

## London Cycling Campaign

2 February 2017

### Bridge H14 (Monier Road Bridge)

<http://planningregister.londonlegacy.co.uk/swift/apas/run/WPHAPPDETAIL.DisplayUrl?theApnID=16/00587/REM&backURL=%3Ca%20href=wphappcriteria.display?paSearchKey=141084%3ESearch%20Criteria%3C/a%3E%20%3E%20%3Ca%20href=%27wphappsearchres.displayResultsURL?ResultID=273329%26StartIndex=1%26SortOrder=APNID%26DispResultsAs=WPHAPPSEARCHRES%26BackURL=%3Ca%20href=wphappcriteria.display?paSearchKey=141084%3ESearch%20Criteria%3C/a%3E%27%3Esearch%20Results%3C/a%3E>

This consultation response is on behalf of the London Cycling Campaign, the capital's leading cycling organisation with more than 12,000 members and 30,000 supporters. The LCC welcomes the opportunity to comment on the plans. The response is in support of the responses from Tower Hamlets Wheelers and Hackney Cycling Campaign, the borough groups, and was developed with input from the co-chairs of LCC's Infrastructure Review Group.

This response is in addition to London Cycling Campaign's original objection (hosted here: <http://planningregister.londonlegacy.co.uk/swift/apas/run/WCHDISPLAYMEDIA.showImage?theSeqNo=112292&theApnkey=6554&theModule=1>) and uploaded 28 December 2016.

LCC notes the two new additions (Noise Levels and Transport Assessment) to the documents for the planning application regarding bridges H14, H16 and the accompanying proposal to drop the requirement for a zonal plan for the area before planning permission is granted.

We also note the very large number of local resident objections to the proposal to construct a motor bridge to replace the H14 pedestrian and cycle bridge, which will generate a significant volume of through traffic across the Olympic Park and Fish Island.

In the light of the new data, which shows there is no need for an additional traffic bridge, and the residents' objections, LCC wishes to reinforce its objection to these planning applications unless a modal filter is introduced to prevent the use of the bridge and Fish Island as through traffic routes.

### Resident objections

Many of the redacted resident objections list seven key issues:

1. A new vehicle bridge will completely transform this idyllic area diverting traffic from nearby busy roads, including the A12, through Fish Island / Hackney Wick to Stratford resulting in high levels of noise and pollution. There is already a bridge just 500ft away on White Post Lane!
2. Ironically given the close proximity to the Olympic Park, numerous cyclists who value the rare and almost unique opportunity to cycle in London without the requirement to navigate traffic will need to compete with cars, trucks and buses travelling into Stratford. This area is popular in London for providing residents and visitors with the opportunity to cycle safely.

3. Residents of established Omega Works, the new development in construction now and adjacent to the proposed bridge and surrounding residential developments will suffer beyond belief. Currently living in a peaceful, residential area, the quality of living they enjoy will disappear as they will be forced to endure the awful noise of traffic outside, breathing in poisonous fumes from motorbikes, cars and double decker buses.  
Residents will also suffer a loss of view and a complete loss of privacy, particularly those residents who overlook the footbridge and adjoining green area. We point out that, although we welcome the development of some new residential flats in the area, the area looks like it is quickly becoming overdeveloped and will suffer a loss of its identity and character as a result. The addition of a new road and bridge (coupled with a new football stadium in the park) will lead to an unacceptably high level of overdevelopment. The new bridge is overbearing and out of scale.
4. The community that has established itself in Vittoria Wharf and that has been resident here for longer than the LLDC has been responsible for the Olympic Park has been served an eviction notice. The Wharf will be demolished to make way for the new planned pedestrian bridge on Stour Road. This proposal, we say, is plainly unacceptable, ill-thought and will wreak havoc on normal people's lives. The experience of the residents to date has been traumatic and little consultation with the residents has taken place.
5. We consider this proposal to be a misuse of public funds because a vehicle bridge is unwarranted and unnecessary. The links between Fish Island and the Park are sufficient. The new proposed developments will be almost car free and so we see no need for the addition of a new road and bridge. We also believe that public funding could be spent in more effective ways by investment in maintaining the character, culture and identity of peaceful, artistic, industrial Fish Island. Furthermore, we are worried that the LLDC councillors too easily agree to planning projects funded by developers and we say that the dynamics of the relationship between LLDC and the contractors, Balfour Beatty, should be reviewed by the Mayoral Office.
6. We consider that building the proposed vehicle bridge flies in the face of the Mayor's commitment to protect London's environment and clean air (Mayor promises Londoners he will protect their air). The green space on the site of the proposed bridge will be ripped up and replaced by concrete and iron. The proposed bridge will inevitably prove detrimental to local wildlife who have made the site, in a conservation area, their home. If the bridge is built the birds, bats and animals that live side by side with residents will be forced to find new, greener, safer homes.
7. Perhaps most importantly, residents of Hackney Wick have seen so many changes to their area over recent years (some for the better) but building a new bridge to accommodate buses and vehicles is simply a step too far and will transform the area from a tranquil, creative hub, which people love to live in and visit, into a monstrous traffic jam. We, the taxpayer, the residents of Fish Island and Hackney Wick, residents of Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Newham and citizens of London say hell NO to A new bridge. It simply cannot progress. There must be another way: a sensible solution. Don't build a vehicle bridge underneath a block of residential flats! Keep Fish Island green and protect London's air!

LCC shares the view that there are strong reasons not to construct a new bridge for through traffic to travel across the Olympic Park and Fish Island.

