

# **HEYTHROP DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION: PP/18/05313 & LB/18/05314**

## **OBJECTION OF THE KENSINGTON COURT RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION**

As Chairman, I write on behalf of the Kensington Court Residents Association, to object to the above planning applications. The Association has 250 members and its area abuts the Heythrop site. Esmond Court in Thackeray Street overlooks it.

So what is developed there is of particular concern to KCRA members.

I have held meetings with the Executive Committee to canvas their views on the revised application and have consulted KCRA members by email. Overwhelmingly they object to the application. I outline the reasons below.

We are not opposed to the redevelopment of Heythrop College. But we are keen that as much as possible of the site's distinctive nature, described in the SPD as *tranquil and picturesque*, is preserved; that whatever is built there adds to the social and community benefits of the neighbourhood and that its construction disrupts as little as possible the peace and quiet of this secluded corner of Kensington.

Unfortunately this proposal does none of these things.

By any standards it is a massive project. What the developers are proposing is essentially a £541 million luxury housing estate, with a bit of care on the side.

1. The development will artificially increase the size of the site by constructing a deck over the tube line, tripling the amount of building on the site and excavating a two level basement that will cover around 60% of the area.
2. The construction of the deck should be separately considered, as part of a strategic look at the overall needs of this corner of Kensington.
3. The excessive size of the development will take over 4 years to complete, causing unnecessary and unreasonable disruption to our residential neighbourhood.
4. The development will not fulfill the social needs required by the RBKC.
5. The conversion of the buildings in Kensington Square into luxury houses is not an 'enabling development'.
6. The development will bring almost no benefit to the local community.

1. The most astonishing aspect of the proposal is the developer's plan to enlarge the site, and thus ignore the planning guidance of the Heythrop SDP. Throughout that document, the constraints of the site are made clear – *'access is extremely limited', 'the constrained nature of the site will inform the site layout', 'The majority of the site is very insular with no frontage onto streets' 'Certain uses, particularly ones that increase traffic in the area, could have a harmful impact on the amenity of local residents', 'There is one vehicle access point via South End, which is not wide enough to accommodate a significant increase in traffic or large lorries', 'The picturesque grounds ... provide a unique and tranquil setting. However, this severely limits the ability to redevelop much of the site.'* etc, etc

The developer has simply disregarded these guidelines. With the construction of the deck over the railway, they plan to INCREASE the site's size by 25%. They will shoehorn three times more buildings into the location, which in every respect is unsuitable for so big a development. The site will get bigger - but not the highly restricted entrance, which is only accessed via quiet residential roads. There will be a massive excavation of a 2 level basement, covering 60% of the site - where currently there is none. The present buildings, though of little architectural merit, are mostly unobtrusive – but not the proposed buildings. These, in number and scale, will utterly transform the site, replacing a modest and unassuming campus into a giant housing estate, dominated by large apartment blocks. It is difficult to see how this enormous development *'preserves the tranquil and picturesque nature of the site'*, as required by the Heythrop SPD.