

Twickenham Riverside redevelopment



Interim report of

The Centre Working Party

13 April, 2000

Final draft

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 BRIEF BACKGROUND

The Twickenham pool site is situated on the edge of the River Thames in the centre of Twickenham. The site is small (0.59ha) and the only vehicular access is via a single-lane one-way system. It is at the end of the riverside walk from Richmond to Twickenham.

At present it is a buffer zone between an active commercial, social and residential riverside community (Bell Lane, Church St, Church Lane, Water Lane, The Embankment, Eel Pie Island, Eyot Lodge & Thames Eyot) and the commercial centre of Twickenham in King St. Since the closure of the pool in 1980 the Council of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames (LBRuT), which owns the site, has been seeking a suitable redevelopment for it.

In 1991, the Inspector at a public enquiry into a proposed scheme for the site laid down strict guidelines for its development. His report emphasised that any buildings have to be on a scale and of a style that matches the surroundings, and is fully in sympathy with the River. The UDP stresses that leisure use is to be the main use for the site, and the Council wants any development to assist in the revitalisation of Twickenham town centre.

LBRuT will contribute the value of the site for redevelopment, but no further funding will be available from the Council, either now or in the future. In exchange for the land, on a prime riverside location, it expects a substantial return in the form of a demonstrable public asset.

As the result of a competition in 1996, Alsop Zogolovitch were appointed as the preferred developers. Since then they have put forward several proposals. The one that is the concern of this report is for a public asset consisting of a Riverside Discovery/Heritage/Arts Centre, and a piazza suitable for outside entertainment and markets, plus a pontoon and a public convenience. This is to be enabled by commercial development comprising private flats, a Health and Fitness centre, restaurants/bars and retail outlets.

In November 1999 the Centre Working Party was set up to consider and make recommendations about the nature, suitability and viability of the Riverside Discovery/Heritage/Arts Centre in the context of the Developer's proposed scheme. This is the first interim report of the working party.

1.2 OUTLINE OF PROPOSAL

The Centre

Discovery Centres originated in the USA, where they are also known as Centres for Curiosity and Imagination. They arose from a desire to turn children's museums from repositories of information into places that stimulate the imagination and to encourage learning through experience. They bear little or no resemblance to traditional museums and they appeal to all ages, with a strong attraction to parents, grandparents and adults with a sense of curiosity.

Now a global phenomenon, Discovery Centres are rapidly gaining in popularity in the UK. They come in many styles and sizes, and the best ones reflect the needs and character of their local communities. Interactive exhibits give them an educational purpose, but the overwhelming feeling is that they're fun. Recognised leaders in the UK are Techniquet in Cardiff and Eureka in Halifax.

Roger Tym & Partners on behalf of LBRuT examined the case for a Discovery Centre for Twickenham. Their report concluded that the riverside was a desirable site for a Centre with a river theme and that the time was right to create one. There is no such Centre in the UK, so Twickenham has the opportunity to create a "first".

A considered analysis of their report suggests that the best approach for Twickenham is to create a small, viable Centre with strong local appeal. This is the possibility that has been explored in detail by the Centre working party.

The heritage of Twickenham is linked in part to the river and river-related activities, and partly to a cultural tradition of excellence in literature, music and art. The proposed Centre for the pool site seeks to capture this through:

- A Discovery Centre focused on the river and local environment
- A performance space for dance, musical, theatrical and literary events
- A continuously changing exhibition of the works of local artists
- A café and an arts and craft shop
- A tourist information centre
- Use of the facilities to create a social centre for the local community
- All in one, integrated building: the Eel Pie Centre.

Position and design

The Centre needs direct access to the riverside and to the piazza.

The design needs to be distinguished whilst complying with the guidelines laid down by the Inspector in charge of the Public Enquiry into the site. It is desirable that the building should be a landmark of ecological design.

It won't work if the building is made smaller than that proposed in this report. There needs to be opportunity for the Centre to expand if there is demand for it; however, the specification for the size set out in this report is for the absolute minimum floor area to be viable.

1.3 VIABILITY

Visitors

The Centre will have a range of displays and events that will be available on a daily basis for at least 12 hours. They will be targeted at children up to the age of 10, schools, adults accompanying children, young persons and adults. Some will be visiting for a scheduled event, others will drop in for a drink in the café or to view a current display or to visit the shop.

The majority of the visitors will come from the Borough but the Centre will be a natural attraction for tourists and visitors. It is estimated 30,000 people will visit per year.

Management

A three-tier management structure is proposed:

- A Steering Body to provide a strategic overview
- A Board of Directors to be responsible for strategic planning and control, and setting operational targets and performance measures
- Day-to-day management team.

Many of the staff will be volunteers or part-time.

Financial

Preliminary investigations suggest that the Centre will be financially viable. The reasons for arriving at this conclusion are:

- The capital costs for construction and fitting out provided by the development accord with the estimates of what is required by both Roger Tym and Donaldsons.
- The Council has direct experience of running Arts events and the Tourist Office.
- The management accounts of some of the best-run Discovery Centres have been opened to us. These provide a guide to best practice and give confidence that an integrated Centre such as is proposed will be financially robust, and stronger than any of the components in isolation.
- It is now normal practice for centres to seek funds for projects and activities. There is every reason to believe that the required level of support will be forthcoming from a variety of sources.
- There are several projected income streams (from the development, admission and hire charges, commercial sales, project sponsorship), so the Centre will not be over-exposed financially if one or the other stream does not live up to expectation.
- Volunteers with appropriate skills, commitment and integrity are likely to be forthcoming.

A full business plan will be prepared when approval is given, in principle, for the Centre.

1.4 PUBLIC BENEFIT

- The Centre will be unique to Twickenham
- It will celebrate its rich riverside heritage and its distinguished artistic tradition
- It will draw people to the river
- It will increase appreciation and awareness of the local environment and its history

- It will provide a landmark building on the riverside that will add style and character to the local setting
- The Centre will become a focus for town life and tourism and as such will contribute significantly to the regeneration of Twickenham town centre. It will:
 - Attract visitors to Twickenham
 - Encourage upmarket customers to come to the development and surrounding area
 - Support existing facilities, including Orleans Gallery, Marble Hill and Strawberry Hill
 - Place the Twickenham Tourist Office where it will be most effective.

1.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. A Riverside Centre of at least 1,350m² with Discovery, Arts, Heritage and commercial elements be approved in principle as part of the Twickenham riverside redevelopment.
2. The Centre Working Group moves on to the essential next steps:
 - Prepare a detailed business plan
 - Make firm recommendations as to management structure and related matters
 - Prepare an outline operational plan that makes clear the potential involvement in and use of the Centre by local groups and the community as a whole
 - Seek professional advice on the design and operation of the Discovery Centre and the performance space
 - Engage in ongoing discussions with the architect and developer
 - Ascertain the possibilities and practicalities of raising additional funds for the support of the Centre
 - Contact local groups about possible use of the Centre
 - Publicise the concept of the Centre.

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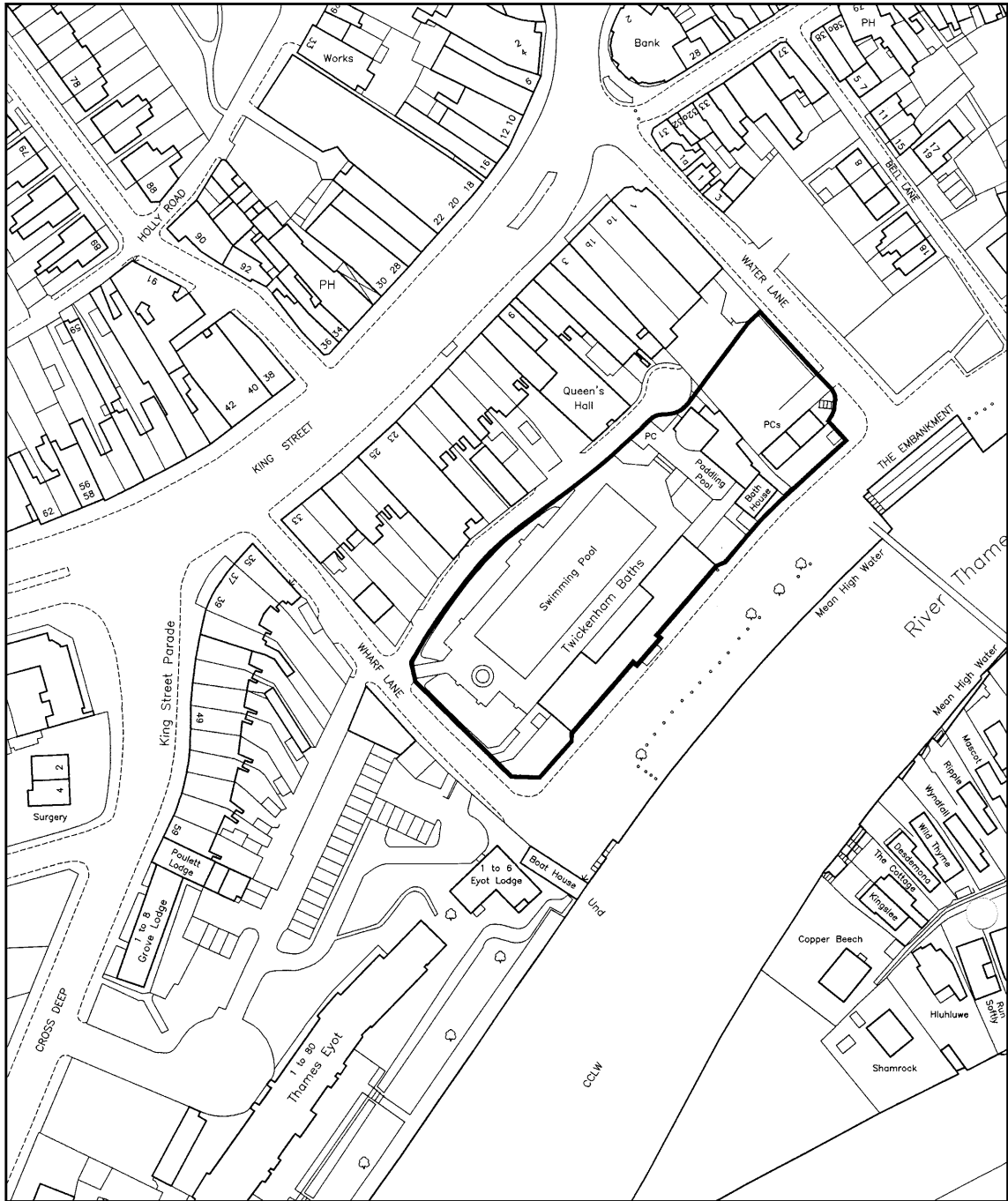


Figure 1: Twickenham swimming pool site

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE REDEVELOPMENT

Since the Twickenham swimming pool was closed 20 years ago, the Council has made several attempts to redevelop the site. These have all failed for one reason or another.

In 1996 the Council invited bids for a new development and ultimately invited Alsop Zogolovitch to be preferred developers. Their original proposal depended upon funding from the National Lottery which was refused. They then submitted a revised proposal that attracted public opposition on an unprecedented scale and was withdrawn in February 1999.

The Council took note of the criticisms and laid down some criteria for revision of the proposed development. It set up working parties comprised of local people, a variety of experts with skills in business, design and traffic management, officers of the Council and elected representatives. Their task was to make proposals for appropriate development and to advise on the resolution of contentious points of the developer's scheme. The developer has since made a number of alternative proposals, two of which the Council is taking to public consultation.

One of these has a tangible public asset in the form of a novel type of Discovery/Heritage Centre celebrating and promoting Twickenham's riverside and culture. The other is a fully commercial scheme, with the principle benefit to the public being a sum of money paid by the developer to the Council. This report describes the concept and practicalities of the Centre in detail.

In both schemes there is a mix of flats with exclusive underground parking, shops, restaurants, leisure centres, and a piazza, adjacent to the Centre, that will be available for markets and outside performances.

The challenge for this working party has been to devise a place that will be unique to Twickenham and will add a touch of class to the area. In the United States there has been a rapid expansion of Discovery Centres. They have interactive exhibits that absorb the interest of young and old alike. They strongly reflect the interests and culture of the local community and are strongly supported by it. They can be science or arts based or a mixture of both. As a consequence, there is no standard model, all are unique. They are tailored to the resources, aspirations and heritage of the community. The common features are that they are very popular and reckoned to be a good spot to go for an afternoon or day out.

