

CTCAAC COMMENTS

We object very strongly to this application, which would affect negatively both the character of the Conservation Area and what can be argued is the largest, oldest and most important Listed building in Camden High Street. The building has served generations of ‘venue-goers’ for a hundred years with almost zero alteration to its original fabric despite several changes in its function (opera, theatre, music hall, and music and dance venue). KOKO is a local landmark and an original and important presence in Camden Town and the Conservation Area.

What is proposed, the creation of another storey and some pedestrian areas on top of the auditorium and creating a corridor that penetrates the dome, are ideas that show very little understanding of the requirement to maintain this Listed building’s carefully designed exterior and interior character and its fabric. Also all roof-level proposals would be visible from many nearby streets and buildings and would diminish the visual importance of the host building KOKO.

Other negative aspects of the proposals are:

- 1) The effect of the increase in height of the building along Bayham Place. This would make Bayham Place a deep canyon with little light available for the lowermost storeys of the buildings each side. On the north side the buildings have permission to be dwellings but at the time of the Daylight Consultant’s report for these proposals the buildings are empty so the reduction in daylight appears to be less of a factor. But whatever that might signify, it seems the daylight amenity levels in Bayham Place at the end of the day may be affected. Whatever the situation turns out to be we would be sorry to see poor amenity for dwellings being introduced into the Conservation Area especially in view of the Local Plan’s ambitions for amenity standards and Conservation Areas.
- 2) The proposal to convert the dome into a bar seems to carry with it a sense of squeezing profit from every last square metre of a grand building that was designed with large spaces in mind and that was built on a generous scale. We feel this work is an inappropriate intervention as well as a complex undertaking with risk of loss of original fabric.
- 3) The proposal to add terraces and structures on top of KOKO’s roof is not appropriate for this Listed building where its massing and features and detailed design ie its dome, roof and façades (as well as its interior) are the reason why KOKO is Listed.
- 4) Rooftop level dancing and music for night-time public use would very likely create nuisance that would be heard in many homes to the south, east and north.
- 5) Given our comment in 3) above we prefer not to comment on the design quality of the rooftop buildings and the corridor into the dome.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Macqueen

Margaret Richardson, Co-Chairs of Camden Town CAAC