

PLANNING APPLICATION PUBLIC COMMENT

Application number: PP/18/05313
Site Address: Heythrop College, 23-24 Kensington Square, LONDON, W8 5HH
Proposal: Reinstatement of three townhouses (Class C3), (part of 23 and 24 Kensington Square); refurbishment of college building (part of 23 Kensington Square) and use as an extra care facility (Class C2). Demolition of all other buildings on site. Erection of deck over adjacent London Underground line and construction of 5 buildings (ranging between 1 and 8 storeys in height) for use as an extra care facility including units, communal facilities and services areas, community hall and on-site affordable housing and associated access parking, servicing and landscaping. (MAJOR DEVELOPMENT)

Comment received: To whom it may concern

25th October 2018

HEYTHROP DEVELOPMENT

I am writing to object to the proposal for the development of Heythrop College behind Kensington Square.

This has been a community use property, put to educational use for 150 years and is designated "Social and Community Use site. The new proposal is described as 'A retirement property equivalent of Claridges'; described on its website as having '...the feel of a luxury private members' club...for the golden generation of ultra-high net worth.' This seems a far cry from 'Social and community use.' They have cynically described it in the planning application as a 'care home.'

Care Home is a skillfully manipulative and inaccurate way to describe the development.

-This scheme involves only a minimal level of "extra-care" mandated for residents, which results in the developer claiming that this is the equivalent of a care home, but the luxurious facilities makes these into nothing more than luxury residential retirement units with all the trappings of luxury housing.

-It cannot be right or in the Council's interests to grant to this developer of ultra-high net worth retirement homes the valuable privilege of exemption from providing affordable housing, by claiming it is the equivalent of a real care home.

The undermining of Kensington as a community is presumably of grave concern to the Council. It continues to be eroded by developments that are bought and left empty, for example the large development in Victoria Road. That is exactly the same target

market for these flats.

-With unrestricted long-term ownership, these very high-priced retirement flats are targeted purely at foreign owners/investors and are destined to become yet more "buy-to-leave-empty" properties, owned through offshore companies. They simply represent money parked in London property, with only very occasional use.

- These UHNW non-resident ghettos are destroying the fabric of our local community. Lights out at night, nobody using the local shops and amenities, lots of security guards. As the developer would say, it's for the "Golden Generation of UHNW".

The size of the development alone should disqualify it immediately.

-The proposal is for a building mass more than 3 times the existing buildings - making it one of the largest housing projects in the Borough

-The amount of buildings is inflated by a deck built over TfL's lines near High St Kensington Station

-It is one of the most remote sites of any scheme ever built in this borough - nearly half a mile from

Kensington Road? massive 5-year construction traffic nightmare - peaks at over 60 large trucks a day thundering down quiet residential side streets (Victoria Road, St Albans Grove), entering site via South End, a very narrow street.

-South End is also proposed as the main entrance for all future traffic once the project is completed

The development of this site will be a nuisance to all residents in the community, especially one of this scale - however, we all accept that this is the nature of progress, within reason, and if the projects are worthwhile. Mayfair and Knightsbridge have made the mistake of hollowing out their communities in favour of extremely expensive properties that are bought and let empty, creating little patches of ghost town where no-one sits except a sad looking concierge.

Please don't allow yet another of these awful buildings to hollow out one of the most charming and vibrant residential squares left in Kensington. Kensington has the beginnings of similar erosion, it is time we banded together to put a stop the demolition of not just an old building, but the fabric of our wider community.

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24/10/2018 11:55:48

Comment type:

Objection