The obvious working name for such a place is "The Twickenham Experience or Adventure", but that is firmly associated in the minds of the residents and the world with the invasion of rugby supporters on big match days. "Eel Pie," however, is associated with the traditions of the river, the local community of artists, legendary entertainment and fun. Accordingly we have adopted as a working name "The Eel Pie Centre", though for brevity in this report it is usually referred to as the Centre.

2.2 CONSTRAINTS OF THE SITE

The site imposes severe constraints on the options open to the developer. Failure to comply with one or several of these that have led to the rejection of earlier schemes. Any Centre that is proposed has to work within the limitations of the site and the development as a whole. The working party has kept these in mind throughout their deliberations.

Physical

The site is situated alongside the river Thames in central Twickenham. It is relatively small and rectangular, with sides of 125m and 50m. The side that opens onto The Embankment is subject to flooding. The other long side is separated from the backs of the shops and flats in King St by a narrow service road. The two short sides of the site are adjacent to residences.

Access

Vehicular access is restricted to one-way roads.

There is an aspiration to have The Embankment as a traffic-free zone, but at present it is a public highway and its use is vital for the emergency services, local businesses and residents.

There are a limited number of parking places on or near the site. These are heavily used by local businesses, sports clubs, visitors and residents.

All supplies and materials to Eel Pie Island have to be ported across a pedestrian bridge or carried by barge. There has to be good access at the end of the Eel Pie bridge for loading and manoeuvring vehicles that are sometimes 15m long.

Planning

The site is in a conspicuous position in a conservation area and various planning documents and reports have set strict criteria for its development (Appendix 2). The major public concerns are about the scale of development and the functionality of any buildings placed on the site.

In 1991 the Planning Inspector in charge of the enquiry into the proposed M&S development laid down guidelines that specified that any development of the site should be on the scale of the existing pool buildings and that it should consist of small units rather than large blocks. He also stressed the need for it to fit well with the local context.

The site has been designated primarily for leisure purposes and any development upon it should relate to the river.

Financial

The site is owned by the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames (LBRuT). In disposing of the site, it has an obligation to get the best value for it, bearing in mind its obligations to meet publicly acknowledged strategic objectives. In

other words, “best value” has a social benefit dimension as well as a financial one.

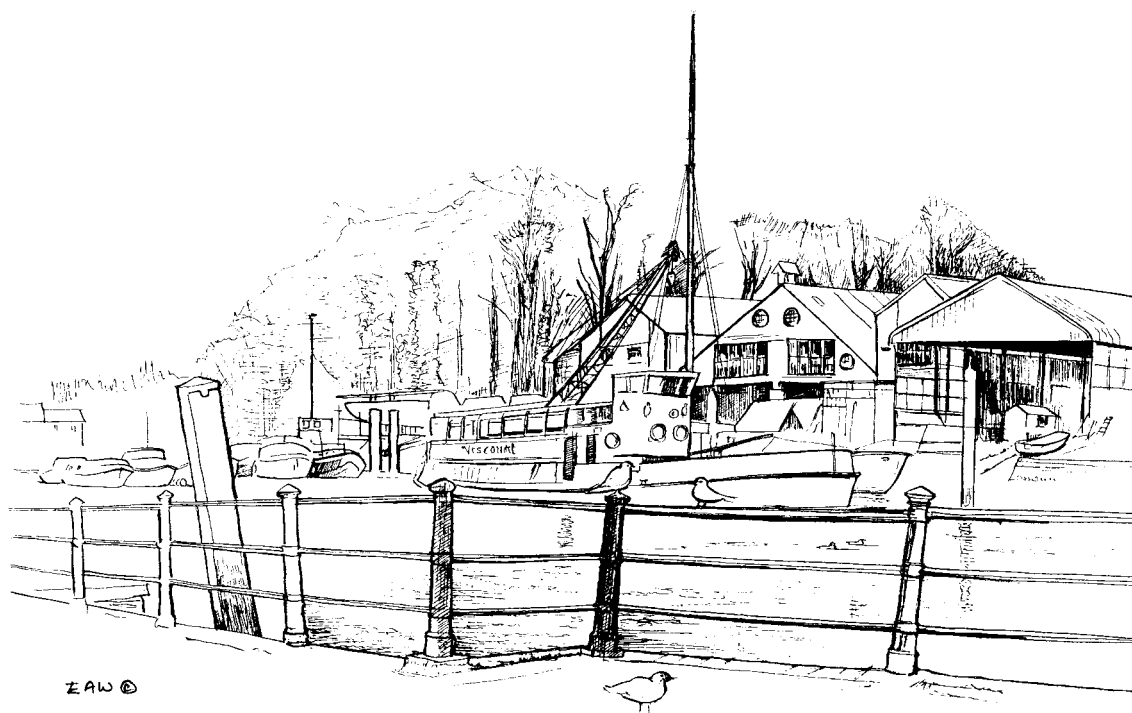
The Council is not willing to subsidise any activity on the site, but as part of “best value” it is requiring the developer to provide a substantial public asset from the development. This may take the form of a significant public building and/or public open space. Alternatively, the Council may take the benefit from the site as cash and earmark that for some specific purpose. LBRuT has already done this with the redevelopment of the Richmond ice rink and Twickenham’s Water Lane car park.

During a series of public meetings in which these alternatives were discussed it was made very clear that the public prefers a tangible asset with the money from the development being reinvested in the swimming pool site, and not elsewhere in the Borough.

Social

There are long-established business, social and residential communities in the riverside area, on the mainland and on the island in roughly equal proportions.

The development needs to enhance the existing community, not displace it.



2.2.1 The public asset as a building

Constraints

Any public asset building must comply with the planning guidelines and it must also fit comfortably within the development.

Option 1 — an Auditorium

In the developer's 1996 competition scheme, the principle assets were open space and an auditorium. The design of the auditorium was very imaginative, and its construction would have demanded advanced engineering and building skills. It would have been a valuable facility for the Arts community of the Borough.

The lottery bid failed, and the scheme ultimately became viewed as unworkable for three reasons:

- Without lottery money, the site would have required massive overdevelopment in order to fund the costly building
- The business case was unconvincing: a programme of events could be identified, but they were insufficient to generate the required level of funding
- The design of the building was such that, in the view of many, it would have been unfit for the purpose.

Option 2 — a Discovery Centre

The case for a Discovery Centre was examined by Roger Tym & Partners on behalf of LBRuT.

They reported that Discovery Centres had originated in the USA where they had grown from a desire to revolutionise children's museums, to make them less repositories of information and more places to stimulate the imagination and to encourage learning through experience. Since the early experiments in Boston in the mid 1960's the concept has taken off in a major way. Discovery Centres now bear no resemblance to traditional museums.

They have now been introduced to the UK and are rapidly gaining in popularity, and they have received enthusiastic support from government, funding bodies, and their local communities. Though the main focus is education and information, the general feeling is that they're fun places that appeal to adults as well as children.

The Tym report concluded that Twickenham riverside was a desirable site for Discovery Centre with a river theme and that the time was right to do so. There is no such centre in the UK, so Twickenham has the opportunity to create a "first": a Riverside/Heritage Centre with national appeal capable of attracting 40,000 visitors a year.

However their financial analysis left many people feeling that the viability of a large dedicated Discovery Centre was questionable and the start up costs were so large that they could not be generated by the development. Some of the arguments used against the auditorium are applicable to such a Discovery Centre.

The Tym report contains a lot of information, and a considered analysis of their findings suggests that a different approach would be more fruitful for Twickenham; that is, to create a smaller, viable centre with strong local appeal with riverside and arts themes.

The development of Discovery Centres in the UK is facilitated by the Kids' Clubs Network, organised by Alison Coles, and primarily funded by the Gulbenkian Foundation, with substantial support from government departments and major agencies. We are members of the Network, which organises frequent meetings that address the practicalities of running Discovery Centres, e.g. financial planning, fundraising, display planning, staffing issues.

The concept and practicalities of such a centre form the core of this report.

Option 3 — Multi-functional open space

There is strong public support for open space within the development. This may take several forms, but two that have been identified are an avenue linking the pool site with King St, and a piazza at the corner of Water Lane and The Embankment. The piazza would be used as a place for occasional markets, a venue for outside performances, and a viewing point for strollers and all those having an outing down by the river.

3 THE PROPOSED EEL PIE CENTRE

The rest of this report is concerned exclusively with the proposal for the Eel Pie Centre. It will describe the working party's vision of the Centre, and explore its desirability, feasibility and benefits.

3.1 THE CONCEPT

The Eel Pie Centre integrates distinct, but mutually supportive activities:

- A Riverside/Heritage Discovery Centre that has hands-on displays and projects about the Thames and the local environment
- An Arts Facility with a performance space which provides for a wide range of music and dance activities, and small-scale theatrical performances
- A Commercial core that has a café, displays by local artists and an arts and craft shop, plus a souvenir shop
- The LBRuT Tourist Information centre which will provide much greater assistance to tourists than is available at present and provide a "desk" to help manage the activities of the Eel Pie Centre.

Eel Pie Centre & the Community

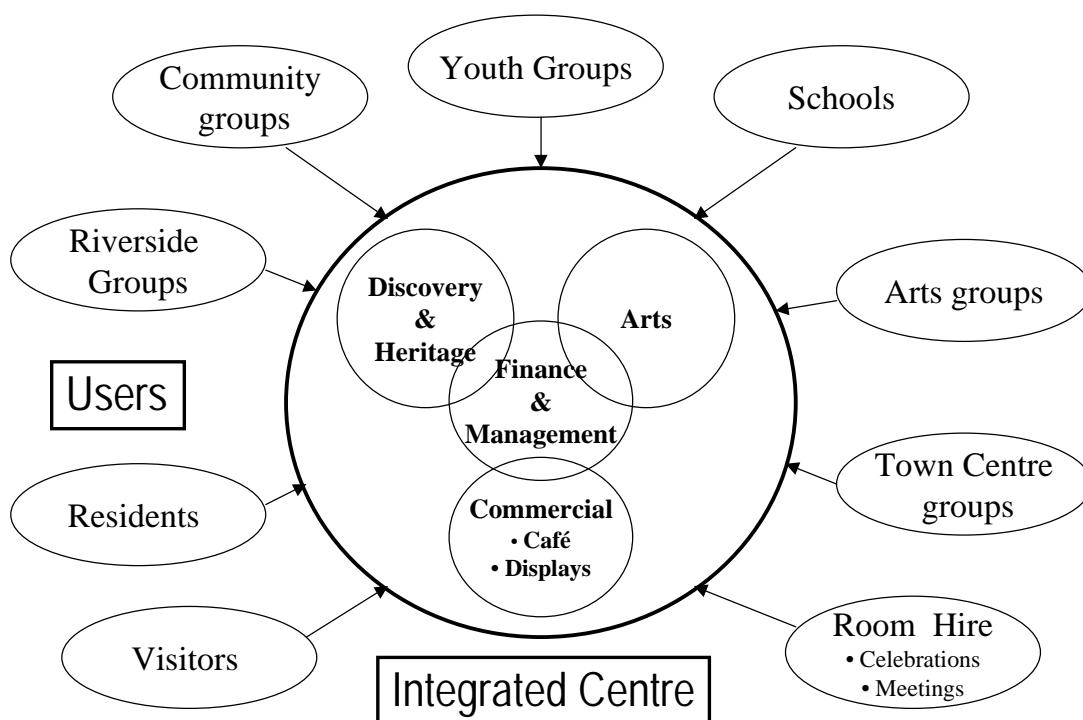


Figure 2: Centre concept

3.2 FOR WHOM?

The catchment area on a daily basis is Twickenham and its hinterland. Residents of all age groups will use the Centre in a variety of ways.

Throughout the year it is estimated there are 50,000 tourists visiting Twickenham and a further 500,000 attending rugby matches. A significant number of these could be interested in a novel and interesting Centre.

3.3 TYPICAL ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

Activities of the Centre may be classed as either *informal* or *planned*.