## Noise assessment

While the noise assessment suggests that the noise impacts of the H14 motor bridge will not be significant its noise maps clearly show a major increase in noise levels on the properties bordering the Lea River Navigation Canal and those bordering the bridge itself.

We question the new calculations showing the bridge will be 7m (rather than 4m) away from residential homes given that the residential first floor of Crown Wharf adjoins the bridge.

The assessment states that the bridge will be equivalent to building a 'minor road' as if this is an issue of no consequence for the residents who have previously enjoyed the quiet associated with a residential area. The assessment states the noise generated by the road is 'acceptable' citing its own staff as the judges.

"The noise levels predicted at Crown Wharf are on the lower range of similar residential properties that are located adjacent to existing small / minor roads in London."

As the numerous objections make clear, building a road that will attract more than 400 vehicles per hour will have significant noise and safety impacts.

## Transport assessment

The Arup assessment establishes, on the basis of modelling, that motor traffic levels in the Olympic Park in 2031 will not exceed 'saturation levels' whether or not bridge H14 is converted into a motor bridge. Only if a notional 20% boost is added to the 2031 motor traffic levels, do any of the routes show saturation levels exceeding 100% without bridge H14.

This 'saturation' based on a 20% increase in motor traffic levels above 2031 projections is then used to justify a conclusion that an additional bridge is necessary to provide 'resilience,' or additional capacity, for through traffic that will continue to create congestion on an unchanged street network in Hackney and Tower Hamlets. It is likely that construction of the bridge will in fact 'induce demand' and create additional motor vehicle trips – using up that 'resilience'.

Given that the LLDC is committed to reducing car dependency and promoting sustainable transport, the construction of bridge that will boost motor traffic in the Olympic Park and create additional congestion in surrounding boroughs is not justified.

The assessment does not consider that, until 2013, the White Post Lane bridge was closed for several years without notable impacts on surrounding areas. With the re-opening of the bridge the relatively small proportion of car owners on Fish Land have easy access to Stratford and Olympic Park without blighting the area with additional traffic.

In other words, the current proposals only make sense if it is assumed traffic levels go up, and nothing is done to restrain them at all – and this runs in direct opposition to the LLDC's own policies. We also note that current cycle commuting levels are very high in the zone covering Fish Island – it would be a poor outcome indeed for the LLDC if cycling levels were to fall as a consequence of increased motor traffic volumes and perceived road danger.

## **Bus routes**

The Arup assessment argues that the motor bridge will permit an additional bus connection but it does not considering the potential alternatives for bus connections. As one resident has suggested a bus route and bus stop on the Loop Road next to the H14 bridge would be readily accessible to Fish Island residents.

An approach based on rising bollards is used in Cambridge. Buses can pass but other motor vehicles cannot. This would obviously require the construction of motor bridge. In some developments such bollards are used to permit resident only access with other vehicles having to use alternative routes. Alternatively a 'bus gate' ANPR camera system could be used – which can be less effective in removing other motor vehicle traffic but generates smaller ongoing maintenance costs and can generate income from fines.

## **Severance**

The Arup study and Legacy Community Scheme both highlight 'severance' as the prime reason for the proposed H14 motor bridge. However, 'severance' has already been addressed by the construction of the H14 walking and cycling bridge, the re-opening of the White Post Lane Bridge (previously closed for 4 years), the creation of good cycling and walking links to Stratford Station, Pudding Mill Station and Hackney Wick station. Additional bus stops on the Loop Road and Wansbeck Road could further enhance connectivity. This is demonstrated by the 'severed' community's own objections to the bridge proposals.

It is notable the residents of Fish Island almost unanimously objected to the bridge rather than complain of severance. The residents rightly fear that the proposed creation of a through motor route along Monier Road will act to sever the community on Fish Island by inducing external motor vehicle traffic in significant volumes through it. We note that nearby communities in De Beauvoir Town, Walthamstow Village, and Hackney Central have all sought to filter out through traffic rather than increase it.

Officers speaking at the LLDC meeting on 19 January 2017 said that the construction of the bridge would allow for the creation of a "normal street pattern" in the area. Again, there are many examples of normal street patterns in nearby areas that do not enable through motor vehicle traffic – and these are considered successful, and are not accused of causing severance.

In fact, there is much sociological evidence that through motor vehicle traffic is one of the key creators of severance and removing it is one of the key drivers of community coherence and interaction.

## **General points about highways schemes:**

- LCC requires schemes to be designed to accommodate growth in cycling. Providing space for cycling is a more efficient use of road space than providing space for driving private motor vehicles, particularly for journeys of 5km or less. In terms of providing maximum efficiency for space and energy use, walking, cycling, then public transport are key.
- As demonstrated by the success of recent Cycle Superhighways and mini-Holland projects etc., people cycle when they feel safe. For cycling to become mainstream, a network of high-quality, direct routes separate from high volumes and/or speeds of motor vehicle traffic is required to/from all key destinations and residential areas in an area. Schemes should be planned, designed and implemented to maximise potential to increase journeys – with links to nearby amenities, residential centres, transport hubs considered from the outset.
- Spending money on cycling infrastructure has been shown to dramatically boost health outcomes in an area. Spending on cycling schemes outranks all other transport mode for return on investment according to a DfT study. Schemes which promote cycling meet TfL's "Healthy Streets" checklist. A healthy street is one where people choose to cycle.
- LCC wants, as a condition of funding, all highway development designed to London Cycling Design Standards (LCDS), with an aim for a Cycling Level of Service (CLoS) rating of 70 or above, with all "Critical Fails" eliminated.