

To: George McKenzie

Kentish Town Planning Framework

This response to the initial consultation on the Kentish Town Planning Framework is from Camden Cycling Campaign, the local borough group of London Cycling Campaign (LCC). We represent the interests of cyclists living or working in Camden and aim to expand the opportunities for all to cycle safely in the borough. We have discussed this consultation internally by email and online and have viewed the exhibition and studied the online material provided. We have read the Kentish Town and Dartmouth Park (Draft) Neighbourhood Forum Plans and believe that our discussion of permeability is consistent with these.

Introduction

We are pleased to have the opportunity to comment at this early stage and hope that Camden will be robust in developing a strong framework and, more importantly, making sure it is used as the basis for any planning decisions.

We will confine our comments to matters that relate to cycling within and to/from the site and make a brief comment on cycle storage and parking facilities.

Background

The site is severed by three railway lines and there are currently no public routes through it. Most of the surrounding roads are very busy with motor traffic and have very poor air quality and are therefore very inhospitable for cyclists and pedestrians. The exception is Grafton Road, which is protected by a tidal-flow system at the north end, which prevents motor traffic from entering from the north in the a.m. peak and exiting to the north in the p.m. peak. This has been very successful in reducing motor traffic at all hours of the day.

Any development must open up routes through the site that are motor traffic-free and also must address the issues on surrounding roads, especially Kentish Town Road, Highgate Road and Gordon House/Mansfield Road. Access for motor vehicles must not create through routes.

