

5 March 1998

Ms Kate Orme  
Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea  
Department of Planning and Conservation  
Room 325  
Town Hall Hornton Street  
Kensington London W8 7NX

Dear Ms Orme

Re:- Planning Application  
De Vere Hotel, 1-3 De Vere Gardens (also 60 Hyde Park Gate) W8  
DPS/DCC/C/TP/98/0019

As owner occupiers of a top floor flat on the other side of De Vere Gardens, we have the following questions, concerns and objections regarding the above captioned application:

Proposed change of use

The notice we received in the mail stated that the application involves '1-3 De Vere Gardens (also known as 60 Hyde Park Gate)'. Currently it appears that the hotel usage only occupies a part of 3 De Vere Gardens (from below grade up to and including the first floor) and the upper floors of that block are residential flats. Moreover, the actual application states that permission is sought for '1-5 De Vere Gardens'. 5 De Vere Gardens appears to be residential flats in its entirety.

Therefore, we question as to whether the application is correct in stating 'a change of use from hotel to apart-hotel', given the apparent residential nature of 3 and 5 De Vere Gardens. We strenuously object to any further erosion of the essentially residential nature of De Vere Gardens for yet another commercial usage, ie 'apart-hotels'.

'Associated facilities'

Upon examining the plans on file with your office, it appears that the developer of this project wants to include functions that are more in keeping with a hotel or entertainment facility. For instance even though every room has a kitchen, a breakfast room and lounge/bar are shown on the plans. Conceivably, an outside vendor could be contracted for these facilities together with their own separate signage and intent on attracting a clientele other than hotel guests.

If so, the situation would be no different than the current hotel with the adjoining Chinese restaurant, or even worse, a franchised operation like McDonalds to cater to the throng of tourists visiting the Diana memorial garden. Many of the restaurants along Kensington High Road and Street including the pub connected

to the Kensington Palace Hotel immediately across the street, illegally block the public footpath on a regular basis with signboards, and even outdoor seating,

Further, we question as to why 'conference rooms' are needed for an 'apart-hotel'? What type of events will be held here? Will public parties and other evening functions be contemplated and scheduled as now occurs with the 'conference rooms' at the Kensington Palace Hotel. Will we and other residents have to endure yet a higher incidence of resulting problems such as illegal parking, loud music, and noisy patrons spilling onto the streets in the early morning hours.

#### Lack of off street parking

Why has no off street parking for the apart-hotel guests been included in this application? Where does the developer expect their guests to park? Is the borough expected to issue parking permits as this property is considered to be 'residential apartments'? You may recall that consent for the Citadines included provision for its own parking demand. We would expect this developer to be responsible for their parking demand increase by incorporating customer parking facilities within their proposed project.

#### Air conditioning

Is air conditioning being included in this project? Given our experience with the relatively recent applications by both the Kensington Park and Palace Hotels for additional air conditioning and their current ongoing compliance violations, we insist that very rigorous acoustic testing be done at this time. Should such testing and subsequent analysis show that ambient noise levels would be elevated, we would further insist that proper remedial measures are agreed before consent, and that they include undertakings by the developer to properly maintain the agreed conditions with full knowledge of penalties should any violations occur in the future.

#### Proposed vertical extension

Perhaps the most serious planning issue is yet another level being added to the height of the existing hotel structure. The De Vere Hotel already has a mansard roofed penthouse level above the prevailing cornice and storey height running along the length of De Vere Gardens. We strenuously object to the proposed additional bulk onto a building already taller than most of the neighbouring buildings within this conservation area.

#### Noise, traffic and other disruptions during construction

In addition to the numerous issues we have with the proposed permanent facilities, we also have serious concerns in respect to the impacts of its construction. The existing chronic noise and traffic problems endured by De Vere Gardens residents are pretty nigh unbearable now, but adding on the impacts of a large construction project will make matters much worse.

Unlike the recently completed Prince of Wales Terrace, a project of similar scope if different use, the constructors for this project will not have access to the site on four sides. Any work at the De Vere Hotel will most likely be accessed only from the De Vere Gardens side of the site, as we cannot imagine the Borough will agree to access being allowed along Kensington Road. This obviously means that much of the construction impacts will be borne by all of the occupants along De Vere Gardens.

