

Westminster City Council

Town Planning & Building Control
Westminster City Council
PO Box 732
Redhill, RH1 9FL

westminster.gov.uk



Your ref:
My ref: 23/07880/OBS

Please reply to: Nikki Mitchell

Email: southplanningteam@westminster.gov.uk

Town Planning & Building Control
Westminster City Council
PO Box 732
Redhill, 9FL

15 November 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

The City Council has now considered the proposals described below and has decided to RAISE OBJECTION for the reasons stated.

SCHEDULE

Application No: 23/07880/OBS

Application Date:

Date Received: 14.11.2023

Date Amended: 14.11.2023

Plan Nos:

Address: High Holborn, London Borough Of Camden, London,

Proposal: Redevelopment of Selkirk House, 166 High Holborn and 1 Museum Street following the substantial demolition of the existing NCP car park and former Travelodge Hotel to provide a mixed-use scheme, providing office, residential, and town centre uses at ground floor level. Works of part-demolition and refurbishment to 10-12 Museum Street, 35-41 New Oxford Street, and 16A-18 West Central Street to provide further town centre ground floor uses and residential floorspace, including affordable housing provision. Provision of new public realm including a new pedestrian route through the site to link West Central Street with High Holborn. Relocation of cycle hire docking stations on High Holborn.

See next page for reasons for objection.

Yours faithfully



Deirdra Armsby
Director of Town Planning & Building Control

Reason(s) for Objection:**1 WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL OBJECTS**

The City Council considers the proposed building to cause a degree of less than substantial harm to the setting of several designated heritage assets within the City of Westminster. Of particular concern is the impact upon the setting of the Covent Garden Conservation Area, the diminished appreciation and setting of Somerset House when viewed from Royal National Theatres and the diminished appreciation of the civic scale of the Adelphi Building in views obtained from Westminster Bridge.

Comments are sought regarding the impact of the development bound by High Holborn, Museum Street and New Oxford Street, which includes a proposed 19 storey building on the site of 1 Museum Street.

Of relevance in this case are the following policies contained within the London Plan (April 2021):

HC1 HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND GROWTH states that: Development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation within their surroundings.

HC3 STRATEGIC AND LOCAL VIEWS explains that strategic Views include significant buildings, urban landscapes or riverscapes that help to define London at a strategic level. They are seen from places that are publicly-accessible and well-used.

HC4 LONDON VIEW MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK states that; Development proposals should not harm, and should seek to make a positive contribution to, the characteristics and composition of Strategic Views and their landmark elements. They should also preserve and, where possible, enhance viewers' ability to recognise and to appreciate Strategically Important Landmarks in these views and, where appropriate, protect the silhouette of landmark elements of World Heritage Sites as seen from designated viewing places.

The proposed building will be highly visible from many vantage points within the City of Westminster, notably from within the Covent Garden Conservation Area which lies to the south of the site. A key view effected by the proposals is from Drury Lane. Whilst the views provided in the TVIA are from the corner of Long Acre, of particular concern is the impact on views further south on Drury Lane. It is here where the development would assert itself more abruptly on the skyline and would appear monolithic against the more modestly scaled terraces in the foreground. It is apparent that due to its height the development would negatively impact upon views from within, and the setting of the Covent Garden Conservation Area. The 2022 TVIA does not seem to include an assessment of any viewpoint further south along Drury Lane, which was a view of concern in our previous objection to the proposals for this site.

Note:

- The Plain English Crystal Mark applies to those conditions, reasons and informatives in this letter which have an associated reference number with the prefix C, R, X or I.
- The terms 'you' and 'your' include anyone who owns or occupies the land or is involved with the development.
- The terms 'us' and 'we' refer to the Council as local planning authority.



The development will also appear in strategic view 18B.2 of the LVMF, at the Lambeth end of Westminster Bridge looking downstream, the view provides panoramic views of the north bank, within the City of Westminster. The framework notes the civic scale of the buildings which characterise the north bank and makes clear that the view should not be diminished by development in the background. The slight reduction in height is considered a move in the right direction; however, the proposal will be clearly seen alongside the Adelphi building and would encroach upon its distinctive profile and obstruct its civic scale.

Also, strategic view 16A.1 of the LVMF, on the south bank, outside of the Royal National Theatres, which again provides views of the north bank, notably of Somerset House (grade I listed). LVMF View 16A.1 relates principally to the Grade I listed Somerset House, and its immediate setting. The Framework explains that development in the background of Somerset House should not dominate the landmark and should respect the horizontal composition of the views and the dominance of Somerset house. As was the case with the original proposals, the revised proposals will protrude above the roof line at the eastern section of Somerset House undermining its horizontal form and silhouette.

The City Council considers the proposed building to cause a degree of less than substantial harm to the setting of several designated heritage assets within the City of Westminster. Of particular concern is the impact upon the setting of the Covent Garden Conservation Area, the diminished appreciation and setting of Somerset House when viewed from Royal National Theatres and the diminished appreciation of the civic scale of the Adelphi Building in views obtained from Westminster Bridge.

For these reasons it is considered that the application is contrary to the guidance given by the LVMF and to London Plan Policies HC1; HC3 and HC4.

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