

**Duke of York's and Royal Hospital Area Residents Interest Group  
3 Cheltenham Terrace  
LONDON SW3 4RD**

**By email (Amanda.Reid@rbkc.gov.uk; planning@rbkc.gov.uk)**

Amanda Reid  
Director of Planning and Place  
Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea  
Kensington Town Hall  
Hornton Street  
London W8 7NX

25 April 2023

Dear Ms Reid

**Application PP/23/00968, 81-101 King's Road – M&S Redevelopment**

I write on behalf on the Residents Interest Group which in turn represents the several resident associations and groups listed at the foot of this letter. To that extent it is likely that this letter of objection overlaps with a number of individual responses already sent by residents.

The RIG was involved in the original consultation with the developers. At that stage our concerns were not taken up and properly addressed. Indeed, it appears they were ignored in several rounds of subsequent marketing and related literature distributed by the developers. That causes us some concerns as to whether the latest application is entirely frank and transparent and with respect to the information that it is supplied. That in turn links to both procedural and substantive objections, as set out below.

**Procedural objections**

1. We are concerned about the accuracy of illustrations in the application depicting the proposed views of the new structure. A study of the illustrations within the application raises several concerns. First, the new structure (while smaller than the original structure in the first application) is still more dominant in structure than corresponding adjacent buildings in the King's Road. The illustrations within the application appear to play this down by adopting graphical illustrations of the current adjacent structures which do not appear accurate. Existing structures appear to have been "oversized", and the new structure correspondingly "undersized".
2. Rather than seek to reach conclusions in this respect, which could be time consuming and expensive for residents, we instead invite the planning department properly and fully to test the illustrations so that the department can be sure that before public consultation ends the residents have been given clear and accurate illustrations of the present and proposed future positions. Otherwise, the consultation is flawed for not being conducted on a factually correct basis.

### **Substantive objections**

Although the residents within the RIG cover an area that does not extend as far west on the King's Road as the site itself, they are nonetheless very interested in the impact of the proposed development on the King's Road and surrounding streets which are within the RIG, for the reasons addressed below:

3. In particular, and notwithstanding many other grounds for objection to the proposed building, it seems clear that the fundamental underlying concern of most residents is the fact that the structure proposes to develop yet more retail space on the King's Road which might be desirable but is not needed in the context of the existing stress on retail businesses, with the resulting loss of a facility that is much loved and much used by residents; mainly the full-service Marks and Spencer operation and the existing car park with over 100 spaces. We do not shy away from identifying this as perhaps the most significant concern. If a development affects residents in any way that is material to their wealth, amenity, or day to day lives, it is a development which residents are bound to comment on and where their interests ought to be taken into account as carefully as possible. In respect to this development the loss of Marks and Spencer's full-service operation for something that the new development would require to be downsized does nothing to assist the residential welfare, but rather takes away something that is valuable to them. To the extent that the new and smaller floorspace available to such as outlet would not attract Marks and Spencer at all as a tenant, then (subject of course to what kind of possible replacement tenant could provide the same facility) the residents would suffer even more.
4. That concern is all the worse because the development (as aforesaid) seeks to use the space to develop retail operations at the expense of the existing car park facility in favour of a parking facility that would be a great deal smaller. The proposed new retail operations are, as things stand, unknown. But, to the extent that a Marks and Spencer food outlet would continue, it seems inevitable that the many residents who currently use the car park, whether for reasons that affect all food shoppers or because they may be old and/or invalid, would be negatively affected. The results would surely be that there would be an ongoing surfeit of cars looking for parking spaces, probably unsuccessfully, in the surrounding streets which are already very stressed for parking and clearly unable to deal with vehicles looking for a space to park to enable owners to travel home with food shopping etc.
5. In short, however one views the proposed development it is likely to have a materially negative impact on residents which ought to be front and centre in the analysis of whether it is desirable.
6. There are number of other grounds of objection, as follows:
  - (a) The proposed building as stated above, would appear to be materially taller than the existing one, and higher than any of the adjacent buildings when the issue is looked at by reference to the reality on the ground rather than what may be flawed illustrations in the application. The result would be a section of the King's Road where the new building would appear to offer "*plateau on top of a mountain*" appearance, rather than remaining at a height that is proportionately the same as the surrounding buildings and structures. This is particularly so when looked at from the long view down Markham Street. These concerns are informed by policies CL1, CL5, and CL12 in the current Local Plan, as well as policy CD1. In short, residents object to the King's Road being incrementally developed so that it becomes something of a

“valley” or “canyon”. There is nothing in the context of the area that would require such a development over time.

- (b) The size of the proposed building carries with it a risk of damage to the privacy to nearby residents. This is apparent from the design drawings which illustrate a considerable number of terraces and balconies at the rear of the proposed structure. It is not apparent from the application what in fact will be done to mitigate the impact on residents.
- (c) We are also concerned about the inability of a traffic management plan properly to address the impact on traffic on the King’s Road for what could be a long period of construction. Two years is suggested in the application. The residents have already experienced the considerable delays and blockages in the King’s Road from existing developments, albeit to sites which on the whole the residents supported. However, given the level of objection to the proposed new development, there appears to be no good reason for the impact on the residents to be ignored as part of the assessment of the suitability of the project as a whole.
- (d) In short, when all of the relevant policies are looked at it would appear that the demolition of a perfectly acceptable existing building is contrary to the objective of avoiding development that does not benefit the community and cannot be justified in terms of the impact during construction. This appears to be a case where retention and refurbishment clearly outweighs demolition, rebuild and increasing size.

For those reasons we would encourage RBKC in turn to encourage the developers to submit plans for retention and refurbishment, rather than wholesale demolition and the loss of an important facility that offers material benefits to residents.

Yours sincerely,



**Duke of York's and Royal Hospital Area Residents Interest Group**