

## Dear Supporters of the Riverside Action Group (RAG)

Our thanks to you for all your recent correspondence.

As you probably know, the Council has opened a further pop-up shop in Church Street to display three new 'concepts' for the Riverside site. The consultation – which is on the Council's website at [http://www.richmond.gov.uk/home/my\\_richmond/all\\_in\\_one/my\\_richmond\\_villages/all\\_twickenham\\_villages/twickenham\\_rediscovered/twickenham\\_rediscovered\\_have\\_your\\_say.htm](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/home/my_richmond/all_in_one/my_richmond_villages/all_twickenham_villages/twickenham_rediscovered/twickenham_rediscovered_have_your_say.htm) – will last until the end of this year following which the Council intends to prepare its firm proposal for presentation to the LBRUT Cabinet and then planning in the first quarter of next year.

All the new designs are by Francis Terry. Proposals 1 and 2 are based upon the Council's interpretation of the views gathered from this summer's workshops. Both abandon the concept of the 'big block' on the river front and create a terrace along the riverside above the access road. Both also have bigger space allocated as the village/town 'square'. Of the two, Proposal 1 creates more space with a much deeper terrace (18m at its widest) and a larger open space; the Proposal 2 is around 6m wider, but the space overall currently allocated to the 'square' is much smaller. Both include a colonnaded space on the King Street corner – the idea is that this could serve as place for a market.

Meanwhile, Proposal 3 is a reworking of the original design which the Council was forced to abandon after the last Council meeting in early July this year, and as such it is more of a revision of the past than a new design.

RAG steering group members were invited to meet with Cllr Fleming and Mandy Skinner (LBRuT's Assistant Chief Executive) on Tuesday 15 and then also Thursday 17 November, for a general report and then a preview of the pop-up consultation. At these meetings, a new outline Brief was presented – see attached. Like the two new designs, it shows some progress. At the same meetings, it was confirmed that Francis Terry had been appointed as the Council's contracted architect. It was also confirmed that there had been no formal input from the major stakeholders (Eel Pie Island Association, Diamond Jubilee Garden Trustees, or RAG) in assembling the new Brief.

**RAG urges you to visit the pop-up shop and consider the options presented by the Council. There is a form to complete, on paper or on-line, for stating your preference. Please keep an open mind: are any of the designs what you and future generations want for Twickenham? If so, say so. Make sure your children and grandchildren have their say.**

The RAG representatives who met the Council suggest that the best course of action for RAG members at this point would be to endorse either Proposal 1 or 2, with a preference for Proposal 1. We suggest that Proposal 3 is so similar to the original concept that it should be rejected outright.

Sections 7, 8 and 9 of the form allow for any comments you wish to add regarding the configuration of the site, the style of the architecture, or any other aspects. If you support either Proposals 1 or 2, these give an opportunity for further thoughts and suggestions which tweak those proposals and we suggest you should take advantage of these sections if you wish to suggest adjustments to those base-lines.

It is our view that – **provided** the Council is willing to engage more fully with the local community (i.e. including the three stakeholders mentioned above) as it takes its decision, and guides the project to the next stage, moving towards the implementation phase – we should be willing to look beyond the issue of the architect, on the basis that Proposal 1 (and 2) are a significant step forward, becoming acceptable, with the potential to meet the

majority of the wishes expressed by residents. We hope you will share the view that a constructive response to the new proposals is now the best way forward – please let us know if you do not, with your reasons, so we can build this into our position.

Other important factors that have been raised with the Council and that you may also want to consider include:

- The crucial issue of defining the 'appropriate mix of uses' (commercial, retail, community, residential, including affordable housing with space for creative workshops). RAG has already pointed out that the mix of uses which emerges will be largely determined by the nature and structure of the funding brought to the development and the terms which are agreed between the Council and residents and then presented to the developer. The Council representatives suggested that 'red lines' could be drawn to define specific uses in specific parts of the development site, for example retail space fronting King Street, as compared with community space fronting the river. RAG expressed the view that it could help the Council in its dealings with the developer for such red lines to be agreed between the Council and residents and made part of the developer's contract. As residents, we will need to watch carefully how the process evolves from these initial proposals into detailed designs, with costings – when will the Council make these available? We need to bear in mind, first, that the Council will be looking at the economic return for its investment in purchasing the King Street front site and, secondly, the chosen developer will have commercial goals which may conflict with any design agreed by the Council and the architect. There is a risk that these goals determine the final designs above the wishes of residents.
- The need for a mix of funding sources if the cultural heritage of Twickenham is to be reflected as stated in the developed brief. Our suggestion is that, currently, a missing element in discussion is the possibility of raising additional funds for the development to complement the private funding of the site, for example by applying to the Heritage Lottery Fund, or other sources (e.g. for arts and sport). Without a mix of funding sources, the mix of uses is unlikely to be 'appropriate' and could involve the prime riverside space being used for luxury residential flats instead of community space. With complementary funding, the development would genuinely be able to deliver the 'appropriate mix of uses' as suggested by the Council in the Brief.

**RAG will continue to support the need for a transparent and democratic approach to finding the right solution for Twickenham's riverside.**

**We need your feedback to understand how you would like us to proceed and discover the extent of your commitment.**

**We look forward to hearing from you.**

**The Riverside Action Group team.**