



Barn Elms Sports Ground

Quick Reference Guide

1. Site Selection

Preferred sites, including Barn Elms, have been identified in accordance with our Site Selection Methodology (which is available on the consultation website). The site selection process involved a filtering approach, passing sites through increasingly detailed levels of assessment to move from a long list to a draft short list, short list and preferred sites.

Barn Elms was the only site in this area assessed as suitable for short-listing for a main tunnel shaft site and following further assessment, was judged suitable by engineering, planning, environment, property and community experts. Four potential sites in this area were shortlisted for the CSO connection site and Barn Elms was also identified as the preferred site for the CSO connection as it offered the opportunity to combine the shaft and CSO works on a single site, reducing overall impact.

It was judged that the existing site constraints could be addressed adequately by positioning the site activities appropriately and providing suitable construction mitigation to reduce the impact on the surroundings. Mitigation measures will be developed further for each site that we are taking forward and consulted on in the next round of consultation.

Hammersmith Pumping Station site

Barn Elms has a number of advantages over Hammersmith Pumping Station as a main tunnel drive site. Both sites have residential property in fairly close proximity, but the Barn Elms site is further away from dwellings than the Hammersmith site. The site has residential property in close proximity and access routes to the site are even more constrained than at Barn Elms. In addition, the frontage onto the river at Hammersmith is not wide enough to accommodate the width of jetty facilities required which would result in them overhanging adjacent river frontage, the navigation channel is narrower and the location on the river bend would present a greater hazard to navigation. Furthermore, Barn Elms location on the river makes it more suitable as a location to set up jetty facilities that we need to transport excavated material away.

We are proposing to use the vacant former industrial site adjacent to our existing pumping station on Chancellors Road in Hammersmith for the construction of a reception site for the main tunnel, a connection tunnel to Acton and to connect the local combined sewer overflow (CSO) to the main tunnel. The site was assessed as being less suitable than Barn Elms as the location for a main shaft site from which to drive the main tunnel as the whole of the currently vacant site would be needed.

This site was not considered suitable as a main tunnel drive site due to an extant planning approval for the redevelopment of the site, the subsequent high acquisition costs, the high probability that construction work on the development would start prior to construction of the Thames Tunnel offering greater risk that the site would be lost to the project and also the close proximity of a considerable number of existing residential properties.

The site was assessed as suitable for a reception site as only part of the site would be needed and that it may be possible to obtain this via negotiation. The amount of material arising from the proposed reception site, CSO connection and connection tunnel to Acton is less than that for the main tunnel construction and it may therefore be possible to use the river at Hammersmith for these operations, though this will need to be investigated further.

2. Use of the River

How much are you hoping to use the river for transporting materials?

It is our clear intention to maximise use of the River Thames where practical and cost effective to do so. We will be undertaking further detailed studies and ongoing engagement will be required to help us develop our proposals.

Our studies to date suggest that we could use river transport for the removal of excavated material from the Barn Elms site and we believe it is technically feasible to create a new jetty in this location. We are confident that the barge movements that we require at Barn Elms is within the capacity of the river without having an unacceptable impact on other river users.

Jetties

Will the boat race be affected and what about other river users?

As part of the consultation process, we are in dialogue with a wide range of river users, including the organisers of the Boat Race, to help us develop the design of the tunnel so that its construction impact on their activities is kept as far as possible to a minimum. We see no reason why the Boat Race should not continue to be staged and will work hard with the organisers to ensure it does. We are also speaking with those affected by our plans to understand the impact of our works on the local community, recreational and river users. At this stage, we anticipate that access to all the boathouses along the Embankment will be unaffected and that river users will continue to enjoy access to the river

We appreciate that recreational river use is very significant upstream of Putney Bridge and also that the depth and width of the navigable channel is restricted compared with other parts of the river. As a result, we recognise there could be limitations on what could be achieved by river without compromising safety or significantly affecting the existing river use by others. We are also consulting and working closely with the PLA to ensure navigational safety and use of the river by others users is not significantly compromised.

For the short-listed sites located close to Hammersmith Bridge, our assessments indicate that the navigational capacity of the river would be insufficient to provide a practical solution for the removal of excavated material from a main tunnel drive. Excavated material arising from shaft or connection tunnel construction is less than that for the main tunnel construction and it may be possible to use the river at Hammersmith for these operations, and again this will need to be investigated further.

