

Cllr D Moylan
Cabinet Member Planning
Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea
Town Hall Hornton Street London W8 2NX

Dear Cllr Moylan

The Future of the Portobello Road Antiques Market

As you are aware, there is widespread & growing public concern over the loss of six individual shop units, comprising Lipka & Abras antiques arcades, (corner of Westbourne Grove & Portobello Road) to clone retail. Two hundred antique dealers were evicted. Some lost their livelihoods. This has ripped the heart out of the antiques market. The most prominent site in the market has been lost and is now the flagship store of international clone retailer: All Saints; which has branches across UK, US & Europe.

In May 2007 the Mayor of Kensington & Chelsea issued the widely publicised: "Balance of Trade Report of the Commission on Retail Conservation." It recommended ways for RBKC to provide special protection to a unique cultural asset: Portobello Market; including the antiques market. How much of the "Balance of Trade" became Council policy?

Sixty thousand people walk down Portobello Road each Saturday; to see the market in all its cultural diversity; not clone retail outlets which can be found anywhere.

Why didn't RBKC refuse planning permission, on the grounds of overdevelopment in a conservation area? There are regulatory flaws in the design of the building. The "warehouse" style shop front has no permission. The huge glass entrance on Portobello Rd is a disgrace. The shopfront is largely fibreglass; which is alien to a conservation area. RBKC has not enforced against All Saints; but last October Camden Council did - for the same offence.

Having failed so disastrously this time, what policy does RBKC Planning have to protect Portobello Road's unique character from overdevelopment? Six shop units have been knocked into a single huge space, fit only for a multinational chain. Even the forecourt stalls have been swept away. How are you going to protect Portobello Market's future?

Yours sincerely

Copy: Mr P Lerner
RBKC Executive Director
Planning