

PLANNING APPLICATION PUBLIC COMMENT

Application number: PP/23/00968
Site Address: 81-103 King's Road, LONDON, SW3 4NX
Proposal: Demolition of existing building and redevelopment for new building up to four storeys and basement (Use Class E - commercial, business and service); roof terraces, landscaping works; installation of plant; and associated works. (MAJOR APPLICATION)

Comment received: The Chelsea Society objects to this application. The proposed building would be incompatible with a number of Council policies; would be damaging to the character of the King's Road and the conservation area opposite to which it is situated; and would be disruptive to the privacy of neighbouring residents. In addition the construction traffic management plan would involve an unacceptable level of increased congestion and inconvenience in the King's Road.
Demolition of a serviceable building.

The application involves the demolition, apart from the basement, of the whole of the existing building on the site. This building is relatively new, perfectly serviceable and not unattractive in appearance. Its demolition would be contrary to policy GB3 (Whole Life-Cycle Carbon) in the New Local Plan which recommends the retention and refurbishment of existing buildings over demolition and rebuild. There might be an exceptional case for demolition if the new building were to bring social or community benefits which could not be provided in any other way. But this is not the case. It constitutes a supermarket and offices, both of which are already present.

Height, Scale, Bulk and Massing

The proposed building would be at least one storey higher than the existing one and higher than any of the buildings in its immediate vicinity. It is not easy, because of the confusing way in which the design is presented, to estimate exactly how tall the new building would be, but the increase in height would clearly be significant and would give the building an excessively dominant appearance. It would also be materially larger than most other buildings in the King's Road. This would be contrary to Policies CL1, CL 5 and CL12 in the current Local Plan, which require new buildings to respect the setting of the borough's townscapes and to resist buildings which are taller than their surroundings; as well as with Policy CD1 (Context and Character) in the new Plan.

To allow a building of this height and mass to be constructed would contribute to the further "canyonisation" of the King's Road. It would also be damaging to the view from Chelsea Green down Markham Street to the King's Road, one of the iconic vistas in the borough (it is bizarre that Council officers made no mention of this view in their pre-application advice). There are elements in the design which are

clearly intended to soften the building's impact, for example the setting back of the top storey and the slightly curved effect of the façade. But they do not mitigate the overall problem that the building is too large for the site and its context.

Privacy

The proposed building contains extensive terraces and balconies at the rear which would have a negative impact on the privacy of residents in surrounding streets, notably King Charles 11 Place, and would constitute a source of noise and light pollution. Those residents are rightly concerned that the construction of these terraces and balconies would facilitate a future application for a change of use to residential accommodation which would, if granted, accentuate the loss of privacy.

Construction Traffic Management Plan

The plan for managing traffic during the construction phase of the proposed development appears to envisage the blocking off of part of the King's Road carriageway and its reduction to one way traffic for a period of up to two years. This is totally unacceptable. We have seen from the recent experience of the Curzon cinema and King's Walk projects what the consequences of such a closure would be. There would at times be total gridlock the whole length of the road from Sloane Square to Oakley Street. King's Road is one of the busiest streets in Chelsea (it is absurdly disingenuous of the applicant to claim that "traffic flows along the King's Road are low") and the pollution and damage to air quality caused by this congestion would be a major health risk. Given that there is no social or community value in the proposed new building, it would be wrong for local residents and local businesses to pay such a high price for the benefit of private interests.

I would be grateful if you would identify the Chelsea Society as the author of this objection when it is published on the Council's planning website.

Date of Comment:

16/04/2023 17:12:55

Comment type:

Objection