Informal activities appeal to “drop-in” customers, who are looking on the spur of the moment for something pleasant to do. Normal commercial considerations suggest that opportunities for these customers need to be easily visible and accessible. By contrast, customers for planned events are going to come to the Centre and the precise location of the event within the Centre is of secondary interest. Such customers, however, will expect good supporting services, e.g. bar or café. Thus consideration of the types of activities and events affects the design of the Centre.

The programme must be sufficiently varied for residents to make repeated visits throughout the year. It must be balanced to appeal to all ages from pre-

school to Third Age. It must also link with the programmes of other local groups to help provide an integrated life-long learning programme.

The overall balance of planned and informal activities must make good commercial sense. Income-generating activities are identified below. Pricing structures that encourage a diversity of visitors in sufficient numbers to ensure a profitable operation will form part of the business plan.

3.3.1 Informal activities

Mainly in the foyer

A centre of social activity, a lively spot to drop into for a variety of reasons:

- To have a drink and chat at the juice bar — open in the evening as well as during the day
- Look at the current display of art & crafts. A local artist for a specified period, changing regularly to encourage repeat visits
- Listen to the music as, for example, in the foyer of the National Theatre
- Tourist information and booking
 - Pamphlets etc.
 - Book local events, hotels, walks, boat trips etc.
 - Guided walks
 - Boat hire
- Notices of forthcoming riverside related events such as swan upping or the Great River Race, and tidal information
- Notices of events organised by local societies and contact details
- Assembly point for riverside events, e.g. Twickenham Regatta, and more generally a link to river activities
- Entry point for the Health and Fitness Centre.

The Discovery Centre

- Family and individual visits to engage with the exhibits. Charging regime to encourage repeat and frequent visits by locals. Design and layout of the exhibits to attract people into the Centre
- Family and individual visits to seek current information about :
 - Local environment; birds, fishes, ecology, etc.
 - Close-up views of the local environment and panoramas through link with the Twickenham Tower or periscope
 - Tidal patterns and predictions
 - Details about river-related clubs and environmental groups; activities and how to join
 - River history

Relax and spend time

- The café/bar with river views. A good place to start the day before a walk, to sit and watch the passing scene, to relax before, during and after a show in the performance space
- The upmarket art/craft shop

3.3.2 *Planned events and activities*

The programme of the Centre will reflect current demand, fashion and opportunities for fundraising, but at any given time, it will have a mix of activities which will have a wide appeal. It will have permanent and changing elements within a clearly set out programming policy.

The content should:

- Reflect, but not be dominated by, National Curriculum attainment targets and programmes of study
- Be cross-curricula and foster literacy and numeracy skills as well as creativity/imagination
- Appeal to adults who may appreciate the opportunity to learn in a relaxed environment and an informal way
- Include sensory experiences and provide accessible opportunities for children and adults with disabilities
- Address the needs and interests of young people
- Fit well with Third Age programmes for mature individuals
- Link with the programmes of local specialist groups and educational centres.

Representative activities and events will include:

Schools

- River-related and environmental projects in the Discovery Centre/performance space
- Creative Arts projects in the Arts Facility
- Rehearsals and plays in the performance space
- Working with the exhibits in the Discovery Centre facilitated by Centre staff
- Outreach projects based on the Discovery Centre
- Projects based on the Discovery Centre carried out by boat
- A small garden project to illustrate the principles of sustainability

Out of school and pre-school

- Regular parent/toddler sessions
- Saturday Club and Holiday Club associated with the Discovery Centre or the Arts Facility or both
- Teenage Homework Club (seminar/workshop). There is recognised national need for additional places for children to do their homework, especially project-related work. This may encourage more young people to take up science.
- After school workshops.

Seminars & workshops

Target audiences to include teenagers, local special interest groups and Third Age.

- Special performance-based workshops/events in the Discovery Centre and Arts Facility
- Workshops and classes enabling people to take part in and learn about a whole range of arts and science activities, e.g. dance, music, visual arts and crafts, creative writing, ecology, workings of the river, local culture, etc.
- Summer Schools and events associated with local Festivals and other Twickenham/river events.

Music & Dance

- Chamber music, jazz and small pop groups. Mainly in the performance space, but also in the foyer
- Dance performances
- Participatory dances; tea dances, line dancing, etc.

Stage & screen

- Rehearsal space
- Small-scale productions
- DVD and video projections to support seminars and maybe a film club
- Link with the puppet theatre on the river.

Room hire

- Discovery Centres are interesting and unusual places for receptions and birthday parties
- Corporate seminars, presentations and receptions
- Recreational activities e.g. yoga classes
- Meeting place for local groups.

Links with local organisations

- Work closely with Orleans House Gallery and Twickenham Museum to develop links with local schools. Possibly, a Community Education Officer could be appointed to work with all three venues
- Joint ticketing with other ventures or with boat hire companies and developing on the present Leisure Card
- Many of the river-related organisations will see the Centre as a natural local base
- Provide an occasional base for Regional groups and organisations, such as the Environmental Agency, PLA, River Thames Society and arts organisations.

3.3.3 *Income-generating activities*

The most important sources of income from the above activities are:

- The café/bar
- Shops
- Discovery Centre
- Arts events; dances performances and concerts
- Hire of rooms for receptions and parties

There will also be income, but on a lesser scale from:

- Charges to local groups for use of facilities
- Schools and school projects
- Homework Clubs
- Some of these activities may attract Government grants.

3.3.4 *Supporting activities*

The commercial viability of the Centre will require the support of volunteer and part-time workers. These workers will be drawn from a wide cross-section of the local population. Young people will be able to act as assistants and guides in the Discovery Centre and assist the running of events in the performance space. Older people will be able to contribute their expertise for planning and organising in the Discovery Centre and Arts Facility and in management and fundraising for the Centre.

For each activity and event there will be those who go to enjoy it and those who go to make it happen. In short, it is a Centre for the community, but not a Community Centre as that term is generally understood.



3.4 DESIGN AND COMPONENTS OF THE CENTRE

This section summarises the current views of the Working Party about the detailed design of the Centre.

It starts with an overview that illustrates the design concept. This considers the areas that will be needed for each of the individual components and the relationships between them, and it also addresses the way in which the Centre harmonises with the whole development.

Then each of the components of the Centre is discussed individually. Because the Discovery Centre element is novel to Twickenham this is discussed fully.

3.4.1 Conceptual design

The Developer's proposals for the development indicate that 1,200 – 1,500 m² could be available for the Eel Pie Centre, and the Resources Committee's brief to the working party is for 1,200m². A conceptual design has been drawn up to demonstrate that it might be possible to house the desired functional activities within the space available.

Figure 3 (next page) shows clearly how the Discovery Centre and Arts Facility can share the café, shops and ticket office, and how other common facilities can be shared. This is achieved within areas that other specialist venues have found viable.

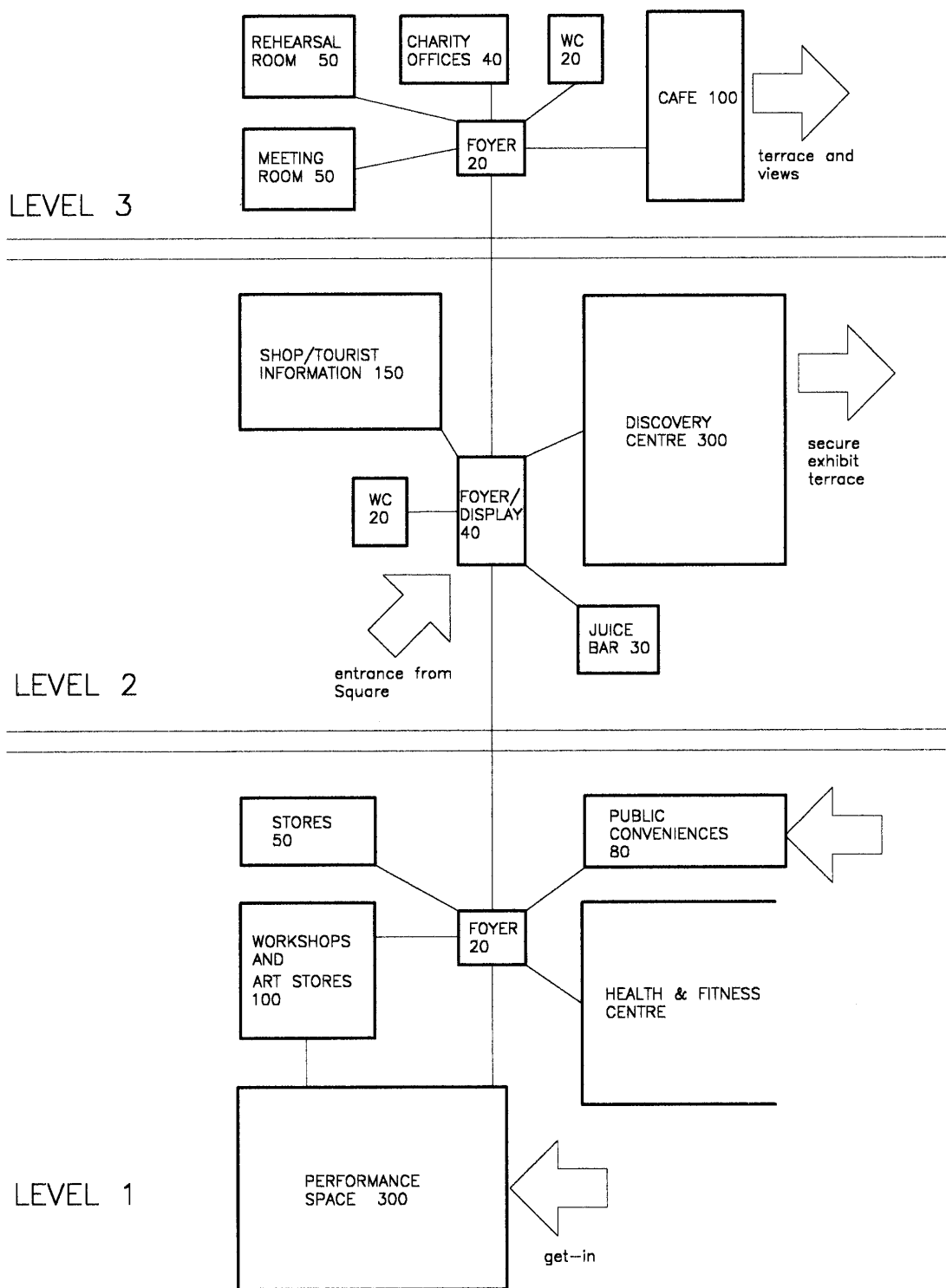


Figure 3: The conceptual design for the Eel Pie Centre. All areas are in square metres (m²).

General

This is a “landmark building” for Twickenham, to be a recognisable entity, visible and easily accessible from the town centre and The Embankment. It should be welcoming to the public, and should be open towards the river. The Centre’s foyer will be shared by many different groups of people, and should be an active place by day and evening. The design should allow flexibility for the Centre to develop and change in the light of experience. Its form and construction should take note of the Inspector’s report on scale and materials, and the Council’s policy on sustainable building. **Ideally it will also be a landmark in terms of ecological design.**

Access

Pedestrian access from King St and from the riverside walk and Embankment. Easy and safe access from car parking. Coaches need a set-down point. Goods access and get-in for the performance space. Some uses may spread out onto the open spaces, e.g. the café, performances, sculpture exhibits. The street market will require storage for stalls and cleaning equipment. The Centre should be fully accessible to disabled people.

Foyer

The entrance foyer will serve the Discovery Centre, performance space, café, and possibly also the Health and Fitness club. It will accommodate displays by local artists and craftsmen, and maybe relics from boatbuilding and the river’s past. It should serve all public function areas, so may be an open split-level design. Suggested area of entrance foyer: 80m².

Shop

This will open directly from the entrance foyer, incorporating tourist and public information, sales and display of local arts and crafts, books, gifts, and river related goods (fishing, boating, wildlife). Shop staff will also control admission to the Discovery Centre and act as booking office for performances. Area 150m².

Discovery Centre

It is designed to appeal to the enquiring nature of children. It will cater for school parties, children with parents, and casual passers-by. Access will be through the shared entrance foyer. There will be some 30 interactive displays of varying size, relating to the science, history, culture and environment of the river. A local historical slide library may also be accommodated. Space will be allowed in the basement for administration, workshop, and storage. Total area 300m², excluding basement area. The Discovery Centre could include an internal courtyard for open-air exhibits, secure but visible from outside. A few robust industrial/archaeological objects might be placed in the piazza as sculptures. The quality and size of exhibits to be similar to those in Techniquet.

