

James Sayer to?

GEO/MAN/1

1515

Old Palace Yard 18<sup>th</sup> March 1773.

D<sup>r</sup> Sir

Having communicated to you, the proceedings of the inhabitants of Richmond towards obtaining a bridge there; give me leave to explain myself further on this subject; so far as regards the part I have acted in it, in hopes for yr advice and assistance, how to conduct myself; <sup>and</sup> finding this business grows more nice and difficult than I at first imagined from the opposition of the owners of the land on the opposite shore, the disappointment of the lessee of the ferry in being prevented from erecting a bridge so much to his advantage; and the ill humour of the inhabitants in not receiving support in their application to parliament. I can't but not thoroughly consider these difficulties, or probably I might have been deterred from interfering in this business, <sup>indeed</sup> my motives for doing it, were from a persuasion that a bridge wou<sup>d</sup> be pleasing to their Majestys, and of utility both to the town and public, and the more so, if it was erected upon a disinterested and public spirited plan, and having reason to believe their M<sup>ties</sup> wished to have their foot lane shut up, I thought the application to parliament for the bridge, wou<sup>d</sup> be a favourable opportunity to accomplish it, as I imagined the inhabitants might be induced from the hopes of assistance in their application, and a proper recompence, to join in a petition to Parliament for leave to add a clause in the bridge bill, to enable Her Majesty, Lady of the manor, to shut up this lane. For these reasons, the beginning of last summer I called upon several of the principal inhabitants to fulfill the promise they made me of endeavouring to have an elegant stone bridge under their own direction, in case the lessee of the ferry was prevented from erecting one. This they most readily complied with, and several general meetings of the inhabitants were had, to

take the same into consideration, when they settled the plan, and appointed a  
Committee to carry it into execution. At these meetings I was often called upon to know  
if the town might expect the countenance and approbation of their Majesties; to which  
I could only answer, that I had not the honours of knowing their M<sup>ts</sup> sentiments, neither  
could I presume to say how those high personages stood affected in their intended  
application for a bridge, but flatter'd myself that a bridge would be agreeable, as it would  
open a more easy communication into the county of Middlesex; in this I was contradicted  
by one or two, who took upon them to declare they believed a bridge would not be agreeable,  
and this notion has been propagated and prevails among many. S<sup>r</sup> Wm<sup>ts</sup> Dineen having  
a few days ago told me he met with Lord Pelham at court the Sunday preceding, who  
assured him a bridge at Richmond was not agreeable to their Majesties, & therefore they  
would not countenance the inhabitants in their application to Parliament, and that he  
had heard the same from several other persons of rank, and that a bridge was a mere  
whim of the lower inhabitants. This I durst not presume to contradict; except the last  
that all the settled inhabitants approved of the plan, among whom were many persons of  
great name and reputation and not the lower sort only. Hence you may perceive how  
disagreeable is my present situation, not knowing how to act or proceed. I did venture  
once or twice last summer, when I had the honour to be admitted into the presence of  
a great personage, to mention the intentions of the inhabitants relative to a bridge, but  
fearful I had been guilty of presumption in so doing, durst never afterwards take  
any further notice of it. I also by desire of the town had the honour of communicating  
the intentions of the inhabitants to Her Majesty, which met with a favourable reception,  
but even there, I have been fearful of saying any thing further about it, till the other  
day, the inhabitants having desired me to know of Her M<sup>ty</sup> if Her M<sup>ty</sup> was desirous of  
having Fero foot lane shut up, if so, they would call a general meeting of the town to take  
the sense of the inhabitants upon it, not doubting but it would readily be complied with, on  
having a proper recompence for parting with it; and being inform'd it would be agreeable,  
they intend to mention it to the bridge committee, who meet on Monday next, and then  
call a general meeting, but what recompence they expect I can't say, not having yet  
fully considered of it. But I might presume to give my opinion, as it now strikes me,

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and as the mode of obtaining a power for shutting up this lane, must be by a petition of the inhabitants to the house of Commons, taking notice that a Bill is depending there for building a bridge, and that the lane is become of little or no benefit to the inhabitants, and dangerous to persons passing along it, from its length and privacy, and that they having reason to believe the shutting it up soon<sup>d</sup> be agreeable to Her M: Lady of the manor, who was willing to give such a recompence to the town for parting with it, which will promote and encourage the proposed plan of a bridge, therefore they pray that a clause may be inserted in the bill to enable Her M: to shut up the same. I sho<sup>d</sup> think if such recompence was the inheritance and lease of the ferry, as this will be connected with the subject matter of a bridge, intended by the bill, will promote the undertaking, by lessening the expence, and encourage persons to lend money towards building it, and support the Allegations in the preamble, that a bridge will be of utility to the town, and the sooner it is free, the more advantageous it must be to the inhabitants. These are my present thoughts, which I throw out with great diffidence for further consideration.

I find Mr: Windham has assigned his lease in the ferry to Mr: Holland but suspect it is only in trust for the former, that his name may not be made use of, and I am inclined to think there was some connection between Mr: Windham, Mr: Robinson, Mr: John Phillips, and Mr: King the ferryman, that if they could have obtained a proprietary bridge, they were all to be part owners of it, but seeing themselves disappointed, and that a bridge is intended to be built upon a more liberal and disinterested plan. I sho<sup>d</sup> imagine they will now part with the lease of the ferry for a fair and equitable consideration, and more particularly to Her M: was Mr: Robinson, who I apprehend has great influence over Mr: Holland, and who knows the value of the lease, to be directed to treat in Her M: name with him for the purchase of it; which I imagine he may easily accomplish. I think he once last summer was calculating the value of it and seem'd to think it worth £2,000 or 2,500. supposing the clear profits of the ferry, after paying the rent, the charge of boats and men, to amount one year with another to £200. and 26 years of the term yet to come, however after obtaining a true account of the profits for two or three years past I sho<sup>d</sup> think the value might easily be calculated by Mr: Robinson, who is accustomed to things of this nature, which I sho<sup>d</sup> think cannot come to so large a

Sum and appchernd the lease ought to be valued according to the rent paid  
the ferryman, and not according to his profits which arise chiefly by his care  
diligence and labour, however this I also submit to yr consideration. I have thus  
ventured to give you my sentiments relative to the proposed bridge & shutting up  
the lane, all which is submitted to your consideration; assuring you that my conduct  
in it proceeds from a zeal for their Majesties service, I hope this will find you  
better and that you will believe me to be Sir

Yr most obedient and faithful  
humble Servant

A. Sayer