise.

Why is there no underground parking provided?

The cost to construct one is too expensive. There is also the significant issue of site levels and flooding (given proximity to the river). The inclusion of a podium level car park was an issue for the Environment Agency in the previous scheme. The Council have developed a strategy to accommodate the loss of parking spaces on the Embankment.

Cycle path through the centre of the gardens?

There are currently shared pedestrian/cycle paths shown through the gardens in the plans and along the Embankment itself, as well as pedestrian-only areas. The consultation asks for public views on cycling and pedestrian provision.

Are residents of Eel Pie Island worried about the parking spaces being removed?

There have been concerns raised by some residents and businesses on the Island and the Council and design team have been regularly engaging with the Eel Pie Island Association. The Council has developed a plan as to how spaces lost from the Embankment might be mitigated as explained in the report to the Council's Transport and Air Quality Committee in November 2020.

For existing residents of EPI, are there new resident parking places to replace the ones being lost?

Yes, this is included in the above-mentioned Committee report and shown in Appendix D. On the Embankment, 35 shared-use spaces will be changed to resident permit holders and one new space will be installed bringing the total to 36.

How is the inherent conflict between pedestrians and cyclists (and service- vehicles) to be resolved along the riverside walk unless the existing demarcation between footway and carriageway retained together with the deep strip of landscaping, as works well to the north-east towards the Barmy Arms?

The exact detail is to be developed, but there is sufficient space along the Embankment for there to be a safe environment for both pedestrians and cyclists. The Council have transport consultants on board who have experience of designing such spaces. The consultation asks for public views on cycling and pedestrian provision.

Would it be possible to hear a little bit snapshot on the waste strategy? More people = more litter and subsequent problems.

A waste strategy will be developed in the lead up to a planning application. The existing site has public waste bins but, noting the intention is to increase footfall, we appreciate this will need to be reflected in the number, positioning and frequency of servicing of bins.

Question - great scheme - at last a positive and realistic proposal. But given the climate emergency declared by the council, and given this is a new development, why are ANY vehicles with internal combustion engines being allowed on site?

As noted above, we anticipate a significant reduction in vehicle use in the vicinity of the site, in line with the Council's action plan on the climate emergency. However, some limited use of motorised vehicles is unavoidable, particularly for servicing and deliveries. The Council has removed parking from the Embankment and significantly reduced vehicle movements on the site which is positive. The residential units will also be car free (no new resident will be allowed a permit). The Council's ambition was to make the scheme as vehicle free as possible which has been achieved.

Concern re empty retail / existing retail on high st / improve existing ambience of Twickenham

One of the ambitions of the scheme is to help revitalise Twickenham town centre, making it a more attractive location for residents and visitors, benefiting existing businesses and attracting new ones not just to the site itself but to the broader town centre.

We are unsure if the question had this in mind, but we note the proposals include retail units. The units being developed as part of the scheme are being designed to be as flexible as possible. It is hoped they continue the successes of Church Street onto Water Lane. Given their smaller size they complement other, larger retail units in Twickenham (e.g. on King Street) and extend the Church Street offer.

Reassessment of the need for retail and office space in light of recent trends and consequence of Covid?

The proposal needs to reflect planning policy requirements to replace the existing retail and commercial space on site (e.g. at the corner of King Street/Water Lane). We are aware that there are wider trends in demand, some of these accelerated by the Covid pandemic. Some of these trends are in the direction of flexible workspaces closer to where people live, including in areas like Twickenham. All units are being flexibly designed so they are future proofed.

Public toilets provision is a must other than relying on the pub/restaurant and cafe.

The provision of public toilets will be explored. The Council runs a community toilet scheme and we would expect the food and beverage units on the scheme to participate in this so that their toilets are not limited to paying customers.

How will traffic exit Water Lane onto King Street?

The junction will be widened, and it will be left turn only.

As this is a developing scheme, is there is still a possibility that the Winter Gardens could be included in the scheme? For example, could the winter gardens be 'shared' between the buildings and the gardens? The provision of a winter garden would make DJG activities and other public activities possible throughout the year.

It is unlikely that the Winter Gardens can be reinstated in the form that it appeared in the original design competition proposals, but consideration could be given to ideas for an alternative covered area and to other suggestions that improve the scope for year-round enjoyment of the site. Their removal was brought about by the need to reduce the building footprint to provide adequate flood storage on site – which has been a lengthy exercise reacting to comments from the Environment Agency. There were also some concerns from the fire consultant given the building includes residential units.

Question about financial viability

Unsure what the question was, but as mentioned during the Q&A section the Council will be taking a long-term view and will be investing in the Riverside redevelopment.

Town/public square

Unsure what the question was, but the event space on the Embankment is suggested to be the new public/town square that residents suggested is needed during previous consultations on the site.