Within the exhibition area there needs to be provision for shop for Discovery Centre souvenirs (cheap, but with a high profit margin) and a tea bar for parents to relax whilst keeping an eye on their children.

Performance and community spaces

A main multi-purpose hall with flat sprung floor for dancing, and with retractable bleacher seating, capable of forming a 150 seat auditorium with good acoustics. Effective sound attenuation (NC 25dBA). Adaptable stage area, dressing rooms, piano and props stores, control room, small office. Adequate get-in facilities. Preferably on piazza level, with scope for serving outdoor performances but if limited site area dictates, it could be on a different level, with public and goods lift and stair access. Total area: 300m² (suggested allocation: auditorium 110m², stage 90m², control room 25m², dressing rooms 20m², circulation, toilets and bleacher stacking 55m²). Additional space for workshop, production room, and art store, accessible from backstage, area 80m².

Meeting/rehearsal rooms

Two rooms, one equipped for art and craft activities, and to serve as a luncheon room for school parties. The other is equipped for meetings, studying and music. Could be on an upper level. Total area 100m². Also 40m² office and administration space.

Refreshments

A café and a juice bar, one of these sited on piazza level, with access from both the Centre and the piazza, with scope for tables to extend into the display area, and outdoors to overlook the river. One to be capable of evening opening and licensing. Total area 130m².

Public conveniences

To include disabled WCs and baby changing. Allow 80m² accessible public toilets accessible from the piazza or The Embankment, and 40m² accessible from within the Centre.

Basement

In addition to serving the uses listed above, a basement would house storage and maintenance equipment for the market, the pontoon, the piazza and the Centre. 50m².

Vehicles

It is assumed that the needs for service vehicle access and standing, and car and coach parking, will be accommodated beyond the site of the Centre, within the overall development.

IT support

Many of the facilities will require a good level of appropriate IT support.

Total area: 1,350m².

3.4.2 Links to the development

The Centre as the central public asset needs to be well situated and to link naturally with the rest of the site and the town centre. The Centre is also the major attraction for visitors who will spend their money elsewhere in the development and nearby, so it needs to be in a very accessible position.

It needs to be by the river and adjacent to the piazza. The river links are essential for a Riverside Discovery Centre. The links to the piazza are necessary because the Centre will be needed to support entertainments on the piazza (power points, dressing rooms, etc.). Displays of sculptures and riverside activities (e.g. boatbuilding) will both add value to the open space and draw people into the Centre. **The possibility of a modestly tented structure to add to flexibility of use of the Centre should be considered.**

3.4.3 The Discovery Centre component

A Discovery Centre must have a theme, and ours is the riverside and the environment.

The displays are exciting, interactive and capable of appealing to both children and adults. They have to work. Some ideas are:

- A control centre with video links to the nests of birds and bats
- A pipeline diversion of the river through a display chamber to see what fish and other forms of life and items of interest are flowing by; monitoring of the stream for a display of oxygen levels, acidity etc.
- How do boats go up hill? With models you have to deduce by experiment how locks work, and have a lot of fun in the process.

There will be projects organised by the Centre for local schools and special interest groups. These might include boatbuilding on site or in a nearby yard, and environmental studies relating to the river and riverside.

Experience from elsewhere

Members of the working party have visited several Discovery Centres (Appendix 3). From these visits there is a firm consensus of views:

- Whether the Centre is large or small, there is a good ambience. We've enjoyed our visits, and we've come back and urged others to go
- Children and adults enjoy hands-on displays, whether they're by themselves, in peer groups or with their families. Interactive displays work at different levels. Everyone learns something in the process, although this may be more evident to adults than children
- Simple robust displays are better than high-tech displays. Too often the latter are overly complex, with a disturbing (and annoying) tendency to break down
- Displays can reflect local themes and interests
- Displays can be made of high-quality materials or wood & cardboard. They can be very sophisticated or decidedly low-tech
- The target audience may be primary school children or the general public

- The Centre's set-up and operational costs are covered by admission charges and sales to a significant extent (55-85%), but there is a shortfall that has to be found by other means
- All Discovery Centres are very individual and their success is attributable in a large part to having a good designer, an excellent manager and a supportive Board of trustees.

The Rowing and Riverside Museum at Henley has, superficially, a lot of overlap with what we are proposing. In fact, there is little. Henley is an excellent museum, but the "hands-on discovery" element is relatively small.

The Thames Explorer Trust at Chiswick Pier, with which some of the working party are closely associated, has been very successful in developing an educational programme and in fundraising. They are willing to share their experience and wish to hire some of our facilities (see Appendix 6, letter from Alison Taylor).

Conclusions

1. The Twickenham Riverside Discovery/Heritage Centre will be unique. It will complement other river or boat museums and centres, but will be quite different in kind.
2. The aim of the Discovery Centre is to promote a sense of the historic evolution of the River Thames, both in its human and natural aspects, by demonstrating the social changes and scientific principles that produced that evolution. It will do this by:
 - Mounting interactive displays and exhibits, taking its examples and materials, wherever possible, from the Twickenham area
 - Providing complementary learning material presented in a friendly and imaginative manner
 - Bringing in local people to talk about the river as they know it
 - Organising field and river trips and projects in support of these aims
 - Co-operating with groups with similar aims
3. Techniquet in Cardiff serves as the most suitable model for Twickenham.
 - It has grown in three stages from a room in a gas showroom to a large building in the Cardiff Dock redevelopment. At each stage the centre has been successful with the public and sponsors. The second stage of development of 800m² matches the size we have in mind, and the record of its business and operational details can be made available to us.
 - Their exhibits are mainly low-tech but are of high quality. They look good, are easy to use, provide a lot of fun and learning and withstand the destructive battering of young hands. Many are of direct relevance to a "water experience".
 - Techniquet provide a consultancy and design service so that their standards of imaginative, high-quality model building are readily available.

4. The timing of visits makes it likely that the performance space can be used for video displays and presentations for the Discovery Centre which will not clash with the proposed arts use.
5. There is a good potential for educational programmes and projects that will benefit schools and youth groups in the area. These will be complementary to those of nearby river-based centres.

Content and programme

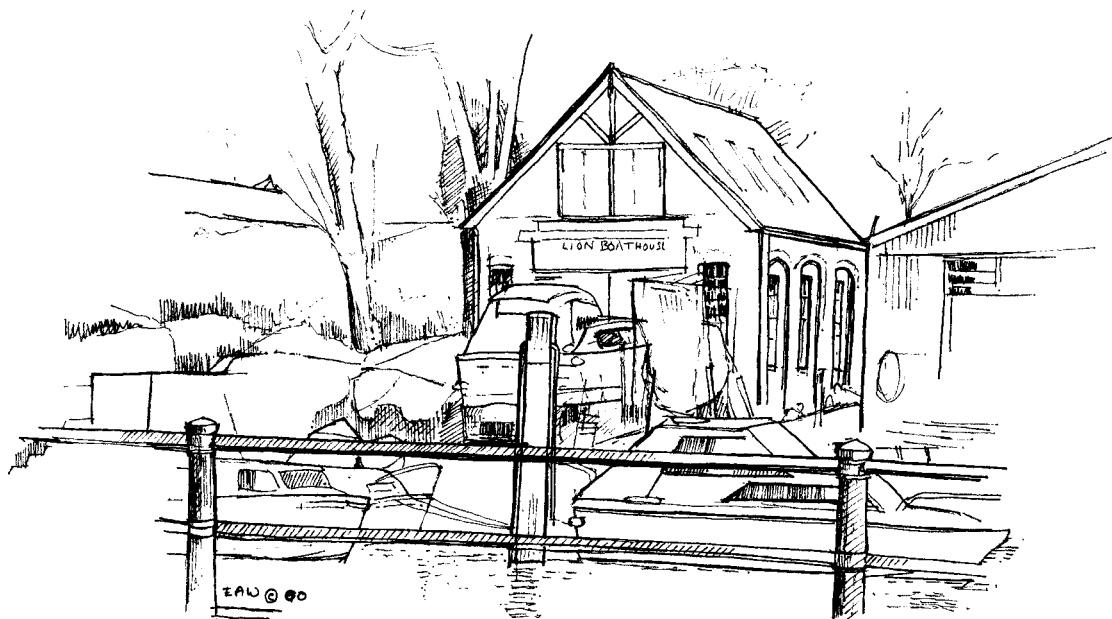
It is beyond the brief for and experience of the working party to design the contents and programme of a Discovery Centre. However, to provide a basis for discussion and a possible starting point for a designer, an exemplar theme and illustrative examples have been laid out (Appendix 4).

3.4.4 Twickenham Tower

The attention of the working party was drawn recently to the fact that a view line from the pool site goes along the avenue in Bushy Park, through the Diana Fountain to Hampton Court. Other views downstream are to Syon House, Ham House and Marble Hill.

The working party liked the concept of having a tower or perhaps a periscope so as to take advantage of these views arising from the situation of the site at the midpoint of the part of the River Thames covered by the Thames Landscape Strategy.

Donna Clack of the TLS who had presented the possibilities has been asked to ascertain the practicalities of these suggestions.



3.4.5 Arts Facility

The Arts Advisory Group advises the Borough on Arts matters. From the outset of the decision by the Council in 1996 to hold a competition for the redevelopment of the site, it has been considering what is an appropriate Arts Facility within the development. They have carried out research into the needs of the Borough and into the viability of options that might address those needs (see Appendix 2 for references).

After the failure of the Palace of Arts scheme and with it the auditorium, the Group reassessed the situation and made a proposal to the Working Party which accepted it in its entirety. This is summarised below.

Main Space — A flexible performance space

The key component is a flexible space with retractable raked seating for performance and workshop activity. Research continues to suggest that the requirement is for a space with a sprung floor with approximate dimensions in the region of 19m x 14m, which in performance mode would seat approx 120.

Programme for the space

This is given in outline here. A detailed programme for the use of the Arts Facility is given in Appendix 5. Projected late afternoon/evening use is as follows:

Dance

Dance Workshops. Various styles, including contemporary dance workshops led by Combination Dance, for whom the building could act as a much-needed base, and also other organisations currently in less favourable facilities, as identified in the Arts Office's Dance Now! register of local dance activity. There are currently at least 32 weekly workshops for children and young people (under 18s) and 38 weekly workshops for adults in the Borough. Most of these take place in conditions and facilities which are less than ideal.

Social Dance Activity. There is significant demand for tea dances for older people and for social dance activity in a variety of styles for a range of ages, notably Latin styles such as salsa. It is likely that this could be offered in partnership with an external promoter. Events generally include some formal tuition followed by a more informal approach to the remainder of the evening.

Dance Performance. All dance performance spaces in the Borough are limited in the facilities which they can offer. While the new facility could only cater for small-scale performance, this would still be an important asset in widening the scope and range of Borough provision.

Children's Events

There is clear, year-round, demand for events and performances for children. It is likely that there would be especial scope for running children's theatre shows at weekends – probably Saturday mornings and possibly Sunday lunchtimes. These would principally be aimed at the 3-7 age group. Although there is provision in neighbouring boroughs, this is perceived as essentially a local activity, as opposed to activity for which people will travel distances.

Music

Performance. There is significant scope for a small-scale space for music of all kinds, including jazz, folk and chamber music. There is a substantial unsatisfied demand for a music venue in this part of London, particularly for amplified music currently only served by pub function rooms, but also for chamber music served principally by churches.

Rehearsal. Research suggests that this is less of a problem than for dance in so far as there is greater availability of at least partially satisfactory facilities at reasonable rates. Nevertheless demand remains, and in particular the facility could prove valuable for Richmond Music Trust and for some of the many professional music groups based in the Borough.

Spoken Word Events

Recent press comment referred to the fact that most events in the Council's highly successful Book Now! literature festival take place in Richmond, rather than the western half of the Borough. The new space could be used to help to rectify this imbalance. Book Now!'s use of the Orange Tree Theatre for the 1999 festival indicated the scope for a larger and more well appointed venue for activity of this sort. Such events have the benefit of low overheads and are likely to be highly affordable to the Centre. In addition to literature events of this kind there is scope for the space to act as a venue for a wide range of talks and lectures. Projection facilities will be required for this.