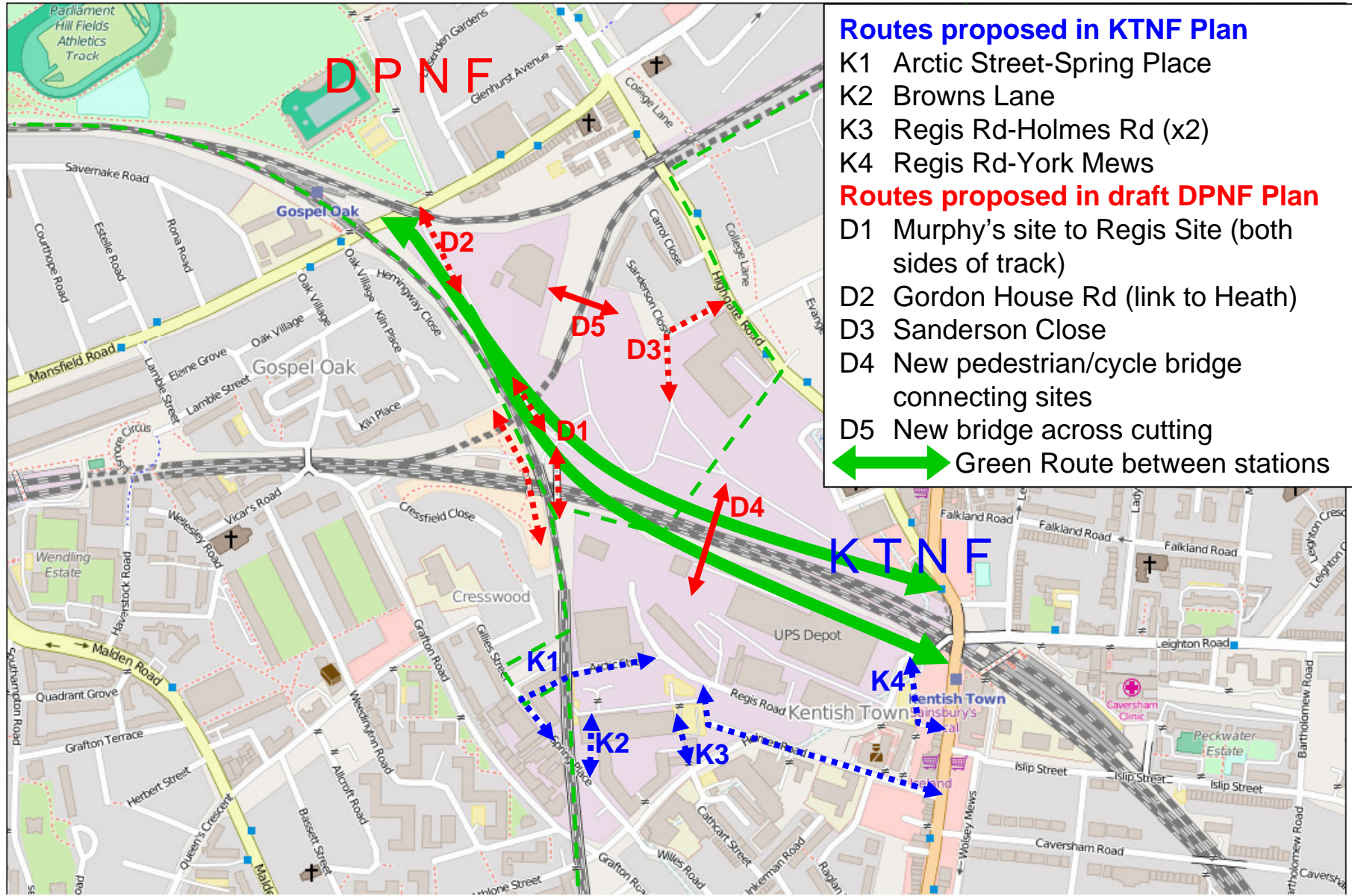
Permeability

The permeability problems in Kentish Town caused by the many railway lines passing through it are notorious. Development of the sites will offer once-in-a-lifetime opportunities for increased permeability, allowing pedestrians and cyclists to avoid the heavily trafficked surrounding roads as well as offering safe and attractive routes into the site.

The map on the next page shows some suggestions and is consistent with the relevant neighbourhood plans. Some of these permeability improvements (shown in dashed lines) already exist and merely require recognition, protection and opening to the public. Others (solid lines) represent new bridges over the railway tracks. It is recognised that these would be more expensive, but at least one (D5 on our map) is over a cutting and therefore would need less infrastructure and space to implement.

We also encourage Camden to take advantage of the opportunity for a link between Gospel Oak and Kentish Town stations (shown as a green arrow). This would be a great benefit for pedestrians and cyclists.

Permeability Proposals for Murphy/Regis Road Sites



Routes proposed in KTNF Plan

- K1 Arctic Street-Spring Place
- K2 Browns Lane
- K3 Regis Rd-Holmes Rd (x2)
- K4 Regis Rd-York Mews

Routes proposed in draft DPNF Plan

- D1 Murphy's site to Regis Site (both sides of track)
- D2 Gordon House Rd (link to Heath)
- D3 Sanderson Close
- D4 New pedestrian/cycle bridge connecting sites
- D5 New bridge across cutting

←→ Green Route between stations

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|------------------------------|---|
| Neighbourhood Forum Boundary | Uses existing infrastructure New bridges over cuttings |
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Surrounding Roads

There is a danger that development will increase pressure on surrounding roads. This must be avoided at all costs and, in fact, every opportunity should be taken to reduce motor traffic in the area. This is key because there is no point in meeting the London and Camden guidelines on cycle storage and parking if people feel unable to cycle to and from the area. So, for example, any office and residential development should be car-free and industrial use should favour businesses that do not attract significant motor vehicle movements.

We have a specific concern about Grafton Road which is currently relatively quiet and is a signed cycle route. It is important that it should not become a back-entrance to the site for motor vehicles, so, for example, the permeability improvements (particularly K1 and K2 on our map) in the southern part of the site should be for pedestrians and cyclists only.

Public Transport

We are very concerned about the impact on public transport, especially the Underground and Thameslink at Kentish Town and the Overground at Gospel Oak. The mix of use of the site will be key (for example, a large amount of residential development will severely increase the a.m. and p.m. pressure, whereas office and light industry should generate the opposite flow). The framework should include predictions of the likely impact and measures to mitigate it. Of course, safe and comfortable cycle routes in the surrounding area will be part of the solution.

Cycle Storage and Parking

From previous experience, we are relatively confident that all developments will meet the London Plan standards for Cycle Storage and Parking, as adopted by Camden. However, this should be explicitly written into the framework document. Additionally, it is important that cycle storage should be easy to reach and accessible to people with reduced mobility (many of whom use cycles as a mobility aid). So, for example, storage should be at ground level with easy access, or, if this is not practical, accessible by gentle ramps and/or lifts.

Please acknowledge receipt of this response. We would be very happy to discuss any aspect of our comments; contact details are below.

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