What contract strategy will be used?

Unclear on the context of the question, but there will be a Committee paper later this year detailing how the scheme will be delivered.

There are many pubs in the area; can you use imagination and provide a resource which will really be beneficial to Twickenham?

We understand this is a reference to the unit in the SW corner of the site identified on plans as a “pub/restaurant”. The exact nature of the business operating there (and for other units) would depend on who expresses interest in the lease at a later date. The unit provides excellent views of the river and will be a destination point at the western end of the scheme. As freeholder, the Council would give consideration to what a potential occupier adds to Twickenham’s overall offering to residents and visitors. More broadly, this is a mixed-use scheme which includes both commercial space and substantial community resource in particular in the form of improved public open space and event space. The commercial space is an important part, but only part, of the project both in terms of viability and attracting people to the site.

Is the disabled ramp the cycle lane?

As can be seen from presentation board 9, there are a range of pedestrian routes around the site, most of which are accessible (i.e. step free). As also shown, it is proposed that some paths will be shared use with cyclists accessing cycle parking at the north of the site, which would be designed with consideration of safety of all users. There is scope to comment on both pedestrian and cycling provision in the questionnaire.

Is it not possible to provide underground parking - below the architectural features we have been shown?

It is too costly and there are significant issues with access, potential flooding and getting Environmental Agency approval given the flood levels. Please see above question on this matter

What is LBORs estimation of registered car owners in D1 area - and what is the availability of actual resident parking places - that has not been answered

The D1 area currently does not exist, it is a concept that is being explored where we make the riverside area (likely Wharf Lane to Church Lane) a sub-zone of Controlled Parking Zone D, which covers much of Twickenham. In terms of car owners in the D1 area, the Council does not know this figure. It does have, however, the number of resident and business parking permits which are attached in the whole of current Zone D (street by street).

Can the council guarantee that the new flat residents will not be able to get parking permits in the future. I understand that when the houses in Water Lane were first built and sold, the new occupants were not allowed parking permits but only for the first five years. Could this happen again on the new site?

Occupiers of the residential units on the new development will not be entitled to parking permits.

Would love free & clean water drinking taps.

We will look into this. The Council is actively exploring new sites for public drinking fountains across the Borough.

Is there a space for Eel Pie Island Museum in the scheme?

The concept design presented in the competition had suggested a potential end use of one of the units could be the EPI museum. We have met with the museum to discuss their ambitions and will continue to engage with them as the design is finalised. It is noted that the building footprint of the design since the competition has reduced by around a third (related to public comments and Environment Agency requirements regarding flood storage and the flood defence) and this has resulted in less lettable space, but we would certainly want the uses of the site to reflect the history and heritage of the local area.

Sales are mainly online now. Is it sensible to provide retail units - think of an alternative.

Some of the retail units are necessary to comply with planning policy by replacing existing retail units. More broadly, clearly there are wider trends towards online purchasing. However, there is still strong demand for well located, specialist retail units and cafes, and many examples of successful local independent businesses of this nature, particularly in small units of the sort proposed. Retail units are also being designed to be flexible should their use change in future.

Question why isn't the underground carpark under the Council offices not utilised for residents of Eel Pie Island?

To be useful for residents there would need to be 24-hour availability to this car park. However, it was built to provide parking for Council staff who have an essential need for a vehicle to undertake their work, including those on emergency call and so 24-hour use for residents is not possible. It was not therefore possible to allocate any spaces in this car park for use by any residents.

What about crime / mugging etc. when people forced to use these dark multistorey car parks? (If they can park at all). Many require a car for work / disability / caring / elderly etc. and these multi-story car parks quite some distance away are not VIABLE

Controlled parking zones allow permit holders to park in a wide range of spaces within the zone, and it is appreciated that there are individuals who would choose not to use certain locations, including

multi-storey car parks, particularly at night. Part of off-setting the reduction in parking spaces on the Embankment involves proposing increased use of local car parks, one of which (on Arragon Road), is multi-storey. However, it is not the case that residents are “forced” to use this car park, which is one of the parking options that exists alongside on-street residents’ parking and car parks at York House and Holly Road, which are not multi-storey. Access to the car parks is currently being reviewed to make improvements where possible. The Council is reviewing the provision of parking both within and around the site, including the allocation of disabled bays.

There seems to be a dark area at ground level, below the Wharf Lane buildings. Won't this area be difficult to police? It can already be quite intimidating walking around the riverside in the evening.

The Embankment in front of Wharf Lane building is open space with the possibility of boat storage. It is hoped the site will be active day and night, with residential and commercial units above offering a level of natural surveillance. The design will consider safety issues as part of planning process, including lighting at night. At present, one difficulty is that there are parts of the site which are particularly secluded, and where there is little activity by residents and others in the evening. This has tended to attract some anti-social behaviour, and one of the benefits of making the area more active in the evenings is to reduce this problem.

