

Network Rail

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Mr. Christopher Thomas
c/o Mrs Samantha Timms
Town Hall
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6th May 2008

Dear Mr. Thomas

Thank you for your recent letter to Network Rail's Media Relations Manager dated 27 April 2008. I have been asked to respond, as the issues you have raised fall within my area of responsibility.

Former Ritz Building Cinema Site

As you have pointed out the former Ritz Cinema site lies over Grove Hill Tunnel. Network Rail owns this infrastructure and therefore are required to be consulted prior to any development that is taking place on the site above it.

Network Rail is aware of the site and furthermore the competition recently held by local authority to develop a concept design. As the competition name 'concepts' suggested, Network Rail was not given any specific details of the designs, nor were Network Rail consulted with any of the design contestants. We therefore by any means have not been holding up the process of demolition.

Network Rail has now been informed of the winner of this competition and is aware that plans are now moving forward. We are pleased to report that the consulting engineers for this project have now been in contact and Network Rail can now start working with them on details of the development, including potential demolition of the existing building taking in consideration of the impact on the railway.

Refurbishment of Tunbridge Wells mainline railway station

Tunbridge Wells station has been selected as part of the National Stations Improvements Programme (NSIP) which looks at improvements to stations across the country's rail network. Together with the train operator (Southeastern) and other stakeholders, plans for Tunbridge Wells will be developed to look at potential improvements over the coming years, more specifically the period 2009-2014.

Funding for the NSIP programme consists of £150m announced as part of the Government's July 2007 White Paper on Delivering A Sustainable Railway. NSIP also looks at potential third party funding for improvements.



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Although Network Rail are in relatively early stages with this project, NSIP looks at a wide-range of potential improvements, including station buildings, redecoration, toilet facilities, lighting, waiting facilities, signage, security enhancements and passenger information.

Improvements at Tunbridge Wells do have to take into account the fact that the station is a listed structure. Network Rail will be further developing plans for the station over the coming months, when we expect to have more concrete plans and timescales in place for the station.

I hope this information is useful and gives you a better understanding of Network Rail's point of view with both the former Ritz building cinema site and the proposed refurbishment of Tunbridge Wells mainline railway station.

Yours sincerely,

Erin Tainsh
Community Relations Advisor L & SE