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Sent: Fri 19 Feb 2010, 16 h 24 min 31 s

Subject: leaflet response

Dear Cyril,

Clapham Junction needs a better station. The purpose of any associated redevelopment should simply be to help pay for a better station.

At a bare minimum a better station means easier/quicker access to/from the platforms and a larger general entrance/booking hall on St John's Hill.

There seems little purpose in embarking on the latter without also embracing the former. Easier and quicker access could be achieved either by an additional overbridge, if not covering all the tracks then certainly spanning platforms 8 to 17, or by a substantially widened subway, or by an additional subway. I suspect a new bridge would be the easiest of the three to effect. Its installation should then enable the existing subway to be restricted to a platform interchange function.

A perfectly adequate new entrance/booking hall plus perhaps galleried shops with offices or flats above (whatever is most profitable), could be built on the sites of the existing Stop & Shop complex plus the Fitness First gym, possibly also including the site of the anomalous Windsor Castle pub. All this would link with the revived Parcels Office entrance to the existing bridge, as well as providing access to a new bridge or subway. I would not be in favour of a "landmark" building here, especially not any kind of high rise. I would be happy to accept an architecturally sensitive mixed development on the Shop/Gym/Pub site of four or five storeys at street side stepping up and back to perhaps eight stories at track side.

At the end of the day whatever decisions are potentially made about Clapham Junction will be driven by available money, which will be in short supply. So more grandiose schemes are unlikely to find any favour for the foreseeable future. If there can genuinely be no enhancement of the station's facilities, even to the modest levels outlined above, without substantial sums being raised to pay for them by further associated redevelopment, then it may be necessary to contemplate knocking down and rebuilding in some fashion the office blocks on either side of the Falcon Pub. These blocks are not of any architectural distinction, but they are inoffensive and, I imagine, functional. They in no way interfere with the purposes of the station. Destroying them would seem to me to be an act of excess and it should only be a last resort. But it remains a possibility.

An alternative and preferable source of potential revenue in my opinion would be the empty land Network Rail owns at the western edge of Clapham Junction station backing onto Plough Road. This substantial and fairly isolated space currently accommodates nothing except railway sidings. A seven or eight storey, say, complex could easily be constructed here above the sidings. It would harmonise tolerably well with the adjacent block of flats on Grant Road, which is itself close to the blocks on the Winstanley Estate. This is a far more appropriate location for a large scale building project than anywhere in the middle of Clapham Junction town centre, which would inevitably create years of chaos in its construction.

What should the strategy of the CJAG be? This public consultation should enable us to ascertain whether there is any kind of very general consensus position over the station within the local community. If so (with luck!), it might be possible to put together a rough outline for potential improvements/redevelopments at Clapham Junction which could legitimately be said to reflect local opinion. By engaging with some suitable professionals, it might then be possible to put some very rough costings on this outline.

Any discussion or negotiation about the future of the station with Network Rail and other relevant parties is always going to boil down to an argument about money. It will be good to be fore-armed with some figures and to have a tangible proposal, however basic. But to get to this stage would probably require expenditure, which would probably require fund-raising, a whole different ball game!

best wishes, David