

South Kensington Station

Presentation to Residents

Christie's, Wednesday 23 March 2016 at 6.30 pm

Questions and comments from residents with TfL's responses:

1. Can more be done to address the entrance stairs from the arcade for those with children.

A new entrance is proposed from the ticket hall to Thurloe Street. This entrance will include both a stair and a lift. The stair will provide the additional capacity for the expected demand. Families with pushchairs and persons with reduced mobility will be encouraged to use the lift to access the ticket hall.

2. Why so late for a lift?

Response: The construction of the lifts will be coordinated with the development around the station to take advantage of construction and financial linkages. The initial stage of the station upgrade will provide some enabling structures for the lifts to the District line platforms.

3. Why not just provide a ramp out to Pelham Street?

Response: The station buildings adjacent to Pelham Street (the 'Ox-blood building') house a number of operational rooms for the station staff in addition to ventilation shafts that extend to the Piccadilly line platforms. These shafts will be used to provide step-free access to/from the Piccadilly line platforms and emergency access to Pelham Street. A compliant ramp from the ticket hall in this area would be an enormous structure and as a minimum would require removing these accommodation units and conflict with the proposed SFA solution to and from the Piccadilly line.

4. Will the lifts serve both platforms?

Response: Yes – lifts from the ticket hall will serve all platforms.

5. Will the lifts cope with the demand?

Response: The lifts have been sized based on the expected future demand at the station. Where there are physical constraints from the existing station, designated waiting areas have been provided within the design.

6. Why can't you install escalators to and from the ticket hall?

Response: The rise from the arcade to the ticket hall is approximately 2.3 m. The use of escalators is recommended when the rise is greater than 5 m. It has been found that short-rise escalators have increased incidents of slips and trips due to the short preparation time to get on/off. In addition escalators require significantly more space compared to stairs, in part because of the additional "run-off" space.

7. Could the emergency exit to Thurloe Square end up as a public exit?

Response: No. It is only being sized to manage passenger flows in an emergency. As a public exit it would need to be significantly larger than the current design.

8. Why is this second exit needed when its not present at so many other stations?

Response: Whenever a station is significantly altered there is a requirement to upgrade the station to meet the latest legislative requirements which include a second means of escape from platforms. When Gloucester Road was altered a second means of escape was provided at the western end of the District and Circle line platforms to Cromwell Road.

9. Why don't you reuse the old lift area from Pelham Street instead of Thurloe Street.

Response: The lift shafts within the building along Pelham Street (the 'Ox-blood building') will be used to provide SFA from ticket hall to the Piccadilly line. In an emergency, it is proposed for the lift to come to surface level to provide a protected route for persons with reduced mobility. Unfortunately the original upper lift landings are located above street level and a number of steps have to be negotiated to return to the pavement.

A new entrance at this location would conflict with the proposal to provide SFA to the Piccadilly line.

10. Why don't other stations have such emergency exits?

Response: As TfL delivers necessary improvement works across the Underground, it is necessary to improve the safety for our customers, in this instance delivering a new fire exit to Thurloe Square Bridge that provides a direct means of exiting the station. In the interim, the station has a robust emergency strategy, agreed with the London Fire Brigade, that will continue to manage passenger safety.

11. How does the design approach announce this is South Kensington rather than just any other station.

Response: The design approach has been developed in partnership with local residents, customers and officers/counsellors at the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The importance of the design ensures that the features of the eastbound platform, namely the brick arch revetments are emphasised. However, the important character of the station is reflected within the canopy design, that uses contemporary materials to echo the historic features, namely the style of the Edwardian canopy that was once installed on this platform.

12. Have you considered other shapes for the glass canopy which clashes with the arches.

Response: Options have been developed and discussed with stakeholders for the right approach at South Kensington station

13. What proportion of the 38 million users go along the long Exhibition Road subway?

Response: Around 54% of users access and egress the station via the subway, so approximately 20.5 million. However it should be noted that the numbers and direction of flow vary throughout the day and can be weather dependent.

14. Could you syphon off museum goers with an exit only route?

Response: The Exhibition Road subway, in addition to acting as an entrance to the station, is also a safe means of crossing the Cromwell Road. Due to the large number of tourists using the station, signage is unlikely to prevent passengers trying to access the station through the subway so this approach would require active control at the entrances to the subway.

15. The canopy design still cuts through the arches.

Response: The balance and use of glass and metal provides views of the brick arches, whilst the inclusion of the traditional District and Circle line colour palette, ensures that the character of South Kensington station is sustained and becomes recognisable to visitors.

16. How will you manage the construction disruption and factor in half term and school holiday periods?

Response: A construction programme is currently being prepared and these comments will be taken into account.

17. Criticism of the reappearance of two year old drawings showing the around station proposals. Nothing at all shown on restoration of the Thurloe Street shop fronts despite the material which has been shared through the working group. Most people are keen to see it properly restored with a sensitive approach.

Response: Thank you to the Brompton Association for giving us design drawings and illustrations of our Thurloe Street building. We are considering them as we develop the building design proposals. TfL's objectives include respectful restoration, good quality design and a scale and uses that are well integrated and in-keeping with the character of South Kensington.

18. Traffic on Pelham Street is considerable so the emergency exit makes no sense. The street is also narrow and shops and housing is going to be difficult.

Response: The emergency exit is proposed to connect to Thurloe Square mid-way along the bridge in an area where traffic is lighter and there are no immediate residencies.

We'll consider and check traffic and access constraints as we develop our access strategies and design proposals.

19. How many storeys along Pelham Street is considered respectful?

Response: We haven't yet formed an opinion on the scale. We'll be informed by both the massing of the street opposite and the historic precedent of the buildings that were demolished in the early 1970s. Proposals will be developed for discussion in future consultation.

20. Along Thurloe Street there is an opportunity for shop fronts to be restored as originally built.

Response: Acknowledged. We will consider this approach.

21. Concern about Pelham Street traffic and servicing.

Response: Acknowledged. Development proposals will need to be properly considered for both traffic and servicing accessibility.

22. What is the position of the existing leaseholders and tenants?

Response: We value our relationships with our tenants. Accordingly, we will endeavour where possible to mitigate the impact on them of new development, including by giving them as much notice and warning as possible. In all cases we will act lawfully.

23. Will one or two shops be lost on Thurloe Street to achieve the new station entrance?

Response: We'll know once the design is progressed further. At least one shop will be lost with a new Thurloe Street station entrance.

24. Are you working closely with the museums and the other institutions?

Response: Yes we hold regular meetings. We plan to develop our proposals through consultation with all local stakeholders.

25. Could you have a longer escalator run to overcome the challenges explained earlier?

Response: Escalators from the arcade directly to the District line platforms are likely to conflict with the running tunnels and require a much more comprehensive redevelopment of the ticket hall to provide revenue control and the additional "run-off" space required by an escalator (6 m top and bottom) over and above a stair (4m top and bottom). This approach is not preferred.

26. What relief do you expect a Crossrail station on the Kings Road to provide?

Response: The introduction of Crossrail at Kings Road provides a slight reduction in passenger demand at South Kensington station. Passengers will have the option to travel from Kings Road station, instead of South Kensington, due to its close proximity.