If the years of work at the Prince of Wales Terrace site are any example, this proposed project on its own will include a loss of residential parking spaces, the installation of external site project offices, noise and dirt from the demolition, lorries first removing debris followed by the delivering of construction materials, and a daily influx of sub-contractors with their worker vans and other vehicles. In addition to this chaos of a ongoing construction site will also be all of the current daily coach pickups and drop-offs for the existing Thistle hotels, as well as the chronic problem of coaches using De Vere Gardens as a 'coach park' where they can eat lunch, sleep and read their newspapers. Also in this mix will be the numerous lorry deliveries made to the hotels via De Vere Gardens as well as the taxis who not only pick up and deliver hotel guests but who also spill out of the taxi rank spaces as they, too, use De Vere Gardens as a 'social meeting place' to meet and hang-out. As the motorist conflicts undoubtedly increase, so too will the horn blasting up and down De Vere Gardens.

Whatever development may receive consent should include an approved traffic and logistics scheme that has been thoroughly vetted with and approved by the proper agencies, and moreover, that includes a proper ongoing overview by the Borough as well as agreed sanctions for any violations that might occur.

However in its present form, the proposed development is quite unsuitable for all of the reasons stated herein. We urge you to recommend its rejection when and if it is tabled for a vote at a future Committee meeting, and if so, for the Committee members to vote to deny consent. Should you have any questions about these matters, please feel free to contact us directly.

Sincerely



for Ms K Kuehn and Mr D Greenhalgh  
Flat 12  
12-14 De Vere Gardens  
London W8 5AE

Phone/Fax: 0171 937 0747



Photo 5. The appeal property, view from the south



Photo 6. As photo 5, details.



Photo 9. 60 Hyde Park Gate, ground floor decorative detail



Photo 10. As photo 9.

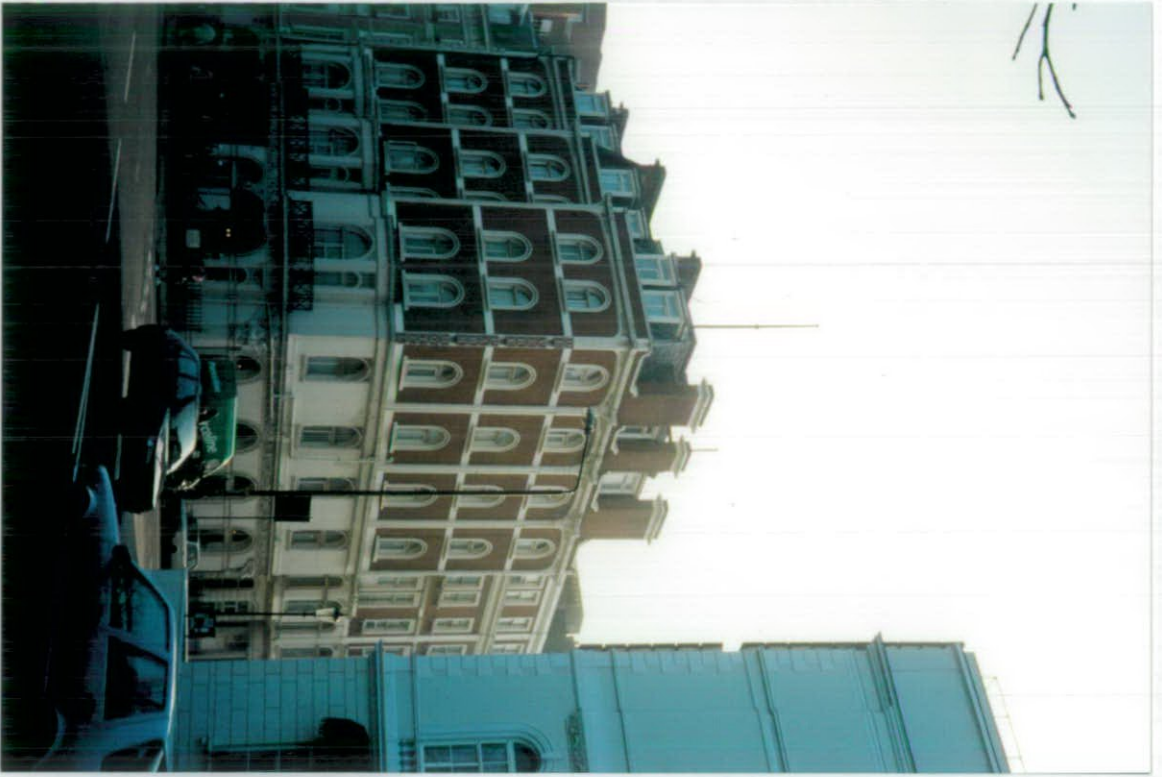


Photo 11. Appeal property, view from the north west.



