

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 Officer,

re: Case reference: PP/18/05313 Address: Heythrop College, 23-24 Kensington Square, LONDON, W8 5HH
Proposed development: 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)
FOR THE AVOIDANCE OF ANY POSSIBLE DOUBT PLEASE MARK THIS EMAIL AS SUPPORT AND I AM HAPPY FOR RBKC TO DISCLOSE I AM A RESIDENT OF 26 KENSINGTON SQUARE
I am writing in my capacity as resident of 26 Kensington Square to provide conditional support to the proposed redevelopment of Heythrop College (application reference PP/18/05313). My reasons for supporting the application are outlined in detail in the representation submitted by the Kensington Square Residents Association (KSRA).
There has been a lot of thought and input from the residents of the Square into this project and the planned use of the site, which affects such a large portion of the Square:
Given the site's immediate proximity to our homes and the potential impact to our amenity from such a major redevelopment, the residents of Kensington Square have worked over the past 3 years first on the Heythrop SPD and then with the developer to ensure an acceptable proposal could be achieved for the site.
We understand the site will be further developed at some point, and, given that assumption, the current proposal is the best option for our community.

I believe the proposed use, Extra Care Accommodation, is an acceptable low impact use for the site, which includes community use, and is in line with the Heythrop SPD. As per the Heythrop SPD, the current use of the site is Class C2 and "this use class comprises residential care homes and sheltered housing where there is an element of care, hospitals, nursing homes, boarding schools, residential colleges and training centres. Extra care housing, offering a sufficient level of care for residents, would also fall under a Class C2 use. Policy CH2(c) (Chapter 35, CLP) encourages extra care housing in C2 use. This benign use could complement other uses on the site."

My support for the application is conditional on preserving the integrity of the Square and keeping the South-West corner closed: Given the proximity to our homes and possible impact to our amenity, as well as consideration for the Kensington Square Conservation Area, my support is conditional on the creation of a solid building gatehouse to be used for resident pedestrian access only, which will fill the void that will be left by the proposed removal of the 1925 Goldie addition and for the public pedestrian access to be via the main building only as proposed by the applicant. For the avoidance of doubt, I would heavily oppose a permanent throughway, which has never existed in that corner and would dramatically change the appearance of the Conservation Area and adversely affect resident amenity.

My wife and I are supportive of several aspects of this application:

1. We value the updated site design, which orients the site within the community on the East-West axis, which was broken by the creation of the Tube railway lines, and provide a parallel route to High Street Kensington.
2. The developer's commitment to release £4million towards step free access for High Street Kensington Underground Station will bring much needed improvement for access benefitting the whole neighbourhood.
3. We welcome the renovation and return to residential use of three existing houses on the Square, even though such a large site will create temporary issues, as buildings need to be renovated or rebuilt, including on Kensington Square with the renovation of the listed houses and college building.
4. In the proposed Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), the developer has committed to continued engagement with local residents to ensure there is appropriate mitigation of the number of large vehicles to protect resident amenity given that many of the roads surrounding the site (except Scarsdale Place on the other side of the tracks) are challenging for large vehicles. With such a large site to be redeveloped, construction traffic is inevitable and if it cannot provide grounds for opposition to the whole scheme, we believe the CTMP and ad hoc Residents Panel can work on monitoring a host of mitigating measures such as timed deliveries, avoidance of school drop-off and pick-up times, car and road cleaning along the route, and of course, noise and vibration monitoring.

There are always possible improvements to the scheme:

The applicant held 3 exhibitions and has agreed to make changes

following feedback from the residents, which has been a positive experience. In terms of some additional points for the developer to consider as points that would improve this scheme we would like to point out the below:

A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) must be agreed with local residents to ensure the number of large vehicles are not affecting resident amenity given that most roads surrounding the site (except Scarsdale Place on the other side of the tube tracks), are challenging for large vehicles.

We believe that the CTMP can be better managed by including access over the rail tracks. The developer, possibly with the assistance of RBKC and TfL, should try to work on a solution to gain access over the rail tracks, from Scarsdale Place, considering their desire to develop over the tracks for the construction of the site and overcome somehow the 6-meter drop in height between the two sides of the track, as well as the lack of direct access to the public highway on the other side of the tracks as this is private land. Perhaps RBKC can facilitate this process. There is much room for improvement to the massive existing hotel building design, which we hope will get resolved. It is our understanding that currently the developer has not yet been able to gain access to the West side of the tracks.

We would have liked the retention of sports facilities (tennis court) for community use. As the tennis court is proposed for removal, and given the lack of swimming pools at RBKC, we would very welcome access to the community to the proposed swimming pool. It is our understanding that currently the developer feels the swimming pool is not suitable for local resident access, but may reconsider, at the very least for other local residents who would also benefit from extra-care facilities.

We are happy with Community Hall, but feel that a proper playground for children would be welcome by the community - it is our understanding the developer is proposing to include this type of playground. A consultation between the developer and local residents to define specific public benefits the local community would like to see would be welcome and we have suggested this to the developer.

We appreciate that others have registered objections to the scheme, but we feel such objections are based on the assumption that they can block indefinitely any proposed development, which, in our view, is wistful thinking.

Sincerely,

26 Kensington Square

27/10/2018

Support

Date of Comment:
Comment type:

