

# Friends of Haven Green



*Keeping Haven Green at the Heart of Ealing*

## Friends of Haven Green **Comments on LBE Consultation on Ealing Broadway Interchange Proposals**

FoHG has examined the proposals for the Ealing Broadway Interchange and the plans for Haven Green. We are pleased to be able to comment on them. As befits a place so heavily used by so many people, we think the proposals merit careful consideration of their overall impact on this very important area of open space. We would like to discuss our comments more fully with Steer Davis Gleave and officers in the Council who have clearly put much thought into them.

In line with FoHG's mission statement, the starting point for our appraisal has been to enhance Haven Green as a priceless asset at the heart of our community. We seek to ensure that every avenue for enhancing the Green in line with our objectives has been explored. Haven Green is the first place in the town centre that people see when they arrive at the station and the impression that it makes is very important for the image of Ealing as a whole. The changes proposed are therefore important not just for the Green but for Ealing more generally. All changes must be done as well as possible.

We support the Council's overall approach to addressing the increase in passenger numbers expected to pass through Haven Green into Ealing Broadway Station because of Crossrail and other developments nearby. We are very pleased that in the wake of the Council's wise decision in 2008 not to approve the construction of a bus station on the east side of the Green, SDG was instructed to re-examine the options for managing the increase. Once SDG had established that Ealing's major stakeholders were not prepared to invest in an integrated interchange, we think the Council made the right decision to go for Option 1 – *'Improved and upgraded facilities including forecourt improvements'* as the option that would do least harm to Haven Green.

FoHG is also pleased that attention is at last being paid to the maintenance of this important area of open space. We are pleased that the consultation proposals show an awareness of this and give some real thought about how to address it.

However, the Option 1 decision means it will be very difficult to manage the demands the expected growth in passengers passing through Ealing Broadway station will put on the Green. Haven Green cannot cope now with the burdens placed on it and we would like to see a fuller recognition of the problems existing congestion creates. A list of these would include:

- the one way system around the Green becomes gridlocked with queuing traffic;



- buses and bus stands clog the Green, and block views into and out of it;
- the large number of pedestrians and waiting bus passengers has degraded the grass;
- otherwise law-abiding motorists are faced with heavy fines for setting down their passengers in the wrong place;
- cycle routes around the one way system are inadequate, and lead to conflicts with pedestrians;
- air quality is dangerously bad ;

If this is the situation now, what will things be like once Crossrail and other major developments in the area have been completed?

Our suggestions and comments on the Exhibition Boards are as follows:

### **Board 1: What's changing and why?**

1. The heading 'What's Happening at Ealing Broadway?' notes that there will be an increase in passenger numbers due to Crossrail. We need to know what the scale of the increase is expected to be, and how the Council assumes they will arrive at or depart the station. We need to know this for the following groups:
  - Bus Passengers
  - Motorcar passengers
  - Cyclists
  - Pedestrians
  - Taxis
  - Minicabs

It is also important to consider whether/how Crossrail will change the way passengers use the Station. For instance, how much more will Ealing Broadway be used by passengers bound for Heathrow and what will this mean for the kind of luggage they are carrying? We have already noted a significant increase in hotel space in Ealing, so how are passengers expected to transfer between the station and hotels? Should provision be made for minibuses making this transfer?

We are very concerned that the plans now being consulted on do not consider how London Buses will increase their services following the completion of Crossrail. We understand London Buses have not yet revealed their intentions but expect they will want service frequencies, if not the number of routes passing through Haven Green, to increase significantly to cater to the expected 40% increase in passengers using the Station. If this proves the case, where will these buses stop? The consultation boards do not say. Unless provision is made now the only option will be to park on the Green and this will further degrade it.

But the problem does not just relate to buses. As we explain above, because no additional capacity is to be provided, difficult choices will be needed as to which other users to prioritise. We think these choices need to be set out more clearly and their implications considered more fully. If they are not, Haven Green will become still more



congested than it is now. We discuss some of the implications as we perceive them below.

2. The 'project context' map ought to identify the extent of the area protected as common land. We attach the plan that Ealing Council used to its application to have Haven Green registered as common land in 1968. It shows that Island 1 on which part of the Cycle Hub now stands and the lay by for the 65 bus both fall within the protected area. The context map should also show the extent of the Haven Green Conservation Area, and the location of nationally and locally listed buildings. We annex a copy of this map for ease of reference.
3. We agree with many of the issues that need to be tackled as the photos illustrate them. But other important items need to be added to this list as they should all be captured at the outset. In no particular order of priority, the problems the Green now faces include:
  - Some of the most urgent landscaping issues are not identified, most particularly the degradation of the grassy areas around the bus stops.
  - Pedestrians do not have sufficient priority along the diagonal road. Buses often park across the footpath which crosses it half way along, and even if they don't they park so close that pedestrians find it hard to see round them for oncoming traffic, much of which drives too fast.
  - Unofficial bus services, including those run by the University, Sky and excursion companies use the Green to pick up and set down passengers. They are not allowed to stand at official bus stops and so wait in places where, for good reason, waiting is illegal. Crossrail and other town centre developments will exacerbate this problem unless it is strictly controlled.
  - Drainage problems in wet weather on roads and the green itself.
  - Many of the footpaths across the Green are in poor quality and need to be improved.
  - The foundations of the air raid shelter detract from the Green, especially in dry weather.
  - The signage of the cycle paths and where no cycling is allowed is inadequate.
  - The timing of the traffic lights at the northeast corner of the Green does not serve pedestrians needs.
  - There is no mention of inadequate provision for dropping-off passengers at the station.
  - There is no mention of the sub-station which is on a temporary consent and under-used.

## **Board 2: The Proposal**

### Enhancing the Gateway to Ealing.

1. As we say above, we agree with the decision not to radically alter the character of Haven Green and the Conservation Area of which it is the heart. However, this Board should explain that one of the costs of not providing new interchange facilities is that the area will become very much more congested than it is now. It will be a huge challenge to manage passenger numbers properly.



2. While it does not appear labelled on the map, we would support any proposal to widen the footpath past the shops along the East side of the Green as the text suggests. This is an urgent priority and should be accompanied by removing as much of the street clutter which impedes the crowds of pedestrians who use this important route. Are there any forecasts of how pedestrian numbers might increase on this footpath once the station has been rebuilt?
3. We are very disappointed that so little reduction in the number of bus waiting and standing areas is proposed. There will be no reduction of parking on the diagonal across the Green which is where it is needed most urgently. The only bus stands to be removed are Stand B which has encroached onto Common Land, and Stand G which means the 112 will have to share Stand F with three existing routes. Besides, as we comment above, this is BEFORE London buses have announced any service changes following Crossrail completion. So we expect the problems caused by bus congestion to grow significantly worse.
4. Our perception is that a lot of thought in these proposals has been given to meeting the requirements of cyclists using the station. While we welcome cycling as a much greener way to get around than private car, we think it essential that the interests of cyclists must not over-ride those of pedestrians whose needs seem not to have been thought about quite so carefully. Our view is that there should be a hierarchy of priority for those crossing the Green. Pedestrians first, including bus passengers, then cyclists, taxis and private car.
5. We note that all parking on the station forecourt is to be removed which we agree will make the entrance to the station much tidier. However, it is not stated where station traffic such as network rail vans which currently park on the pavement in the forecourt will park. They must not be permitted to pull up onto the newly created space.
6. Bearing in mind how many people will be using the station, many of them heading for Heathrow Airport with heavy baggage, the proposal makes far too little provision for vehicles to set down or pick up passengers close to the station. Three small laybys are to be provided in different locations which will make them hard to use, especially as they are to be shared with delivery vehicles. Two of these will require passengers to cross the main road, while the third will require a westbound driver to cut across two lanes of traffic to turn right at the traffic lights. This will be a very dangerous manoeuvre.
7. Given the constraints on passengers arriving at the station by other modes we do not see why provision for cycle parking outside the station should be unlimited. There has already been an increase in cycle parking at the new cycle hub and we fear that further bike racks will make the place extremely cluttered and out of keeping with the station as the gateway into Ealing, as well as the character of the Conservation Area in which Haven Green lies. If more cycle parking is needed it can be provided within the station building or in the Springbridge Road or BBC car parks nearby. We see no reason why some cyclists should not have to walk to the station from these two car parks which are



no further than pedestrians walk to some of the bus stops e.g the westbound 207/427/607 on the Uxbridge road or the 297 at the far end of the diagonal.

8. We agree that unnecessary street furniture should be removed including anything of a temporary nature. Most urgently, the unused cycle stands now despoiling Haven Green must go.
9. With regard to the improvements labelled on the proposal map we have the following detailed comments:
  - We greatly welcome the proposal for a build out and the raised crossing at the point where the diagonal footpath across the green crosses the diagonal road. However, we note that the build out is not actually shown on the map. We need both measures in order to stop illegal waiting here and to give better protection to pedestrians on this heavily used route.
  - We have considerable reservations about widening still further the footpath on the diagonal road. It has already been widened a few years ago and we are very reluctant to see it encroaching still further onto the Green space. By how much is it proposed to widen it and from where would the compensating land be returned?
  - We do not consider that compensation can be provided by removing the 65 bus layby. As can be seen in the Council's map showing the extent of the Common land, this layby lies within the protected area and is an encroachment onto it.
  - We think the most effective way to protect the grass around the bus stops would be with a simple rail that discourages pedestrians from straying onto the grass. This idea has been discussed on a number of occasions and we are surprised no provision is made for it. The temporary chestnut pale fencing proposed on Board three will not be an effective long-term solution.
  - Has consideration been given to siting the bus shelters in the centre of the footpath on the Diagonal road onto which they would face? Such an arrangement would leave the space behind the shelters free of waiting passengers, allowing pedestrians to pass more freely.
  - No details are provided explaining the improved crossing facilities for cyclists at Gordon Road.
  - We need better signage for the routes on which cycling is permitted and to show where it is not. Signs are best painted onto the paths themselves.
  - It is not clear how the new footpath along the Green opposite the shops on the east side of the Green will terminate. The plan suggests it will end before the taxi cabin, from where pedestrians seem to have to walk into the road. This looks highly unsatisfactory.

### **Board 3. Haven Green**

1. We are very pleased to see the proposed landscaping enhancements. These **MUST** be considered integral to the whole scheme. The following must be put in place now, lest they become overlooked as implementation proceeds and money becomes tight:
  - An implementation plan for the landscape enhancements as outlined in the Arboricultural report.
  - A ring-fenced funding plan.



- A Maintenance plan.
2. We have already commented in detail on the landscaping proposals and we trust what we have said will be taken on board. We have just a few further points to add here:
- Trees planted should be semi-mature and adequately protected in accordance with the Arboriculturists' Report.
  - The box hedging and flower beds in the northeast of the Green add little of value. To save expense they should probably be removed and the area grassed over.
  - The corner of the flower bed by the crossing on the north east corner is trampled by pedestrians taking a short cut. It needs redesigning.

#### **Board 4. Station Forecourt**

1. Without a better idea of just how Crossrail plans to redevelop the station it is difficult to comment definitively on the proposals for the forecourt. We recognise the need to phase the works to fit in with Crossrail's construction plans, but think that more or even all of the existing wall in front of the station should be removed from the start. Crossrail construction will create additional congestion and everything must be done to smooth flows into and out of the existing entrance. Projection of the hoardings south of the station entrance will give very little room for arriving passengers turning left out of the station towards the Mall.
2. In the long run we think the station forecourt should be kept clear to allow passengers easy entrance into the station, as SDG proposed in their initial concepts for Option 1. This means there should not be additional cycle parking here. Very many cycle stands have already been provided at the cycle hub, and we see no justification for despoiling the forecourt by adding the clutter of additional bike stands here. As we say above, space restrictions mean that there must be restrictions for all passengers arriving at the station, including those who come by bike. If the cycle hub proves insufficient and more spaces really are required, alternative locations including finding accommodation within the station, and the BBC and Springbridge Road car parks need to be considered – but definitely not the Common land of Haven Green.
3. We are unclear about the arrangements for the pedestrian crossing opposite the station entrance. Has there been any thought about moving the traffic lights to the north of the turn off for the diagonal, perhaps as far as the end of the new footpath along the west side of the road? We think this might make it much easier for passengers arriving at the station to cross to the taxi rank and the bike hub.
4. The drop off points proposed are totally inadequate for the passengers who will be using the station. While we understand the reasoning for installing bike stands it is essential that drop off facilities are also provided to meet the needs of people and their families for whom cycling is not an option. Hotel building in the centre will we imagine increase the no of passengers with luggage. Additional and more conveniently located drop-off points are essential.
5. We think there should be a simple finger sign immediately outside the station to help arriving passengers to orientate themselves to destinations in the town centre.



## **Board 5. Material and Street Furniture**

1. We very much support the prospect of real time travel information points. This will help passengers to find and transfer to their bus.
2. Any street furniture to be provided in or around the station must be moveable. This includes, for instance planters which often turn out to be a blockage to pedestrian flow and new bike stands

## **Board 6. Changes to Bus Arrangements**

1. We very much welcome and would support any move to reduce the numbers of buses which terminate on Haven Green. We applaud the lead the Council is taking to secure this in the case of the E10 and the 112.
2. However, as discussed elsewhere it is impossible to comment meaningfully on the proposals in the absence of any plans from London Buses as to how they will change their services when Crossrail is operational. London Buses need to explain their plans now – not just with regard to their services to Ealing Broadway, but also to other Stations along the route. One aim should be to use other stations to relieve the congestion at Ealing Broadway.
3. We would like to see an analysis here of how bus passengers interchange onto the railway. What are the numbers and what will be the most popular routes? This information is needed to ensure that the stops have been allocated to best effect.

**Greg Phelan**

**Chair Friends of Haven Green**

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Visit our website at <http://www.friendsofhavengreen.com/>



### Common Land.

Area as indicated in the successful application by Ealing Council for Haven Green to be registered as common land in 1968.



*(our shading for ease of reading)*





# Haven Green Conservation Area.

