

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: Dear Planning Committee

Firstly I would like to apologise for the lateness of the comments I am sending you this morning.

I am very much concerned with this application, which in the context of our Local Plan is deficient in a number of ways. I particularly draw your attention to the objections of the Kensington Society, with which I concur absolutely.

When weighing up the positive and negative aspects of this application you are asked 'on balance' to approve. Given that it proposes the demolition of listed buildings, loss of mature trees, loss of a dyslexia teaching centre, loss of education facilities, loss of a sports pitch, and loss of floor space for the community facilities, one would expect a genuine benefit to counter-balance these losses to the local communities.

Instead we are presented with yet another example of what many are now calling a provision for 'caviar care'. Let's be very clear about this: the need for residential care for older people needing a level of care is decidedly NOT for very high income residents. This is made clear in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment whose evidence is that the overwhelming need is for low to middle-income older residents. My knowledge of the spread of incomes across the borough suggests that even our higher income residents would find the cost of these units exorbitant.

To be precise, the units at Heythrop cost cc£3.5m for a one or two-bedroom flat with a minimum of just two hours' care a week. I am informed that the 'caviar care' home at Auriens, Dovehouse Street has had difficulties marketing their units for sale and are offering them for rent instead. Rental of these units is offered at up to £450,000 a year, with a minimum of two hours' care a week.

If there is indeed evidence for extra care at this very high cost it is not identified in the SHMA. We can only conclude that this will be yet another development catering for some unsubstantiated international requirement, and not to satisfy local need at all.

This development will impact the area for generations to come. I ask the Committee to reflect seriously on these issues, and determine against the application in its current form.

Date of Comment: very sincerely
27/11/2018
Comment type: Objection