Evening Hire

There is likely to be significant scope for hiring on a number of bases, including for commercial events, community activities and private social events. This should act as a reasonable source of income besides topping up the programme on a no-risk basis. Partners in some regular programme activity besides that outlined above may also be sought. For example, there is a significant market for comedy clubs in the Borough. While this seems to be satisfied largely by pub function rooms, it is likely that the prospect of more professional facilities on a desirable site would be attractive to promoters.

Daytime Use

Discussions about daytime use have tended to focus on schoolchildren and after-school activities. While these can undoubtedly be a part of the mix, there is also more scope for working in partnership with pre-school childcare agencies and organisations providing activity (including cultural activity) for older people. Demographically there is clear need to provide for both these groups, particularly, in the case of the former, in view of the number of families with both parents working.

Workshops

There is a clear demand for smaller workshop spaces, one 'wet' (notably for visual art and craft activity) and one 'dry' (particularly for music and creative writing). As with the larger space, significant usage by children and young people is envisaged. Research suggests particularly high demand for visual arts and crafts workshops for young people.

Support Facilities

Additional facilities required include: office space, storage for technical and other purposes, dressing rooms (designed so that they can also service outdoor activity), box office/reception, small licensed catering operation.

Conclusion

On the basis of the above it is reasonable to envisage that the Centre could be busy for five nights a week, for much of the weekend daytime and for a significant amount of time at weekday daytime depending on partnerships with other agencies. This does not allow for the kind of new activity which the creation of such a Centre might reasonably be expected to generate. Overall the indicators at this stage are that these spaces could be very popular, and used for a sufficiently wide range of activity to achieve broad public support. Research will continue into the above usage. In addition there will be closer examination of management, staffing and funding issues.

Since receipt of the proposals for the Discovery Centre and Arts Facility, the working party has considered how these can be integrated. There will be sharing of space, especially the performance space, and support facilities such as café/bar, ticketing, shop, separate eating space for school parties, circulation space and management staff.

There is a growing trend elsewhere for Discovery Centres and Arts Facilities to be integrated, according to Lords Consultants who advise the Kids' Clubs Network. No doubt, others see the potential benefits of integration in the same way.

The design and programming of the available space within the Centre for multiple uses are critical issues for the practicability and viability of the Centre. It is essential that professional advice and guidance be sought on these matters.

3.5 MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE OF THE CENTRE

3.5.1 Organisation

An appropriate management structure can be set up in many ways. The prime considerations are:

- LBRuT is likely to want an arms-length relationship
- Charity status is probably essential
- Operational decisions must be sound
- Speed of operational decision-making and implementation is essential

Staff costs must be kept at a minimum.

Management structure

A three-tier structure is proposed:

1. A Steering Body to provide a strategic overview.

Sets strategic objectives and monitors the enterprise. Provides assistance in support of funding applications. Major backers are given early warning of impending serious financial or managerial shortcomings.

Membership to be drawn in the main from major stakeholders.

2. A Board of Directors to be responsible for strategic planning and control and setting operational targets and performance measures.

Equivalent to the Board of a small company. Senior managers of the Centre staff along with the equivalent of non-executive directors to provide practical experience and helpful guidance.

3. Day-to-day management team

Key members of the team are:

- A Centre Director whose task is to provide drive and focus and to ensure that the operations are conducted effectively and efficiently. Preferably someone with the experience of running a Discovery/Heritage Centre
- A Finance Director, who might be an experienced business person who has taken early retirement, working for the Centre on a part-time basis.
- An expert in the Arts
- Education workers
- A marketing expert.

If the Centre is to perform well as a unit, it is important to set up a structure that integrates the functions, Discovery/Heritage, Arts and Commercial.

3.5.2 Finance

The preparation of the business plan is taking place in two stages. The first is to carry out a robust, credible analysis of the financial implications of the Centre, sufficient for reliable decision-making. This has been done and the results are reported below. The second is to prepare a detailed business plan. As part of a DfEE-funded project, Lords Associates working with Kids' Net have prepared a template to enable groups in our situation to develop a full business plan. A prototype template has been obtained and this will form the basis of preparation for the full plan.

The approach taken in the preliminary analysis is first to examine the financial aspects of each of the three parts that comprise the Centre, and then to determine what benefits accrue from operating the three as a single unit.

The Council has direct experience of running arts events and the tourist office. The management accounts of some of the best run Discovery Centres have

been opened to us, so we are able to benchmark against a realistic standard of best practice.

The aim of the Centre will be to break even by good management, a suitable mix of income-generating activities and a low-level of fund raising.

Capital costs

As a first estimate, Donaldsons, the Council's independent financial advisors, assume the cost of building the Centre and fitting it out is just under £2M.

This is based on the figures of the Tym's report that assumed a large Discovery Centre equipped with high-tech exhibits. In our visits to Discovery Centres we have encountered a wide range of fit-out costs all of which are lower than those used by Tym's. Further, the cost of fitting out the Arts Facility will be less than the cost of fitting out the Discovery Centre. Thus Donaldsons' figure is too high, but it is a convenient reference point and gives a feel for the scale of the proposal.

Operational costs

Principle costs are staffing, replacement of exhibits to encourage repeat visits, maintenance and administrative overheads.

Techniquest recovers a high level of its running costs through admission charges, sponsorship and operation of a café and shop.

Arts functions in the Borough under the control of Leisure Services are within that department's budget.

Income

The initial capital cost is due to be met from the development. There is no reason, in principle, why some of the other costs could not be met by sponsorship.

A condition laid on the developer is that £50,000 is made available annually to the Centre from the development.

The major source of income will be from those visiting to explore the Discovery Centre, attend an event, shop, or use the café/bar. It is estimated that 30,000 visitors a year will visit the Centre. For comparison, in 1998, Marble Hill had 11,993 visitors, Orleans Gallery 5,001 (down from 17,864 in 1997 when entry was free of charge) and Strawberry Hill had 2,095 in 1998. The Centre is better situated for tourists than any of these and has more diverse attractions.

Other income will derive from hire of space or facilities.

Some of the staff costs are already met by the Council, e.g. by relocation of the Council's Tourist Office into the Centre.

The proposed commercial centre core is more robust than other stand-alone discovery or arts centres with a café, two types of shop and art displays.

It is highly probable that the Centre will break even, but there are other benefits to be taken into account.

Benefits of an integrated Centre

There are significant cost savings and income generation benefits that accrue to the integrated Centre compared with stand-alone centres. These include:

- Staff costs are lower because of shared administrative functions, e.g. the ticket desk, publicity, etc.
- Intense use of the multi-purpose performing space
- The prolonged day: the Discovery Centre will be open in the morning and the afternoon, and the Arts Facility in the afternoon and the evening, enabling the shops and café to stay open longer.

Fundraising

It is common for Discovery and Arts Centres to raise funds by a variety of methods. The developer made a bid for National Lottery funding. Had that been successful it would have enabled a scheme that was acceptable to the public to go ahead. His attempt to raise equivalent funding from the site led to a proposal for overdevelopment that was quite unacceptable.

The benefits of gaining funds in addition to those available from a small-scale development are therefore clearly evident. Funding mechanisms for Discovery Centres and recognised bodies engaged in river-related activities are well established. The activities of these centres lend themselves to appeals for relatively small amounts of money, e.g. to sponsor a display or fund a project.

Significant levels of support can be achieved by accumulation of small-to-medium contributions from the public. This has been effective in other local projects such as the refurbishment of St Stephen's Church in East Twickenham (£1.8M) and the building of the new Orange Tree Theatre.

One can well see that an injection of £1.8M into the Centre would make it financially robust without question. Informal soundings suggest that there are realistic chances of gaining financial support of that order. It takes time, but it may well be time well spent. Furthermore, local sponsorship brings a sense of ownership and community spirit which is a valuable if intangible benefit for the ongoing success of the Centre.

3.5.3 Traffic

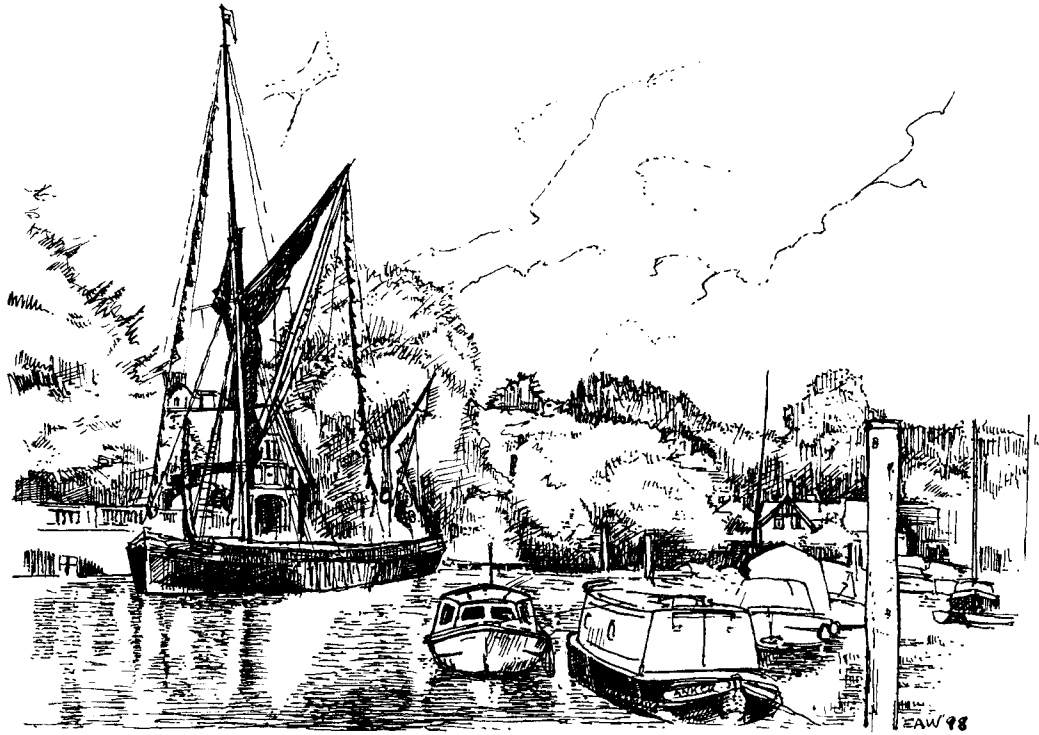
Traffic congestion is very dependent upon the timing of a visitor's arrival and the length of stay. Thus if, 150 people arrive by car at a fixed time for a specific event, such as a film or performance lasting, say, 3hrs, they will require approximately 75 parking spaces for a fixed period. In central Twickenham, this amounts to a parking problem. If, on the other hand they arrive at times spread out through the same 3hr period, and if they only stay for an hour to visit the Centre or the café or the shops, the parking requirement will be much less.

It has been found that during the days of French Markets or Open Days on Eel Pie Island, thousands of visitors have been accommodated within the existing parking regime because their visits have been spread out.

For the Eel Pie Centre, then, there are mixed messages. By day, when most of the visitors are to the Centre or small participation events in the Arts Facility, parking is not a major issue. But when there are performances in the Arts

Facility, extra parking needs to be available nearby, especially if other parts of the development are attracting a significant number of visitors.

The parking proposals of the Working Party on Traffic and Parking, if accepted, would prove satisfactory.



3.6 HOW DOES THE CENTRE RELATE TO TWICKENHAM AND THE RIVER?

Heritage context

Contextually it contributes to the riverside environment by acting as a focus visually and symbolically (a focus for the eye in the long view; a destination for a visit; focusing attention on the importance of the river). For this reason it must be a separate building (ie not part of another building).

The function is complementary to the role of the proposed Twickenham Museum, which would deal with all aspects of Twickenham's heritage/history, not just the river, and be a more traditional museum/archive.

The function is also complementary to existing long-term traditional land uses in Twickenham – boat repair, leisure boating, riverside walks, restaurants, pubs, civic offices, and tourism to Ham House, Marble Hill House, Orleans Gallery, and Strawberry Hill. It will provide a visitor attraction and complementary functions such as information on river services.