Photo 12. Appeal property, view from the north east.



Photo 7. De Vere Gardens, present roofline of appeal property and the neighbouring nos 3 and 5



Photo 8. De Vere Gardens, appeal property and its neighbours as seen from the north



Photo 3. De Vere Gardens, view of aprel property and its immediate neighbours



Photo 4. As photo 3.





Photo 1. De Vere Gardens, view towards the appeal property from the south



Photo 2. De Vere Gardens, view towards the appeal property from the south



Photomontages 21. and 22.

Roof, east elevation and lightwell to the rear of 1 - 3, De Vere Gardens





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Photo 13. Appeal property and its adjoining neighbour on eastern side, view from Kensington Gardens



Photo 14. As photo 13

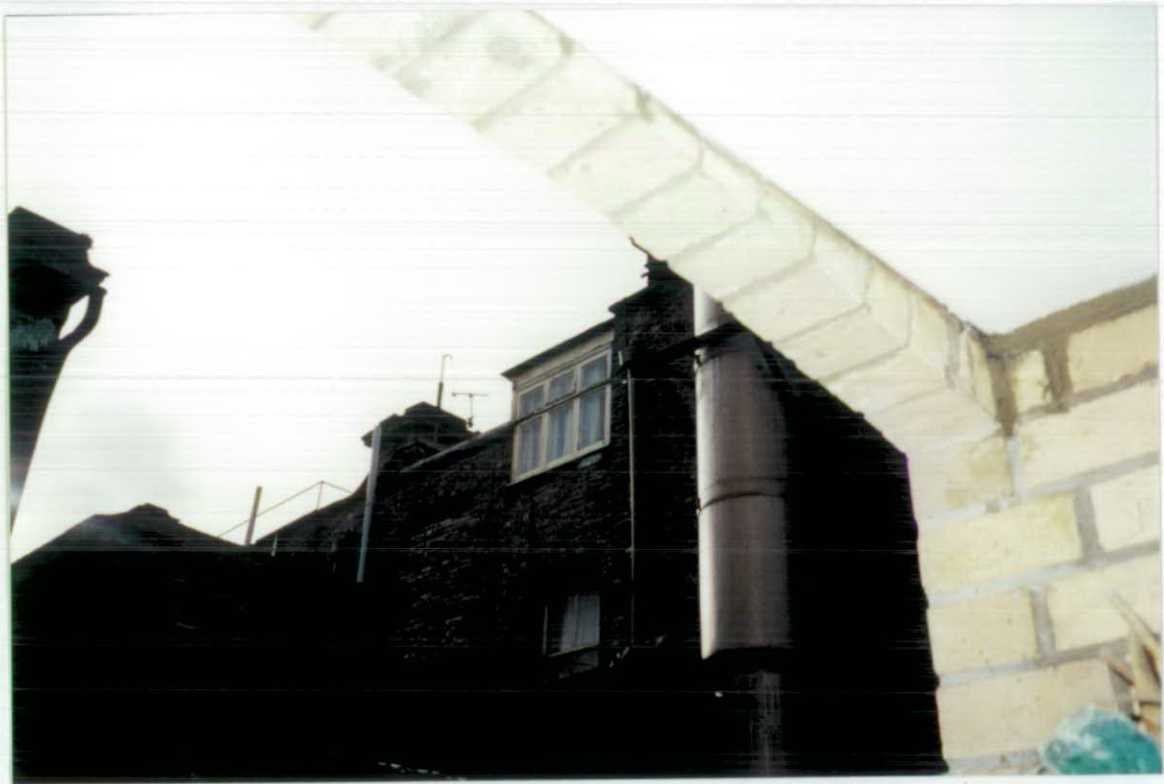


Photo 18. Rear elevation of no. 1, De Vere Gardens, existing roofline, view from adjoining residential property



Photo 19. As photo 18



Photo 15. Existing rear elevation of 1, De Vere Gardens, detail



Photo 16. As photo 15



Photo 17. Existing rear elevation of 1, De Vere Gardens, detail



Photo 20. De Vere Gardens, rear elevations and roofline of No.1 and neighbours to the south



Photo 23. Prince of Wales Terrace, view from the north west



Photo 24. Prince of Wales Terrace and neighbouring Milestone Hotel, view from Kensington Gardens