

Hello all,

Since we sent our most recent newsletter on 30 March, we have had an exchange with one recipient of the letter who questioned whether it was time to accept the Council's proposed scheme for redevelopment of Twickenham Riverside on the basis that the proposal would inevitably be an improvement on the current status.

We at RAG agree that the site has been derelict for far too long and we confirm our interest in the Council making the area better.

But what are we residents being offered, currently? It seems to have changed massively since the original Hopkins winning design.

Before, however, Twickenham residents decide to withdraw objections to what the Council is currently proposing, we suggest the following test which we members of the RAG steering committee have done. We suggest that you walk the site with the architect's plan in hand and compare footprints and heights, actually in situ, with the surrounding buildings and property lines on King Street and Water Lane. This will allow you to do a check of where you are standing at a given time. The plan can be printed from the Council website [here](#).

Entering the site from Wharf Lane coming from King Street, you would immediately face a large, 5-storey building – shown in green on the plan – and look across the existing Gardens to the 4-storey building on Water Lane – shown in purple – on the line of the derelict pool buildings. (To judge what the first of the two looks like, the building on the corner of King Street and Cross Deep, where there is the sports outfitters on the ground floor, is five stories high).

With extensions also planned by the new owners to the back of the existing buildings on King Street (height expected to be 4 storeys too), the effect of these buildings would be to create an area enclosed on three sides.

We ask you what you consider – based on a site visit – the combination of these buildings would look like from the garden space between the two? The Council has talked about this in the consultation questionnaire as 'open space', but to what extent will it really *feel* open?

It seems to us that the space offered by the proposed plan would feel substantially more overlooked and confined than the current park/green space of the existing Diamond Jubilee Gardens, even with the planned narrow terraced grassed area leading down to the riverside at the bottom of Water Lane. Is that, then, the best that can be done?

A walk around the place itself is a good way to assess that.

The blue part of the proposed Wharf Lane building is to be mounted on a plinth to protect the building from flood (as per the Environment Agency requirements). That means that the view from the level of the walk-way by the river will be of a Wharf Lane building that is even taller and more dominating.

The original Hopkins design which won the design competition in November 2019, proposed the Wharf Lane building with a 'winter garden' which gave it a lighter look/feel. That concept has been abandoned - which makes it more important, we think, for the positioning and shape/bulk of the Wharf Lane building as now proposed to be carefully considered.

The redevelopment needs to be right, to ensure the future practicality and attractiveness of this important site. The design will have to stand the test of time, over the next century and more. RAG is not wanting 'resistance' for resistance sake. Instead, there could surely be a constructive compromise to identify a better solution.

As ever, we welcome any comments.

Best wishes,

Peter, Marion and Mark