River-Related Users of the Eel Pie Centre

Richmond upon Thames is unique among London Boroughs in having riparian land on both sides of the river. The Thames changes character from tidal to the east to semi-tidal above Richmond, then tideless to the westward above Teddington.

The Thames in the Twickenham reaches has a special quality due to the construction of the half-tide lock and sluices at Richmond in 1894. Over the last century they have enabled the river above the lock to be developed for all manner of water-related activities, from long-established sailing, rowing and canoe clubs, to houseboat and cruiser moorings. The only inhabited island on the semi-tidal Thames, Eel Pie Island, is home to busy boatyards and clubs.

Although the Thames is not as busy now as in the Victorian and Edwardian heyday, during the year a number of water-based events are held in this reach, including the Richmond and Twickenham Regattas for rowing craft, and regular Sunday and Wednesday evening sailing races. One of the most spectacular events of recent years is the Great River Race, which starts off the slipway at Ham and includes a wide variety of rowing boats from all parts of the country and the Continent.

There are numerous clubs and organisations that have a special interest in this stretch of the river and with whom the Centre would expect to form strong links. They fall within the following categories:

- Member-based groups, such as the River Thames Society, who are concerned with all aspects of the Thames
- Boating groups
- Educational organisations
- River-oriented groups, such as the Thames Landscape Strategy
- Sports clubs

There will also be opportunities for the Centre to act in support of informal river use by supporting the activities envisaged in the developer's brief for the pontoon and enhancement of The Embankment. These include increased river traffic visiting Twickenham. (For further detail see Appendix 7.)

3.7 CONCLUSIONS

A Riverside Centre would make a major contribution to the regeneration of Twickenham by increasing awareness of its riverside environment and heritage. It will do this by providing a point of focus for the cultural identity of Twickenham, which will attract tourists and visitors to the town centre.

An integrated Centre is more robust to the vicissitudes of fashion and finance than one that supports just a single function, but it is not without risk. The opportunities, strengths, weaknesses and risks of the Centre are:

3.7.1 Opportunities

“Spirit of Twickenham”

Twickenham has grown from a riverside village, but the river remains at its core and one of the best parts of it is the site of this development. In the 18th Century, a tradition was founded of Twickenham as a centre of excellence in literature, painting, music and crafts that is maintained by the present artistic community. The views, the environmental features, and the combination of a working and a recreational river, continue to attract visitors and residents. The Centre will:

- Celebrate its rich riverside heritage and its distinguished artistic tradition
- Be unique to Twickenham.
- Provide a focal point for both of the riverside and artistic strands of Twickenham’s heritage and present culture
- Improve the ambience of the area by removing the current blight.

The Riverside

The Centre will relate strongly to the river and it will:

- Draw people to the river
- Increase appreciation and awareness of the local environment and its history
- Be a landmark building on the riverside that will add style and character to the local setting.

Commercial impact

The Centre will become a focus for town life and tourism and as such will contribute significantly to the regeneration of Twickenham town centre. It will:

- Attract visitors to Twickenham
- Encourage and support upmarket customers to the development and surrounding area
- Place the Twickenham Tourist Office where it will be most effective
- Associate the Health and Fitness Centre with a public activity, by virtue of the entrance to the facility being through the Centre
- Support the performances and markets in the piazza
- Provide a place for the family elements of rugby crowds to spend their time and money
- Attract visitors to the shops and café within the Centre, thus helping to ensure its financial viability.

Fundraising

It is normal for Discovery Centres to raise funds from the local community and funding bodies, for projects, exhibits and further development. Fundraising is always hard, but this area has the advantage of a population with a strong sense of civic responsibility and suitable skills and experience in funding local projects.

Local shops, businesses and groups have a good track record in sponsoring relatively modest identifiable objects or projects.

Flexibility

Because of its composite nature and flexible building it will be possible to adapt or extend the Centre to future needs, trends or developments.

3.7.2 Strengths

The Centre has a number of fundamental strengths.

Position and presence

- There are few riverside buildings with public access between Marble Hill House and Kingston Bridge
- It is the end of the riverside walk from Richmond to Twickenham
- It has good public transport links
- It will support the open-air performance space (storage, etc.)
- It will attract good and appropriate local support
- It's the right place for the Tourist Office
- It will be open for long hours and attract different types and ages of people throughout the day.

Management and finance

- It will start debt free
- The financial projections are robust
- Management will be lean
- Volunteers with appropriate skills, commitment and integrity are likely to be forthcoming
- The building design and management structure will enable the Centre to respond to changing circumstances.

New concept

- A new concept stirs the imagination and will attract support and visitors.
- The pioneer work has been done by other Centres, such as Techniquet. We can learn from their experience and get the Centre underway much more quickly than if we were starting from scratch.

3.7.3 Risks

There are risks associated with the venture. However, they are risks that can be addressed, not grounds for rejecting the proposal.

Design

- It won't work if the building is made smaller than that proposed in this report. There needs to be opportunity for the Centre to expand if there is demand for it
- Poor design of the multifunctional building may result in parts of the building being unsuitable or unusable for their intended purpose.

Loss of nerve

In the light of the current perception of the Millennium Dome and other major Millennium projects, the Council may conclude that it is unwilling to support the Centre.

A review of such projects ('The Times', 4th February 2000) showed that the failures were mainly associated with acceptance of ambitious attendance figures prepared by consultants, and the aim of being a national attraction. Less ambitious projects that focus on local strengths and needs are proving successful.

The proposal made in this report is for a Centre with strong local focus. The recommendation contained in the Tym's report for a national Riverside Discovery Centre has been firmly rejected.

It is essential that the Council is not exposed to claims for subsidy. The initial view is that the financial and management arrangements can be structured so as to ensure against that risk. However, this is an item that requires detailed attention, whilst the Developer is preparing his proposal, before a firm commitment is made.

In the long term

One can foresee a number of problems arising in the future. Each is a consequence of bad management, and can be avoided by good management. They include:

- The Centre is so successful that demand can't be met so that the ambience is destroyed and the building is battered
- There is a loss of vision and focus because of multiple use and poor management
- Poor management creates a dead space and white elephant
- Can't sustain enough interest and diversity of exhibits and/or projects
- Sponsors lose interest.

3.7.4 Weaknesses

There are a number of identifiable weaknesses:

Scale

- The size of the Centre may drive up the scale of the requisite enabling development to an unacceptable level.
- One way of addressing this difficulty is to find part funding for the Centre beyond the development. This is likely to be achievable, but will take time. To accommodate the time, the options are to delay the whole development or to proceed with the shell of the Centre, leaving fitting out until later.
- The Centre building may fail to meet planning regulations. However, if the Centre is a stand-alone building and it spreads horizontally rather than vertically, this is unlikely to be a difficulty.

Access

- Although access by public transport is good, parking in Twickenham is limited. Many Discovery Centres in other metropolitan areas work without special provision being made for parking. The Centre will mainly be used for visits and events that do not require lots of people to be present at a fixed time; hence, the parking demand is spread throughout the day. Thus, the parking constraint is less severe than it appears at first sight. However, it may be a problem for the audience in the performance space.

New concept

- Whilst it may be seen as a strength, there are problems in getting a new idea understood and accepted. To be a success, the Centre will require a significant amount of promotion and marketing, both short-term and long-term.

3.8 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A Riverside Centre of at least 1,350m² with Discovery, Arts, Heritage and commercial elements be approved in principle as part of the Twickenham riverside redevelopment.
2. The Centre Working Group moves on to the essential next steps as stated above:
 - Prepare a detailed business plan
 - Make firm recommendations as to management structure and related matters
 - Seek professional advice on the design and operation of the Discovery Centre and performance space
 - Prepare an outline operational plan that makes clear potential involvement in and use of the Centre by local groups and the community as a whole

- Engage in ongoing discussions with the architect and developer
- Ascertain the possibilities and practicalities of raising additional funds for the support of the Centre
- Contact local groups about possible use of the Centre
- Publicise the concept of the Centre.

APPENDIX 1: THE WORKING PARTY

Membership

Active

- Prof. Jack Betteridge (Chair), Eel Pie Island resident
- Robert Bowcock, Architect, Eel Pie Island resident
- Martin Brunt, Architect, Richmond resident
- Donna Clack, Thames Landscape Strategy
- Nigel Cutting, Head of Leisure Services, LBRuT
- Jim Deasley, Architect, Eel Pie Island resident
- Peter Francis, river enthusiast
- Robert Hancock, river enthusiast
- Yvonne Hewett, Thames Eyot resident
- Colin Hunt, Twickenham Rowing Club
- Tom Morden, Student, Richmond Tertiary College
- Brian Parker, Chairman Twickenham Society and Chairman of the Traffic and Access Working Party
- Jenny Pearce, Planner, LBRuT
- Elizabeth Wood, Embankment resident and boat owner
- Derek Plummer, Architect, Chairman Richmond Environmental Trust
- Judith Strong, Arts Advisory Group
- Rachel Tranter, Curator, Orleans House Gallery, LBRuT

Communicating

- Christine Byron, Netscape
- John Armstrong, River Thames Society
- Ron Berryman, River Thames Society
- Ken Dwan and Ted Leppard, Eel Pie Slipways Ltd
- John Hatto, London Wildlife Trust
- John Idon, St Mary's College
- Janet Knox, Twickenham Town Centre Manager
- Helen Montgomery-Smith, Eel Pie Marine
- Eve Risbridger, LBRuT Tourism Officer
- Loveday Shewell, Arts Advisory Group
- Mark Thatcher, Francis Francis Fishing Club

Terms of reference

The terms of reference of the Working Party are as follows:

1. To develop the concept of the Centre building as a community facility suitable for all age groups. The minimum facilities to be provided will include:
 - .1 local discovery and heritage centre;
 - .2 facilities for youth;
 - .3 small scale music and dance;
 - .4 café and arts display area; and
 - .5 support facilities for external performances/events.

The overall parameters to be assumed are a building of approximately 1,200 square metres in floor area and a total income from the development in the order of £50,000 per annum; and

2. To make recommendations to the Steering Group on the proposals for:
 - .1 the physical requirements of the building, e.g. uses, floor area, storey heights, etc.;
 - .2 the estimated costs of fitting out the facility;
 - .3 the options for managing the Centre;
 - .4 the likely programme of uses/events; and
 - .5 the estimated operating costs.

APPENDIX 2: REFERENCES TO RELATED REPORTS

LBRuT Reports of Working Parties

Rivers Use, 1999

Traffic and Parking, 1999

Discovery Centres

Roger Tym & Partners, Eel Pie Centre Feasibility Study, October 1999 (for LBRuT)

Gulbenkian Foundation Report, John Pearce, Centres for curiosity and imagination, 1998

Mary Maher (Ed) Collective Vision: Starting & sustaining a children's museum, Association of Youth Museums, Washington, DC 20006, 1997

Arts needs in the Borough

Feasibility study for The Palace of the Arts, 3 volumes, Positive Solutions, September 1997

APPENDIX 3: VISITS TO DISCOVERY CENTRES

Members of the working party visited Techniquest (Cardiff), the Manchester Discovery Centre, Museum of Rowing (Henley), Children's Museum Bethnal Green, Livesey Museum, Science Museum, Natural History Museum and the Horniman Museum. A typical visit report is:

Visit to Techniquest by Robert Hancock, Strategic Director, LBRuT, October 1999

To ensure that we are properly briefed in handling the issue of a Discovery Centre, I visited three of the major centres in the country, Techniquest in Cardiff (the only centre with a R and D and exhibition build department), the National Science Museum (which hosts the National Group of about 30 centres), and the Manchester Discovery Centre.

My first visit was to the largest of them all which also provides the greatest amount of external consultancy help and advice to those developing in Britain, Europe and further afield, Techniquest in Cardiff. The Director, Colin Johnson, assembled a team of himself, his Exhibitions Director, Harry White, and his Development Director, Allan Edwards, to host me for a day last Friday.

Whilst we had a discussion about the current Centre, the key elements of advice came from them in regard to their previous Centre which had a total of 800 square metre space including exhibition, entertainment and support staff.

The current team have been working together for 15 years and this is their third Centre. They started in a Gas showroom with some interactive displays, moved to their second dedicated, Centre of 800 square metres prior to moving this final 3,500 square metre Centre with 1,500 square metre of exhibition space.