3. Environment

Impact on the Wetlands Centre and surrounding residential areas

We are aware of the sensitivity of this site both in terms of it being an important asset to the community, its setting and its location to surrounding residential areas, for recreational activities, as well as for its rich ecology. We take very seriously our obligation to mitigate the impact of our works on the local environment, and as you would expect for a project of this size, a full Environmental Impact Assessment will be submitted as part of our planning approval process for the Thames Tunnel. We intend to work very closely with the local borough, local residents and other interested groups to minimise both the construction and permanent impact of any works.

4. Barn Elms Construction Activity

We do not propose to illuminate the site after construction, except during routine or emergency maintenance visits. Our plan at this stage is to eliminate the need for a fenced area as we believe this could result in the area becoming a trap for litter and limit the area of land that we can hand back after the construction period. Instead our proposals are to create above ground structures that are secure and will blend into the existing environment as far as possible. At Barn Elms, our structures would be located within the existing sports field perimeter fencing and so we believe there would be an element of security in place to prevent access to them directly from the Thames Path.

Thames Path Access

We recognise that the proposed works would need to be achieved while still maintaining access along the Thames Path. Details of how access would be maintained, should this site be used, will be developed as the project progresses

Traffic – Access Routes

Even with our use of the river for transporting materials, there would still be a need for some vehicles to access the Barn Elms site via the local roads. At present, we are consulting on two possible access routes across the playing fields to reach the proposed worksite, though it is possible that additional options will emerge during the consultation process. Option one would involve a dedicated route along the southern perimeter of the sports field and connect to Rocks Lane. The second option would be to share the existing access passing through the sports field and connect to Queen Elizabeth Walk. Beyond this, we have not yet determined the routes any construction traffic would use.

A third access has been suggested during the public consultation sessions which we are currently reviewing. This access would require a temporary crossing over the Beverley Brook watercourse, pass across the Lower Putney Common in an approximate north / south direction and connect to the Lower Richmond Road carriageway to the south.

We are currently reviewing the comments received to date about access alternatives and will continue to assess other suggestions made during the consultation process. It is currently proposed that any temporary access route would be removed and the land appropriately reinstated upon completion of construction at the Barn Elms site.

Traffic – Congestion

We recognise that in common with much of London, the road network in the area around the proposed Barn Elms site suffers from congestion at peak times. We will look to identify a viable access route which minimises additional impact on the road network and local residents. This process will include conducting detailed Traffic Impact Assessments on the surrounding streets to identify current usage and capacity levels, as well as discussions with Transport for London and relevant local authorities.

Tunnelling Strategy

Even though we have a preferred route and tunnelling strategy, we are still looking at all the sites and potential tunnelling options that are available to us and continuing to assess their viability. Our preferred tunnelling strategy is to drive the tunnel boring machine from Barn Elms east to Tideway Walk and then North to Hammersmith Pumping Station but we will need to look at this again in light of the comments we receive from the public consultation.

5. Compensation

Thames Water recognises the potential for impact on property in the vicinity of its work sites and is working towards mitigating that impact as an integral part of the Phase 1 and Phase 2 consultations. The potential for schemes of this nature to blight property during the planning process has long been recognised and provisions for protecting owners and occupiers are set out in The Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

In parallel with the statutory regime, Thames Water is proposing to introduce a discretionary policy for dealing with exceptional hardship cases that may arise prior to the project detail being finalised or to deal with situations where land is not required for the scheme but may nevertheless be affected by it and owners have an exceptional need for assistance.

The details of this policy are still being finalised. The policy will set out the criteria that must be met to qualify for assistance and will be subject to public consultation. It is currently anticipated that the policy will be introduced in Spring 2011.

6. Once we have finished on site

When we have completed our works we intend to return as much of the land as is practicable to its previous condition. Where this is not possible we will work with the local authority, the local community and other interested parties to agree on how best to restore the area affected.

We are acutely aware of the sensitivity of this site, including its importance to the community. We take very seriously our obligation to minimise and mitigate the impact of our works on the local environment, including noise and traffic concerns, as well as the visual impact and appropriateness of the final structures. As you would expect for a project of this size, a full environmental impact assessment will be submitted as part of our submission for planning approval planned for 2012.

Odour

We believe that, based on how the tunnel system will operate and our experience with other large sewer interception systems, odours and air released from the tunnel system will not be a problem in the vicinity of shafts and facilities. We have developed a robust strategy to control air movement, provide air treatment when necessary and therefore avoid odour problems. This strategy involves ventilating the tunnel when not in use, monitoring the system for odours and if necessary treating air leaving the tunnel at strategically located treatment facilities. We are designing the system so that we do not cause an odour nuisance in the vicinity of the shafts and air treatment facilities.