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**St Helens Residents Association**



**St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum**

### **Imperial College planning application for 'east west link' finally surfaces**

It was back in 2014 when RBKC Planning Committee considered an application from Imperial for construction of an underpass beneath the West London Line. A decision was deferred because of lack of information on how cyclist and pedestrian traffic would be managed safely, and the extent of CCTV coverage. The proposals then disappeared into a limbo of endless negotiations between the College, Network Rail, and LBHF. The Borough had agreed the project as a S106 'community benefit' flowing from the development of Imperial's White City campus.

Eleven years on a fresh application is with the Council. No deadline has been given for consultation responses. We are asking that the RBKC considers the application alongside that for Unit 9 Latimer Road, so that both decisions can be made in the wider context of the future of this important street in our neighbourhood.

The documents for the planning application can be found on the RBKC website at <https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/PP/24/08435>. These include the Transport Statement and a Security Statement explaining how Imperial intend to manage cycle traffic. While the information is generally reassuring, there are no projections of numbers of cyclists and pedestrian who will use the underpass. Demand from the wider area is not predicted. The underpass will shorten the existing journey between the southern end of Latimer Road and the Wood Lane campus by as as much as 1km, as compared with the existing route around North Pole Road,

The StQW Forum and St Helens RA have always supported the principle of the underpass, given the improved connectivity for residents living on both sides of the railway line. At our last open meeting in St Helens Church hall on December 9th 2024 there was a 37:5 majority vote in favour. We also agreed that *we want commuter/delivery cyclists prevented from speeding and encouraged to use cycle route through Westway sports centre rather than Oxford Gardens.*

On the Latimer Road side, there will be bollards discouraging speeding cyclists, as below. **Please let us know if you think this insufficient, and that staggered steel barriers will be needed? We discussed this option at our open meeting.**



On the Imperial campus side, planters are proposed. There are bollards on adjacent routes through the site and the College seem confident that their security staff and CCTV system will be able to prevent anti-social riders and access by motor-cycles and mopeds at this end of the underpass.



It will be entry at the Latimer Road end where problems of use by delivery scooters and cargo bikes will arise. While there will be CCTV coverage, any enforcement would need to be at the campus end where Imperial staff can take action on their private property. Action will be no more than polite persuasion not the use the underpass on an unauthorised vehicle. Imperial have told us that *In accordance with the Highway Code, only pedal cycles and rental electric scooters will be permitted to use the cycle path.* Users of private e-bikes are not known for their observance of the Highway Code

Westway Trust share our concern that good signage is provided to encourage riders to continue to via the cycle route through their sports centre. We will liaise with the Trust on the need for a meeting with Imperial, and RBKC transport planners, prior to the Planning Committee meeting which will decide the

application. In the meantime, please feel free email to [sthelensassn@aol.com](mailto:sthelensassn@aol.com) with any thoughts you have on this project so that we can incorporate these into a response to the planning application.

### **Will Mitre Bridge, Scrubs Lane ever prove a successful residential location?**

Back in 2016/7 in the early years of the OPDC Mayoral Development Corporation, we argued long and hard that it would be premature for OPDC to grant planning consents to high density residential towers just north of Mitre Bridge. At that time there was a well advanced masterplan from Cargiant/London & Regional Properties to build 6,000 new homes and a major town centre at 'Old Oak Park'. Other developers had bought up sites in Scrubs Lane, hoping to piggy back on what would have been a coherent area of regeneration north of the HS2 rail interchange.

Cargiant abandoned its plans in 2018. A year later the OPDC shifted its focus of activity to the western side of the Scrubs. The Development Corporation has since been buying up land and is now seeking one or more development partners for comprehensive redevelopment of public and private sites around Old Oak Lane. Timelines for the opening of Old Oak Common station continue to slip, and the 2033 date (at the back end of the 2029-33 official programme) is now acknowledged by the Department for Transport to be 'under pressure',

Meanwhile developers City & Docklands are marketing off-plan their apartments at '[North Kensington Gate](#)'. Their neighbouring development at '[Mitre Yard](#)' was passed on in 2024 to Buy to Rent specialists ILA and is now filing up. The websites and brochures for both developments paint a massively hyped-up picture of the location. Mitre Bridge, prospective buyers and tenants are being told, *will be one of the most dynamic and best connected districts in the UK. The location is a stone's throw from the edge of London's most celebrated Royal Borough, filled with landmarks such as Harrods, Harvey Nicholls and the Portobello Road.*



The reality is that Scrubs Lane remains pretty much as it has always been, a congested route through a largely industrial area. Even when Elizabeth Line platforms open at OOC station, they will be accessible to Scrubs Lane only via a 900m pedestrian/cycle ramp and a length of the canal towpath. We are trying to persuade the OPDC to take some action to ensure that the worst falsehoods and misleading images used in these marketing efforts are removed. There is a problem in that HS2 and OPDC also continue to promote the 'unrivalled connectivity' of

a part of London which in reality has comparatively poor access to public transport, being reliant mainly on the 220 bus.

## Plans by St William for the Kensal Gasworks site

St William are part of the Berkeley Homes Group. They specialise in regenerating former gasworks sites. The company 'paused' their plans for the western end of the Canalside Opportunity Area a couple of years back, but are now back in pre-application discussion with RBKC for a scheme for 800 new homes and some commercial space.

The Council's Planning Department are holding a **Development Forum** on the proposals on **13th February, at Barlby Primary** (entrance on Treverton Street). An exhibition opens at 5.30pm with the meeting starting at 6pm. There will be a presentation from the developer team, including architects Pilbrow and Partners.

The scheme is for around 800 high-density apartments, on the part of the site bordered by the canal and Scrubs Lane. Plans for a ped-cycle bridge across the canal, to open up a secondary entry and exit point to the site are *not* included in the application. One residential tower is proposed, of equivalent height to Trellick Tower.

The invitation to the event is headed '*Have your say on local development*'. The reality is that plans are already at a very advanced stage. There is still no news on when the Council will take a decision on the application from Ballymore/Sainsburys for 2,519 housing units on their part of the site. This set of proposals has been with the Council since October 2023.

## Changes for residents parking

Our last newsletter mentioned proposals from Cllr Cen Kemahli to widen eligibility for a residents permit to owners of second homes in the Borough. The Council has been running a [consultation](#) on creating 2,000 new for this purpose, arguing that *With falling permit applications in recent years, this additional eligibility for some residents should not create undue pressure on existing space to be applied for create 2,000 new residents permits.*

The Chelsea Society, the Fulham Society and several other associations in the Borough are not convinced that

second homeowners are a priority group if more permits can be made available. There is growing support for the alternative of introducing visitor permits, as exist in many areas, to allow visitors and tradespeople to park in residents bays. The closing date is 23rd February and responses can be sent to [trafficorders@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:trafficorders@rbkc.gov.uk).

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