All the following comments are advice in regard to our 1,000 square metre proposal taken from their own experience of their 800 square metre Centre. Obviously costs are at current day rates:-

- Their 800 square metre Centre hosted 100,000 visitors per year, one third being children during term time and two thirds being families and children at weekends and holiday periods.
- Each exhibit requires 10 square metres of exhibition space to enable proper utilisation by individuals and groups.
- An 800 square metre Centre would require a minimum of 8 permanent coach parking places and 250 car parking spaces.
- The current costs per exhibit are between £12,000 to £15,000. These are for the plastic style, brightly coloured exhibits. Should we require robust wooden exhibits which may be more in keeping with

the prestige riverside site then approximately £18,000 should be allowed per exhibit.

- The current Centre requires a subsidy which is in the region of one third of the total annual running costs. Their view is that the most cost efficient Centres, where they are run as a Discovery Centre business, require between a 15% to 20% subsidy and some around the country require an 80% subsidy.
- The target for visitors should always be about one third of the total from schools during term time and two thirds from children and families together at weekends and in school holidays.
- They reckon for business terms on 170 term day visitors, and 190 family and weekend visitors.
- It was pointed that you can indeed have 1% of all your visitors on a single day or 10% over a ten day period at busy holiday times.
- For 800 square metres it is their view that in addition to the appropriate Director and Exhibitions Director you would require six to eight floor staff on a permanent basis. This would be in addition to a schools officer, booking officer and admin. support.
- Enough space must be in the Centre for children's wet weather clothes, storing their luggage, space to eat sandwich lunches, and recognise that unless bookings are very tightly undertaken you may need double the coach parking space.
- They recommend 150 square metres being allocated to theatre and 200 square metres to office space. This is in addition to storage and repair space.
- A significant sum is required as an annual basis for refurbishment – a capital replacement fund. It is suggested that 10% of the initial capital cost be allocated each year for replacement and refurbishment.
- They are very willing to provide consultancy support either for a day or two on a more prolonged basis should a Centre be established.
- Given that they are a charity and running on the tightest of budgets requiring a significant subsidy, the salary levels for staff are very low. At Director level they only earn somewhere in the region of £25K per individual.

Overall from this we can see that we should be quite cautious of considering this service as a fully blown business on the riverside site. I doubt it would be sustainable in traffic terms and clearly the subsidy would not be feasible from the balance of the site.

Should it wish to be considered, then having an aspect of discovery exhibit within a riverside/heritage centre with the involvement of youth and arts groups would appear to be a more hopeful balance.

APPENDIX 4: DETAILED PROPOSAL FOR THE DISCOVERY CENTRE

Aims

Many people are only peripherally aware that Twickenham is on the river, and many more, even those who are native to Twickenham, know little about how the Thames came to be as it is today, and the complexity of its ecology and its economy. The Centre will provide people of all ages with badly-needed information on the river and its development in the past, present and future.

There is nothing in this area which demonstrates the importance of the river to the growth of London or its importance in our day-to-day lives – for example, many people don't know that most of our drinking water comes from the river.

The aim of the Centre is to stimulate interest in the river, to make people take note of their surroundings, and to encourage them to use and appreciate the unique opportunities that Twickenham riverside provides. The Centre will raise public consciousness, and engage people and make them look anew at the world around them.

Users

- Casual visitors: local people, friends and families with children of all ages, and tourists including the walkers along the riverbank at weekends
- Educational: primary and secondary schools, groups like the Thames Explorer Trust
- Groups: local youth organisations, and interested adult groups who want to know about the river and local environment
- Those who wish for an unusual and interesting place for a children's party or corporate reception.

Layout

Frequently repeated advice from those who are responsible for other Discovery Centres is:

1. As well as the display area, there needs to be:
 - Space for visitors to gather to hear talks, watch videos or demonstrations.
 - Space for activities, like the River Game devised by the Thames Explorer Trust, which is played on a large sheet of canvas
 - Space for tables to follow-up on field work, with microscopes, note-making, etc.
 - A separate eating facility for school parties

These may be shared resources with the Arts Facility.

2. In the exhibition area there needs to be:

- A souvenir shop which sells small cheap objects
- A tea bar for adults to relax whilst keeping an eye on the children for whom they are responsible.

Displays

These can range from the interactive to the more didactic, requiring reading and co-operation in problem-solving. The displays at the Science Museum often fail to fulfil their function in teaching the theory behind the activity because they're too complex and inadequately explained, or, they have a long reaction-regeneration time, or, infuriatingly, they don't work at all.

Displays need to be geared towards the Key Stages in the National Curriculum, at primary and secondary level in Science, Geography and History. Good displays at this level also appeal to adults, albeit in a different way. Some will have to change from year to year, though some core displays will have an enduring attraction, like the rowing machine at Henley.

Displays at other locations that have impressed us include:

- A river system with locks – wet and great fun – Science Museum
- Water erosion – good display killed by inadequate water pressure and slow refresh rate – Natural History Museum
- Working lock system – Techniquest
- Hydraulic power display – Techniquest
- Speed and depth of water movement - ball races – Techniquest
- Waterfall and fountain movements – Techniquest
- Rowing machine – Henley
- Living River – Millennium Dome
- The built-up town – the historical growth of Lewes, with each district created by the people who live there – Lewes Museum

These could be adapted and original displays could be created. For example, there has been a lot of interest shown in our discussions at the possibility of having a visual display of the local environment, e.g. nesting birds or bats, fish leaping and distant views, e.g. over Diana's Fountain to Hampton Court. The visual display can be achieved by a mixture of techniques, e.g. camera obscura, viewing platform, CCTV, telemetry or by piping some of the river through the Centre. Alongside can be visual dynamic displays showing the state of the tide and environmental measurements of the river.

As well as static and interactive displays, there are other possibilities: the Borough is rich in photographs, and many local people have photos which provide detail on the last hundred years in the Borough. The Mayor salvaged valuable drawings from Tough's Boatyard, and the area has been heavily filmed and televised. (An easy game would be 'Spot the location' using stills, e.g. the steps at Marble Hill in 'Shakespeare in Love'.)

Such material could form a database relating to river issues, history, archaeology, wildlife, and could become the archive for valuable historical material, with images, text and sound being easily accessed by visitors.

In setting up such displays it should be possible to call upon considerable local expertise in these matters. Local businesses may also sponsor individual exhibits.

Possible Thematic Developments

A visitor's first impressions are very important. There should be a sense of occasion, of coming to an almost magical world and the theme of the Centre should be instantly apparent. Two possible themes which could work well together follow:

1. The Thames

Using Twickenham's history, the theme would show how man responds to opportunities and how that changes the way he lives.

- Early Settlement - influx of Celts, Iberians. Formation of English Channel. Survival as hunter-gatherers. Artefacts, flint, axes, bows
- Importance of water. Growth of settlements around water. Primitive rafts and boats. Artefacts: wattle and daub, boat shapes
- Water transport - a way of carrying great weight, fords, early bridges, flash locks. Meaning of place names e.g. Wallingford. Artefacts: examples of goods moved, water flow models, boat displacement, models to show ease of moving weights by water
- Conflicts of interest - bridges and ferries, water mills and locks, fishing and boating, leisure and commercial. Artefacts: archive material, planning games and re-enactments
- Tides - effect of building and dredging on water flow. Explanation of rotation of tides, effect of Richmond half-tide lock. The problem of sewage. Artefacts: Tidal clock, water aeration, current circulation models, what happens when the river going downstream meets the tide coming upstream?
- Leisure on the Thames - effect of half-tide lock on Richmond, sport on the river, types of boats, electric launches, water entertainments, growth of Eel Pie Island, tea dances, the Rolling Stones, Phil Collins, Robert Wyatt and others, Artefacts: old newspapers and photographs
- Wildlife - could be a start for nature walks, Artefacts: live animals
- The future - changing climate, London sinking, flood defences, effect of northerly gales. Artefacts: Flood contour models, exercises in planning for the future.

2. Conservation of Resources

Using local examples, the object will be to show the importance of conservation of resources:

- What is energy? Prime source of energy. Artefacts: models to show radiation of sun to earth and dissipation of heat from earth into space
- Storage of primary energy in land and sea masses. Storage in plant life. Artefacts: measuring land and water temperatures. Heat from compost
- Plants as energy, human intake and output of energy. Decay of organic material into oil, coal and gas. Artefacts: natural materials, measuring energy required to move a rowing boat and food input required. Observation of the efficient use of energy in birds and animals. Energy used in growing meat compared to vegetables
- Non-renewable energy: expiry date for coal, oil, gas and metals. Artefacts: examples of renewable materials (bone, leather etc.). Is a self-sufficient Twickenham possible?
- Renewable energy - waves, wind and solar. Artefacts: solar panels on roof, measuring the energy in Teddington weir
- Conversion of energy from one form to another - steam engines, clockwork radio, dynamo torch. Making more efficient use of human energy. Artefacts: winding up clockwork (gramophones, clocks), bicycles
- Entropy and insulation - the cooling universe, how animals control body temperature, insulation and the human body. Artefacts: insulation materials, thermal imaging
- Consumption of energy – graphs showing consumption of energy, how it has increased this century. Total energy required to produce familiar objects. Artefacts: experiments on model house, problems in how to reduce energy consumption drawing up a balance sheet for Twickenham.

Next steps

1. Consult with the staff of Techniquet and/or other consultants about the realities of establishing and running the Discovery Centre
2. Network with other members of the Kids Clubs Network and use their material and templates for drawing up a business plan and planning the Centre
3. We should work with the Head of Education and local schools and teachers' groups to ascertain their needs
4. Consult with Alison Taylor at Thames Explorer Trust, and other local persons who have a great deal of experience in setting up courses and the practicalities of running them
5. Consult widely with local people about what they would like to see in the centre, and ways in which their interest in and enthusiasm for the river can be increased.
6. Search out sources of funding.

APPENDIX 5: THE ARTS FACILITY

Indicative Monthly Programme Pattern

	am	pm	evening
Monday		after school arts	rehearsal hire
Tuesday		music rehearsal	comedy
Wednesday		dance class	salsa
Thursday		dance class	jazz
Friday			social hire
Saturday	children's show		event hire
Sunday	children's workshop		film /video
Monday		after school arts	rehearsal hire
Tuesday			classical recital
Wednesday		dance class	jive
Thursday		dance class	folk
Friday			social hire
Saturday	children's show		rock bands
Sunday	children's workshop	jazz	film /video
Monday		after school arts	rehearsal hire
Tuesday		music rehearsal	literature event
Wednesday		dance class	salsa
Thursday		dance class	jazz
Friday			social hire
Saturday	children's show	social hire	event hire
Sunday	children's workshop	classical recital	film /video
Monday		after school arts	rehearsal hire
Tuesday			dance show
Wednesday		dance class	jive
Thursday		dance class	folk
Friday			social hire
Saturday	children's show		rock bands
Sunday	children's workshop		film /video

Notes

1. Weekday daytime use: most of the pm weekday activities would start after school hours. While it is reasonable to anticipate a degree of usage by schools during school hours, it would seem wise not to be reliant on this. Thus it is envisaged that the bulk of weekday daytime use could come from partnership with agencies providing activity (including cultural activity) for either older people or pre-school children. Some use, and income, should also come from commercial and business hire.
2. After school arts: one session per week envisaged for an after-school club based on performing arts activity, possibly resourced from New Opportunities Fund bid.
3. Rehearsal hire: one evening per week envisaged. This could be from one regular user or a range of groups. Likewise two afternoon music rehearsals per month. Note that for much other small-scale music rehearsal the 'dry' upstairs space would be adequate.
4. Dance classes: two afternoons per week envisaged. This broadly ties in with Combination Dance's current schedule. Other existing groups might well also be interested in shifting activity to the Centre.
5. Comedy event: one per month envisaged. In view of the number of comedy clubs which regularly spring up across the Borough, this is probably a modest estimate of potential usage.
6. Salsa/Jive: One social dance event per week envisaged. Would probably be two different types, each on a fortnightly basis. Salsa and jive given as examples, but fashions vary and others may become more appropriate.
7. Jazz/Folk: One event per week, on alternate basis. Many local promoters interested in staging such activity given an appropriate space. Additionally, one Sunday lunchtime jazz event per month envisaged – this might be less contemporary than evening activity.
8. Rock bands: venue will be too small to play a major part in local provision, but demand is such that fortnightly events still a reasonable estimate.
9. Classical recital: one evening and one Sunday afternoon per month envisaged. These would be small-scale (certainly smaller than, for example, Richmond Concert Society programme) but there is still demand at this level.
10. Literature event: one evening per month. Programmed by Arts Office using existing publisher and other contacts generated through Book Now!
11. Dance performance: one evening per month. Programmed by Arts Office, possibly with support from London Arts Board, who are aware of this possible development and who already fund the dance festival Leap Into Dance on an annual basis.
12. Children's Show: one per week. Proven demand for this activity.
13. Children's Workshop: one per week. Proven demand for this activity.
14. Video/film: If this is to be part of the facility, one evening per week is minimum provision level
15. Social hire: one evening per week plus one afternoon per month is a relatively modest expectation.

