



Save Ealing's Centre

Only the Best will Do

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Dear Peter

CROSSRAIL PRESENTATION TO SAVE EALING'S CENTRE

Thank you for taking the time to visit Ealing recently to provide the representatives of Save Ealing's Centre (SEC) with an overview of Crossrail's proposals.

As mentioned, SEC is an alliance of 23 local residents associations and other groups, representing approximately 11,000 residents. While we were formed in response to a specific large scale planning application for central Ealing, we and our member associations recognise that transport and related issues are central to and underpin the future viability of our town and all future developments in it.

The SEC Group found your talk most helpful and informative. A number of concerns and questions were raised at the meeting, and we agreed to provide you with a record of them. These have been the subject of further discussion and work by the group, and have benefited from the insights provided by other visiting speakers. They can broadly be grouped into specific points about the implementation of Crossrail in Ealing, and more general observations about the operation of the Crossrail scheme.

AN INTEGRATED TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE AT EALING BROADWAY STATION

Onward journeys, especially to the residential districts to the North and South of Ealing Broadway Station are dependent on road transport by bus, taxi, private car and bicycle. TfL has stated in writing that "The current facilities are inadequate and TfL has an aspiration for a bus station to serve Ealing Broadway Station and the town centre."

The construction of Crossrail will bring substantial additional passengers to the station. Some will interchange to other rail and the underground services. Others will start or continue their journey by road or on foot at street level.

It is a universal view that the last time Ealing Broadway Station was redeveloped the result was unsatisfactory. This property, as opposed to traveller, led project resulted in the now vacant Villiers House, the current booking hall and appalling passenger links between the platforms and street level.

The arrival of Crossrail represents both a tremendous opportunity to redeem past failures and to support a stepwise increase in passenger numbers. However, it also has the potential to compound past mistakes and create additional problems. It is a "once in a lifetime" event for our town and its surrounding area.

We were concerned to learn from the presentation that Crossrail appears to have opted for what is basically a free-standing implementation at Ealing Broadway Station which fails to provide the integrated transport interchange between rail, tube, bus, taxi, and car users which Ealing needs. An approach which may fail to

Save Ealing's Centre Alliance

SEC is an alliance of over 20 Residents' Associations drawn together, as local stakeholders, in response to the proposed developments within the centre of Ealing.
SEC wants Ealing Town Centre to be regenerated in a manner that meets the needs of our future generations.

deliver the full Crossrail business case, in that many of the additional passengers would not be able to get to and from the station.

We cannot understand why there does not appear to have been any attempt to integrate Crossrail's requirements and available funding with a wider and integrated proposal to redevelop the whole station site. The Crossrail proposals should be dovetailed into a comprehensive redevelopment proposal for the whole Ealing Broadway Station site, embracing both the Crossrail/Network Rail and TfL Underground portions. Combining the capital funding streams of the stakeholders, plus the potential for commercial and/or housing development should result in a number of viable proposals.

SEC is anxious that Ealing has the best possible chance of obtaining planning proposals for such integrated development that would meet Ealing's and Crossrail's needs. The wider regeneration of Ealing Town Centre will be overwhelmingly dependent on the spending power of the additional passengers generated by Crossrail, with its links to Heathrow and the City/Docklands

We would be grateful if you could comment on the concept of an integrated transport interchange on the Ealing Broadway Site and set out the approaches and attempts which Crossrail has made to achieve one. We would be particularly interested to learn who this was discussed with at Ealing Council and at TfL.

We would also be interested to learn if any plans for an integrated transport interchange have been prepared.

BUS INTERCHANGE

Road Congestion represents an increasing challenge for Ealing. This means that increasing reliance will have to be placed on buses in order to maximise the movement of passengers by to and from the station by road. Poor bus interchanges will act as a major disincentive to the use of buses.

Many of the passengers using Ealing Broadway Station live to the North or South of the town centre and rely on buses to reach the station

Crossrail is projected to generate up to an additional 12,000 passengers during the morning 3 hour peak (27,068 minus 14,900). Many of these additional passengers will live beyond walking distance of the station. TfL is understood to have prepared projections which forecast a substantial increase in rush hour bus movements as a result of Crossrail.

The station's catchment area is indicated on the TfL map of bus routes terminating at and passing through central Ealing. It can be accessed on the TfL website at: <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/gettingaround/maps/buses/pdf/ealingbroadway-2068.pdf>

The indicative slide in your presentation showed a couple of buses outside the remodelled station. This fails to reflect the current volume of buses servicing the station, let alone any increase resulting from Crossrail. TfL has already acknowledged that the current rail/tube/bus interchange arrangements at Ealing Broadway are unacceptable. The additional Crossrail passengers would represent an impossible challenge for the existing arrangements.

SEC's view is that Ealing has run out of space for buses around Haven Green. It may be possible to increase the number of buses by doing away with the current bus stands. This would mean that no buses could terminate at Ealing Broadway. This would create many of its own problems, including unreliability of bus departure times from Ealing Broadway.

