

Statement to Richmond Council concerning RIBA Competitions and the development site on Twickenham Riverside.

6th February 2019

Dear Cllr Roberts,

Twickenham Riverside Trust (the Trust) wholeheartedly supports the RIBA Competitions run process that has been initiated by the Council with respect to development proposals in central and riverside Twickenham.

As requested of all members of the Stakeholders' Reference Group, the Trust submitted a "Principles for Development" document in mid December 2018.

Prior to this, a letter to the Council dated 15th October 2018 had stated the Trust's undertaking to consider, in relation to its objects, all plans proposed by LBRuT.

The Trust has been asked if there are any further points it would like to raise at this stage of the RIBA Competitions process, namely that of drawing up the Design Brief.

One possible design proposal raised twice by the Council in meetings held with the Trust (on 15.11.2018 and on 22.1.2019) is that of the site of the DJG being moved forward towards the riverside, taking the space currently occupied by the Embankment road and pathways while also retaining some of the existing DJG space. The equivalent space to the rear of the existing DJG would then be taken up by residential / commercial development.

Whilst there exist no plans relating to this proposal, it has nevertheless been mentioned twice in meetings with the Trust, and the Trust would accordingly like to give its considered response.

The current site of the DJG is public open space, protected from development.

The pedestrianised Embankment and planted areas that sit to the rear of this area of the Embankment are existing public open space.

In addition, these areas, along with the Embankment thoroughfare, are situated on the flood plain, and therefore not available for development.

By moving the DJG site forward to riverside, the Trust is therefore relinquishing public open space protected from development in exchange for public open space that is not suitable for development. Accordingly, the end result is not “net neutral” i.e. there will have been a loss of protected public open space on the riverside resulting therefrom. It is highly likely that this would contravene the Trust's charitable objects.

There is always, of course, the possibility that a proposal as loosely outlined above might result from the RIBA Competitions process to which the Trust, taking into account its charitable objects, may be able to lend its support.

With the above in mind, the Trust would like to reiterate two of its guiding principles in its SRG-submitted document, both of which relate to the Trust's charitable objects:

- (i) dimensions of any newly configured DJG: of proportions that can support community events and be enjoyed by a wide range of groups and communities
- (ii) be complementary to DJG in such a way as to enhance them and promote the public's enjoyment thereof but certainly not reduce their enjoyment and use thereof

The Trust would accordingly hope that the Design Brief will include the above.

The Trust would also welcome engagement with architects at any stage of the RIBA Competitions process if the movement of whole or part of the existing DJG were to form part of a design proposal.

It is also to be stated at this stage that any development on the existing DJG is incompatible with para 4.2 of the Trust's Lease.

The section entitled Landlord Covenants states:

As from the Term Commencement Date [16th May 2014] and for a period of 10 years thereafter to maintain the Property as Public Open Space and maintain responsibility for the repair and maintenance thereof.....

The Trust is hopeful that this letter, when read alongside its letter of 15th October 2018 and its Principles document of December 2018, provide suitable clarification of its support for involvement of RIBA Competitions and the Trust's willingness to engage with each stage of the emerging process.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Perry

Hon. Sec. TRT.

cc Mandy Skinner, Ishbel Murray, Anna Sadler, Charles Murphy,