16. Event hire: two evenings per month. Expectation is that with such an attractive site this level, over and above other activity outlined above, is not unreasonable.

17. The programme would of course vary somewhat according to a variety of factors. These might include:

- Easter and summer school holiday activities – considerable potential for additional weekday daytime programming, but possibly less evening activity in summer
- Dance festival – considerable potential for additional dance performances for two weeks in spring
- Book Now! – considerable potential for additional literature events throughout November.

Much of this activity might well be staged by or in partnership with external promoters. The programme does not take into account activity related to the Discovery Centre.

The schedule indicates a relatively heavy level of usage, which in turn would imply significant staff costs (although in many cases these ought to be covered by hire charges). The actual programme will be developed to optimise activity in relation to staffing costs and to minimise the frequency of format changes between flat and raked floors. This schedule does not take into account the optimum efficiency for the use of the space in terms of minimising format changes i.e. between flat floor and raked seating events. Obviously it would be possible to achieve other permutations of these activities.

The workshop spaces would also accommodate a range of uses. The 'wet' space would primarily be for art and craft use. This space might particularly be appropriate for use by children and young people. There is a significant amount of art and craft provision for adults but very little for younger people. We know from enquiries to the Arts Office that considerable demand exists in this area, and we also have access to many potential local teachers. The 'wet' space could also be used for school parties to eat packed lunches.

The 'dry' space would be used principally for writing groups (mainly but not exclusively adults) and small-scale music rehearsal (all ages). As with the performance/larger workshop space, both workshops would be used on a mixture of bases:

- activity generated by the centre itself
- hires by local groups
- private hires by individual teachers.

In addition, they would be used for purposes related to the Discovery Centre. They might also be of value to weekday daytime partners as outlined above.

Overall the facilities would be used by people of all ages, from pre-school children to older people, for both 'passive' and participatory purposes. The majority of users would be local, but given the nature of the activities, involving a range of specialist and minority tastes, would also include some enthusiasts for particular programme elements willing to travel from elsewhere in and beyond the Borough.

APPENDIX 6: LINKS TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS

The following letter from Alison Taylor is indicative of the spirit of riverside and local community. It illustrates the level of support that may be expected if the Centre goes ahead.

THAMES EXPLORER TRUST

Please reply to:

Thames Explorer Trust
The Pier House
Corney Reach Way
Chiswick
London W4 2UG

Telephone/fax 0181-742-0057

email: ali@thamesexplorer.freemove.co.uk

30 November 1999

Jack Betteridge
14 Aquarius
Eel Pie Island
Twickenham TW1 3EA

Dear Mr Betteridge,

re Twickenham Pool Site Redevelopment

Thank you for the report that you recently sent drawn up by the River Use Working Party on the above redevelopment. I am afraid that at the moment I do not have time to comment on the proposals in detail but would like to draw the working party's attention to a couple of points.

1. Use of the Centre for educational purposes

The Thames Explorer Trust is a charity promoting education about the Thames. Much of our work is with school groups and we have a river studies centre at the Chiswick Pier Community Waterfront. We work with school groups and adults at several locations between Teddington and the Thames Barrier.

We would certainly be interested in using the Centre to run activities for local schools to teach them about the river both locally and further afield. Because of heavy demand from schools, we are running a project to develop new river studies sites along the river and I enclose a briefing paper *Developing an Education service for the Thames in London* that outlines the project. I also enclose a copy of our schools brochure for your information.

School use would obviously take place during the school term. Adult courses and family workshops tend to take place at weekends or during holiday time. It may therefore be worth considering designing at least part of the Centre to be flexible enough to accommodate use by different groups at different times. If you would like further information about what is needed to enable educational use, I would be happy to discuss it.

Registered Charity No 1010903

Company Limited by Guarantee No 2396145. Registered Office: *The Pier House, Corney Reach Way, Chiswick, London W4 2UG*

2. A local example of a multi purpose waterfront

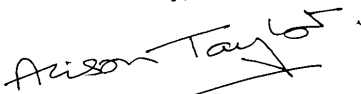
It would be worth members of your group visiting the Chiswick Pier Community Waterfront. The facilities consist of a community building used for a variety of river related purposes including education, sea cadets, a canoe club and public events, a pier for trip boats, residential moorings and visitors' moorings. The facilities are leased from Hounslow Council and are run by a charity made up of local volunteers.

Much of what is contained in your report deals with issues that have been faced and dealt with here. This includes designing facilities, securing funding, creating workable business plans and managing the facilities.

I enclose a copy of *Waterfront*, the magazine produced by the Chiswick Pier Trust, to give you an idea of what happens here.

Do get in touch if you want more information. And good luck with the project. It sounds extremely worthwhile and entirely appropriate for that particular site.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alison Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Alison Taylor,
Trust Officer

APPENDIX 7: RIVER-RELATED USERS OF THE EEL PIE CENTRE

Organisations as potential users

Member-based groups

River Thames Society is concerned with all aspects of the entire River Thames. The Society has a number of branches; the nearest to Twickenham is the Upper Tideway branch (Teddington to Putney bridge), which holds meetings, organises visits and publishes a sponsored newsletter.

Inland Waterways Association is a campaigning organisation, more broadly based than the River Thames Society. It is concerned with all navigations throughout the UK and it is open to all, whether walkers, boaters, anglers, etc. The Middlesex branch organises monthly talks and the Association also sponsors waterway restoration projects through its volunteers in the *Waterway Recovery Group*.

Boating groups

They are concerned either with specific types of craft or more general and wider based, and they include the *National Association of Boat Owners*, the *Dutch Barge Association* and the *Residential Boat Owners Association*. All have members moored locally.

There are a number of societies for owners of vintage craft. Many were built locally and gatherings of these craft have been held at Port Hampton and Trowlock Island. They include the *Association of Dunkirk Little Ships*, an association of vessels used in the evacuation of Dunkirk in 1940, which has particularly strong local connections, as many of the fleet of "little ships" were assembled at Tough's boatyard. The ADLS holds gatherings in support of other organisations such as the RNLI.

Educational organisations

Thames Explorer Trust based at Corney Reach, Chiswick. The Trust promotes education and the Thames for children and adults, school projects linked to the National curriculum, and runs summer schools and field trips to other sites.

The River Thames Boat Project. The locally based vessel *Richmond Venturer* is the focus of the group's activity, and small groups, children, the disabled and the elderly are enabled to cruise on the river in a specially adapted former Dutch motor barge. The project was instigated in the Borough.

Other river-oriented groups

River User Group Number 9 (Teddington to the Tower) is one of a number of Thames groups covering the length of the river, acting as a liaison between the Port of London Authority, the Environment Agency, yacht and rowing clubs, anglers, businesses etc. to discuss matters of concern to all river users.

Thames Landscape Strategy is a partnership of local authorities and agencies concerned with influencing the river landscape in the long term, focused at present with the area Hampton to Kew, using other groups on projects such as the *British Trust for Conservation Volunteers*.

"Friends' organisations" linked to museums include the *Docklands History Group* (hosted by the Museum of London), the *Friends of the London Canal Museum*, and the *Friends of the National Maritime Museum*.

Opportunities to get afloat

The easiest way to get afloat is to take the ferry at Marble Hill Park across to Ham House, or hire a boat from Richmond or Marble Hill. At Hammertons Ferry there are approximately 12 rowing boats and 3 canoes available for hire, and an additional five motorboats, four electrically powered, will be added to the fleet during 2000. Hammertons is one of the few surviving public ferries.

Visitors may also pass through the length of the Borough on a passenger launch from central London and locally from Kew, Richmond, Kingston and Hampton Court. Passenger craft vary considerably in size, capacity and comfort, and it is not possible at present to embark or disembark at Twickenham.

Clubs and organised groups

Rowing

Twickenham Rowing Club, based on Eel Pie Island immediately opposite The Embankment, is one of the earliest established clubs on this reach, with premises extensively used daily, every week throughout the year. It is a highly active organisation which has expanded in recent years, particularly the ladies' section. Their two boat-transporter trailers are usually stored on The Embankment, and other craft come and go during the course of the year.

Sailing

Twickenham Yacht Club is located on three mainland sites and leased midstream moorings in the backwater off the downstream bird sanctuary on Eel Pie Island. The upper dinghy park leased from the Mary Wallace Theatre is accessed from Twickenham draw dock by the Church. The Sunday race fleet boats are stored in the lower dinghy park on the riverside.

Canoeing

There is a well-established canoe club at Petersham Road, Richmond, and another at Teddington whose members train and use the reach extensively.

Angling

The slipway or draw dock and the watermen's steps are also used by the *Francis Francis Fishing Club* who operate from fishing punts. These eight craft are by tradition moored alongside the wall of The Embankment, including the section near the Bath site.

Local powered craft

There are a number of moorings in the vicinity licenced by the Port of London Authority to riparian property owners, including the commercial boatyards. *Richmond Yacht Club* with premises on Eel Pie Island has a programme of social events, and members' craft are based at a variety of locations.

Visiting cruising craft

Vessels from the east coast, Medway, or the Continent require a short-term licence from the Environment Agency to proceed above Teddington, and they may wish to remain in the Twickenham area to go through the lock early in the morning. The popularity of the Thames, Oxford Canal, Grand Union Canal "ring of waterways" has enabled an increasing number of canal-based narrow boats to pass through the area, and with the introduction at the beginning of 2000 of a co-ordinated "Gold Licence" there is every likelihood of this activity expanding.

Visiting craft are by no means all privately owned. The nearest boat hire bases are at Thames Ditton and at Southall on the Grand Union Canal. Further afield there are hire boats on the Wey Navigation and at various points along the Grand Union Canal and the Thames.

However, before it is practical to encourage the more intrepid visitor to come to Twickenham by water, there is a need for adequate mooring facilities for visiting craft with sufficient depth of water at maintained level.

Promotion of tourism, the river, and the Centre

During the summer months, the watermen's steps outside the Barmy Arms are busy with small boats visiting the pub or seeking shops or a garage for petrol. Local boat owners are not infrequently quizzed by passers-by as to the availability of boats for hire in the locality or just, "How can I get to the other side?" Visitors are curious about the history of Eel Pie Island and the "naked ladies" statuary in York House Gardens.

There is amazement when high spring tides inundate sections of the roadway, and bafflement when the river virtually drains away during the annual "draw off" when the sluices are left raised at Richmond half lock. Children and adults alike are fascinated by the opportunity to walk on the exposed riverbed discovering crabs, mussels, and waterborne debris.

As evidenced by the many questions asked by visitors and local residents alike, the river is a constant source of curiosity and fascination. Whatever the weather, the Warren footpath, the riverside and The Embankment are alive with visitors on foot, with prams or on bicycles.

APPENDIX 8: LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Cover	Twickenham Embankment, from a postcard c 1963.
Page 8	Figure 1: Twickenham pool site.
Page 11	Boatyards on Eel Pie Island, 1992. The yard beyond the mast was destroyed by fire in 1996. It is now being redeveloped.
Page 14	Figure 2: The Integrated Centre concept.
Page 19	Twickenham parish church, drawn from a postcard view of the riverside, c 1919.
Page 20	Figure 3: The conceptual design for the Eel Pie Centre.
Page 25	The Lion Boathouse, Eel Pie Island, from The Embankment.
Page 32	Sailing barge 'Pudge' at the Twickenham Yacht Club Centenary celebrations, 1997.

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