We have been told that TfL have or are investigating the option of constructing an integrated bus station over the underground portion of the station. It would seem sensible that this is designed to accommodate the additional passengers and resulting bus movements which will be generated by Crossrail, without requiring further land take on Haven Green or along the Uxbridge Road.

While we are unclear as to the amount of space which would be needed for an integrated bus station, it seems likely that there will be insufficient room above the underground platforms alone. If so space, including access routes, would be needed above the Network Rail and Crossrail platforms. The following link to an annotated Google map provides an indication of the location of an integrated bus station and its access routes both over the platforms to the south of the station and on to Haven Green.

<http://maps.google.co.uk/maps/ms?hl=en&ie=UTF8&msa=0&msid=112559324089845259232.00044931a34d64ed956c4&ll=51.514725,-0.30066&spn=0.002474,0.007145&t=h&z=18>

We are most concerned that this once in a lifetime opportunity to incorporate an integrated bus station into Crossrail's proposals for Ealing Broadway Station appears to have been overlooked, and we would be grateful for your comments and suggestions as to how it can be incorporated.

TAXIS

The current Taxi arrangements based across a busy road on Haven Green are just as unacceptable as the Bus interchange commented on by TfL.

As was pointed out during your presentation, the improved links to Heathrow and the centre of London will increase the number of travellers with heavy luggage using Ealing Broadway Station to access Crossrail. There therefore is a compelling and overwhelming requirement to accommodate an increase in Taxi movements.

It is essential that the designs for Ealing Broadway Station incorporate a seamless Taxi to Rail and Tube interchange, which is fully accessible for those with impaired mobility. The model of routing taxis alongside, or above the tracks with an escalator link, as is done at some major central London stations and TfL interchanges provides an excellent example.

We look forward to Crossrail's comments as to how this can be achieved at Ealing Broadway Station.

PICK UP AND PUT DOWN POINTS

One of the failings of the existing station is the inadequate arrangements for the existing volume of Stop and Drops. Crossrail will provide improved connections for long distance travellers, who are likely to be carrying more luggage than the average commuter. Crossrail is therefore likely to generate a disproportionate increase in the number of Stop and Drops at the station.

Passengers with mobility problems are most likely to be dependent on this facility. It would seem strange for Crossrail to improve accessibility for these travellers within the station, while making it impossible for their family or friends to drive them to or from the station. After all, demographics mean that there will be a growing number of passengers with mobility problems.

The two car bay on the indicative drawing is clearly inadequate. The Stop and Drop should be incorporated into the station complex and ideally within the integrated transport interchange.

BICYCLES

We would be grateful if you could provide us with details of the arrangements which are envisaged for bicycles in the development, including the basis for arriving at your estimate of the number of storage spaces and their location.

PLATFORM ACCESS – ESCALATORS

The Station floor plan in the version of the presentation slides you showed us suggests that there will only be two escalators linking the new booking hall to the platforms. This suggests that one escalator will be used for ascending and the other for descending passengers.

This appears to be an extremely low number of escalators for a station with this volume of passengers, especially as many of the services will connect with international travel connections and are likely to attract passengers with a substantial amount of luggage.

The population is aging and an increasing proportion of travellers are likely to be drawn from those with less than 100% mobility. Accessibility is critical if this expanding market segment is to be attracted to rail rather than road transport.

At many stations, for example at Waterloo, multiple escalators have been installed in preference to steps in order to maximise passenger movement.

Experience on the Underground suggests that additional escalators provide essential backup for failures. The separation of the two escalators by a railway track means that one of the escalators is not able to provide a viable back-up to the other in the event of failure. It is a feature of London Underground installations that their escalators are along side each other and that one can always be operated to provide upward access from their platforms.

We therefore strongly suggest that the number of escalators in the draft Crossrail proposals are revisited, with a view to at least doubling their number in paired installations.

PLATFORM ACCESS – CENTRAL LINE PLATFORMS

The relocation of the booking hall materially alters the route by which passengers will access the Central Line platforms.

At present passengers continue in a straight line via the steps linking the existing booking hall with the platform. This arrangement must facilitate high volumes of passenger movements at peak periods.

The plan attached to your presentation suggests that the majority of Central Line passengers will be expected to descend via stairs or an escalator to the Network Rail / Crossrail platform(s), and then make a sharp left-hand turn.

The double width staircase on the northern side of the new booking hall will replace the substantially wider staircase linking the current booking hall with the platforms. It is difficult to see how this reduction in staircase width will be able to cope with increased passenger volumes.

While the draft Crossrail plans include a southern staircase and escalator between the new booking halls and the middle Network Rail / Crossrail platform, this appears to be separated by railway tracks from the Central Line Platforms. This would mean that the southern staircase and escalator would provide little if any access to the booking hall for passengers using any of the underground platforms and the northern most railway platform.

We would be grateful if you could provide further information, including more detailed plans of the proposed station layout, together with Crossrail's modelling and estimates of morning and afternoon peak passenger movements within the station.

PEDESTRIAN FLOWS TO AND FROM THE STATION

We are concerned that the proposals do not adequately reflect the current and potential future pedestrian flows to and from the station, especially the increase in passengers contained in the Crossrail projections.

