


SUMMARY

The KCRA accepts that the Heythrop site will be developed and looks forward to a project that matches the size and nature of this charming site, maintaining the diversity of this community. This proposal clearly does not do this, nor does it meet the requirements of the RBKC's Planning Policies or of the Heythrop SPD.

1. It's much too big for the site. The developers are being greedy, cramming a large luxury housing estate into a peaceful enclave with restricted access. Only by erecting a deck over the tube line and increasing the site's size by 25% can they fit their buildings in. The result is a complex of apartment blocks utterly inappropriate to the size and nature of the site.
2. The proposal to build a deck over the tube line does not consider the needs of the wider community. It may limit or even prevent any longer-term development around the railway line and Kensington High Street station.
3. As a consequence of enlarging the site, the scale of demolition, excavation and construction will take an excessively long time and its traffic will create added pollution and unreasonable disruption to the community. The proposal does not *'preserve the tranquil and picturesque nature of the site'*, as required by the SPD.
4. It is too exclusive. It's a luxury development, masquerading as a much-needed care home facility for the Borough's older residents. But the high cost of flat sales and leases for the extra care units rule out the vast majority of the older people in the Borough who might need such care. The units are designed for the super rich, many of whom inevitably will be foreign owners who rarely visit or will be medical tourists. The proposal signally fails to offer *'a social and community use which predominantly serves, or which provides significant benefits to borough residents'*.
5. It includes the conversion of two buildings which currently offer social and community uses, into 3 luxury town houses in Kensington Square. There is no planning justification for this.
6. It brings too few benefits to the community: 5 affordable homes, a community hall and public access to the grounds. These are derisory public benefits in a £541 million development. The Heythrop SPD requires that the site should *retain a social and community use'* and a *'a good mix of uses'*. This proposal conspicuously fails to do that.

In light of the Grenfell tragedy, the KCRA committee is concerned by the Royal Borough's reputation for supporting proposals by developers who favour the well-heeled at the expense of the worse-off. We feel strongly that this diverse and unique corner of Kensington should not become another exclusive ghetto for its richest residents, much less for foreign-owners looking for a safe investment. It deserves a better and smaller development, in keeping with the terms of the Heythrop SDP. That is why we object to the application and why we ask the Planning Committee to refuse it.


Chair, Kensington Court Residents Association.