Glad to see the development is largely pedestrianised. Signage is needed directing people from Twickenham station to the riverside.

This is already under consideration.

Different views. Light pollution is a concern of many. The darkness is lovely.

The lighting of the scheme will be carefully considered, balancing security and ecology considerations.

If people use the pontoon or paddle board etc and need to change or use a loo, how keen will the pub/café be to people going in to always use their toilets? Wouldn't public loos would better?

The inclusion of facilities related to the possible river-based activities is being considered. The Council would also expect future tenants of the food and beverage units to join the community toilet scheme.

As a resident and a representative of RAG - the Riverside Action Group. The Council has stated - at the most recent Stakeholder Reference Group meeting on 15th December - that it views this development as a priority which it is looking to deliver despite pressures on Council finances in the changed circumstances since March 2019. In the event that the proposed design - with buildings and other features it proposes for different parts of the site - were approved for planning, will the Council make an undertaking to the residents taking part in the public consultation to provide regular reports on the financial status of the project as it proceeds and on the financial situation as that evolves?

There will be a Committee paper detailing the finances of the scheme later in the year, before the award of a construction contract. It is unclear at this stage how much of this the Council will be able to include in a public report, given the commercial sensitivities surrounding the award of a construction contract, and it may be likely there will be a confidential paper only available to Committee members. The Council will endeavour, where possible, to make financial information publicly available.

Why can't there be 'floodable' boathouses at the proposed event space area? The rear of the boathouses could align with the required flood defence wall. The area above the boathouses could then be used as a town square - above the flood zone.

Through conversations with the Environment Agency it was made clear that the Council need to demonstrate that the flood defence wall can be repaired, maintained and, if needed, replaced from both the wet and dry side. This would make it unlikely that we would get approval for a permanent structure directly in front of the defence wall, which is why moveable boat storage structures have

been suggested in the designs. This is not to say that there could not be a boat house somewhere in the flood plain, but this will require careful consideration and cannot impact the flood storage, again this is why a mobile unit has been suggested in the plans. This will be further explored following consultation.

I waited 50 years for this development - so when does the project move on to next stage and what is work start date?

The consultation runs until the 3rd February, the team will then develop the design and submit a planning application in Spring this year. Start on site is expected 2022, with a construction period of around two years.

If the space on Wharf Lane building not specific, why not bring back the Winter Gardens?

This is answered above. The Wharf Lane building comprised of food/beverage and offices uses at ground flood and residential on the upper floors. The Winter Gardens was lost due to flood storage requirements across the site, resulting in the reduction in buildable area.

Please could you make available Chris' slides which are not in the pack online, plus a view down Water Lane to give a clear picture of its width.

This is now on the Council website. The images contained in the consultation boards are the only images available for this consultation.

I presume that the cycle parking will be in useful locations where people will want to park their bikes and not tucked away where it would be unused and/or unsafe?

The cycle parking locations can be seen on the last page of the consultation boards.

How would the servicing access across the site be controlled, especially if lorries turn up outside designated times - where would they go?

A transport strategy is being developed. Clear messaging will be key to success so that local residents and businesses know the very limited hours in which vehicles will be allowed to drive across the Embankment.

Could traffic orders be used to restrict lorry size - I assume we are talking largely about Iceland? How would high tides be accommodated?

Yes, certain restrictions can be included in the traffic order where considered necessary. Companies close to an area subject to high tides are generally encouraged to check the tide tables for such situations. Should designated loading bays/areas be provided in King Street and Water Lane, this may provide a viable alternative for certain businesses.

Will the Water Lane/King St junction be left out only?

The scheme proposes a two-way working for Water Lane but with exiting vehicles being required to turn left into King Street. A right turn is not being suggested as it would have impacts on the traffic movement of King Street and is a safety concern.

In relation to retail units I presume that the council will design the units so they can be used by other uses (community use, etc) - all councils will need to review how town centres are used and will need to diversify from retail in the future.

Answered above. They are being designed to be flexible and future proofed.

Thanks - at last an exciting scheme that is what we need. Well done for covering all the different views. Great to be able to 'meet' the team this evening. Grand opening when?

Construction is anticipated to finish early 2024, though it is possible this may change.

When is it due to be built and how can we ensure residents won't be inconvenienced for a long time while it's being developed?

Work on site is due to start early 2022 and take around 2 years. There will be a construction plan developed in due course which will look to minimise disruption.

Will there be restrictions on music licences for pubs/ bars to manage noise late at night?

New venues will be subject to the same licensing process that applies to existing venues in the area, which are intended to, amongst other things, mitigate noise and other impacts on residents.