The majority of passengers using Ealing Broadway Station either live in, work or visit locations to the West, South or North of the station. Substantial volumes of these pedestrians cross the road in front of the station.

Major residential developments are proposed for the sites immediately to the West of the station. As envisaged by the developers and their contacts in the Council's Regeneration Team, these are likely to result in some 3,000 additional adult residents. As the units will have limited car parking, most of the residents can be expected to commute via the station.

It would therefore seem essential that an East-West pedestrian underpass is included alongside the railway tracks under the road in front of the station in order to facilitate an even flow of passengers to and from the station, and to ensure their safety from road traffic accidents.

At present the proposals you showed us appear to stop short at the station forecourt and show little integration with the town.

We would be grateful for your comments on this point and as to how a pedestrian underpass can be incorporated.

PASSENGER NUMBERS

The presentation included a summary slide which identified a substantial growth in passenger numbers. While this extract referred to the morning and afternoon peaks, presumably there would also be an increase at other times of the day.

We would find it helpful if you could share with us the underlying passenger number projections so that we can get a greater understanding of the sources and destinations of these passenger movements, together with their use of other means of transport on their journey to and from Ealing Broadway Station.

HEATHROW EFFECT

We raised the implications of the proposed Heathrow expansion during the discussion.

There seem to be two expansion options for the airport under consideration.

- Firstly, an increase in the volume of movements on the two existing runways due to the adoption of mixed mode operation.
- Secondly, the construction of a third runway whose terminal would be linked to what will become Crossrail, and would not have its own underground station.

Both expansion options have implications for the passenger traffic on Crossrail. The first because the Piccadilly line is now running at capacity and many of the additional airport users may choose to travel on Crossrail via Ealing Broadway. The second because Crossrail is the airport's chosen rail link to the terminal which will service the proposed third runway, which will not have an underground connection.

We would be grateful if you could identify for us the number of additional passengers which are expected to be generated by each option, and their implications for Crossrail passenger capacity at Ealing Broadway. In the case of the Piccadilly line, this is already at standing room only for much of the day, and it would be helpful to understand if a similar overcrowding was likely to occur on Crossrail's Heathrow services.

TIMETABLE AND SCHEDULING

We would be grateful if you could amplify the summary information contained in the slide on peak hour train movements on each stretch of the route. You mentioned that different services would travel over different stretches of the route and that some would stop at or by-pass certain stations. It would be very helpful if you could let us have details of this.

We would also appreciate an indication of the variations in service to and from Ealing Broadway across the 24 hour day, and the hours when it will be shut down for overnight maintenance.

CONSTRUCTION ACCESS AND WORKS SITE

The Crossrail website indicates that part of Haven Green has been reserved as a contractors' site.

We would strongly suggest that this should be avoided if at all possible; two alternatives exist, both of which are likely to be more satisfactory to Crossrail and far more acceptable to residents.

- The first is the discarded siding area to the East of the station beside the District Line tracks. The space is nowhere near big enough for the whole development and doesn't extend all the way to the station, but could be an important overflow site for heavy construction materials.
- The second is the former horticultural nursery site, again to the East of the station, in the triangle formed by the District Underground tracks, the Network Rail Tracks, and the A406 North Circular Road. The existing plan of works for the replacement of the A406 bridges over the railway are thought to use this site, which we believe is now owned by TfL. This site could be used and could allow a temporary road access from the A406 to the construction site.

The following link to an annotated Goggle map illustrates this solution

<http://maps.google.co.uk/maps/ms?hl=en&ie=UTF8&msa=0&msid=112559324089845259232.0004482a7fe3b31809636&t=h&z=17>

A further reason why alternative contractors' sites should be investigated is the need to identify one which would be large enough to support a comprehensive reconstruction of the whole station, rather than just the limited works currently presented by Crossrail.

TUNNEL BORE AND ROLLING STOCK DESIGN

Given the experience of the M25 and other major transport construction projects which have to operate at levels significantly above their envisaged capacity, we would be grateful if you could advise us of what if any consideration was given to constructing the tunnel section of Crossrail with a sufficiently wide bore to accommodate "double decker" rolling stock.

We understand that this type of rolling stock is operated elsewhere in the developed world and would only require a marginal increase in the diameter of the proposed Crossrail tunnel bore.

During the presentation it was mentioned that the most intensively used stretch of Crossrail would be the tunnel section, with many trains being turned around shortly after reaching the surface. It would therefore seem prudent to design in the capacity to operate larger rolling stock on this section of the route at a later date.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

There was some discussion about the Environmental Assessment which Crossrail has already prepared and which it would have to have prepared to conform to European requirements. We would be grateful if you could provide details of what has been prepared and what may still be in preparation and when any further consultation is due to start?

We look forward to your and your colleagues' written response to the above points. We would be most happy to arrange a further meeting in Ealing to discuss these matters in greater detail. We would also be happy to arrange for SEC representatives to visit your offices if that was more convenient for your specialist colleagues.

Thank you again for taking the time to visit us and for opening this dialogue.

We look forward to receiving your response to the above points.

Yours sincerely

Nick Woolven
Chairman