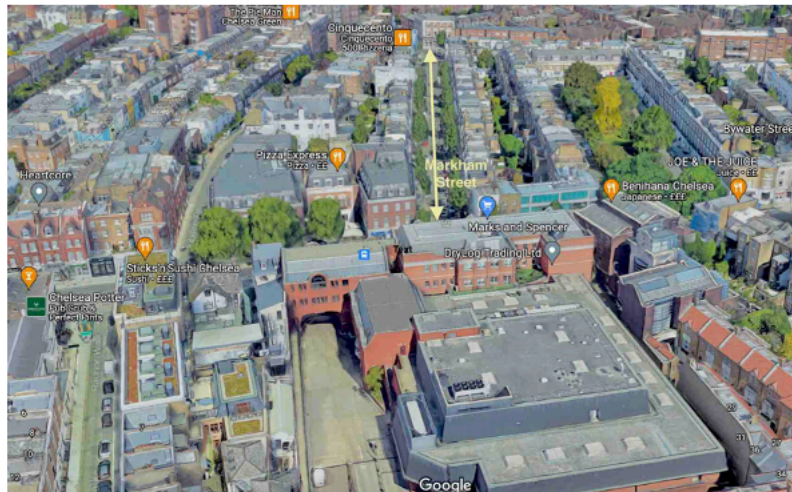


OBJECTION to PP/23/00968, 81-103 King's Road, LONDON, SW3 4NX

The proposed building does not respect the setting of the Borough's valued townscapes and landscapes, notably those of the surrounding Conservation Areas. It will damage the views along low-rise Markham Street – one of the most beloved vistas in the Borough. It will not strengthen our traditional townscape in terms of building heights and roofscape, and it will not provide for a roofscape that reflects the context of the site¹.

The existing building should not be demolished given the unacceptable environmental costs and low benefits. As 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 narrow private interests.

Additionally, there is a pattern of omissions and erroneous/misleading documents in the application. Please could you require the applicant to make a complete, accurate and clear submission?

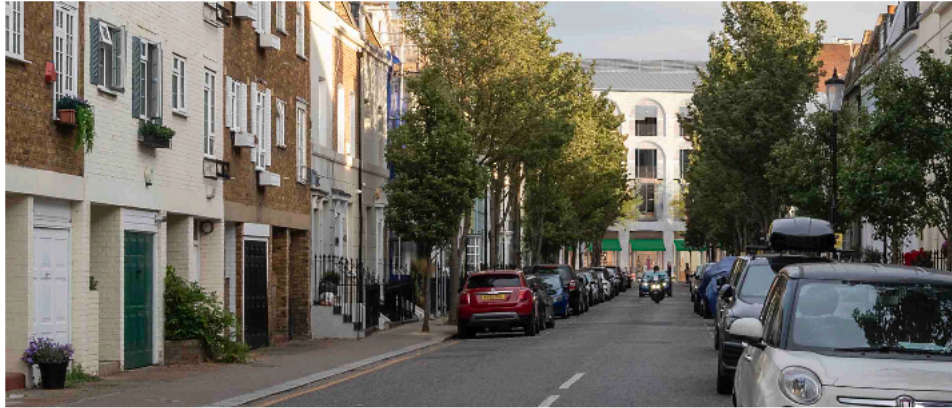


¹ Council Policy CL12, Building Heights: the Council will require new buildings to respect the setting of the Borough's valued townscapes and landscapes, through appropriate building heights. To deliver this the Council will, inter alia: a. require proposals to strengthen our traditional townscape in terms of building heights and roofscape by requiring developments to: i. reflect the prevailing building heights within the context; ii. provide, for larger developments, a roofscape that reflects that of the context of the site; iii. seldom use height to express local landmarks so the prevailing building height is maintained; b. resist buildings significantly taller than the surrounding townscape other than in exceptionally rare circumstances, where the development has a wholly positive impact on the character and quality of the townscape; etc.

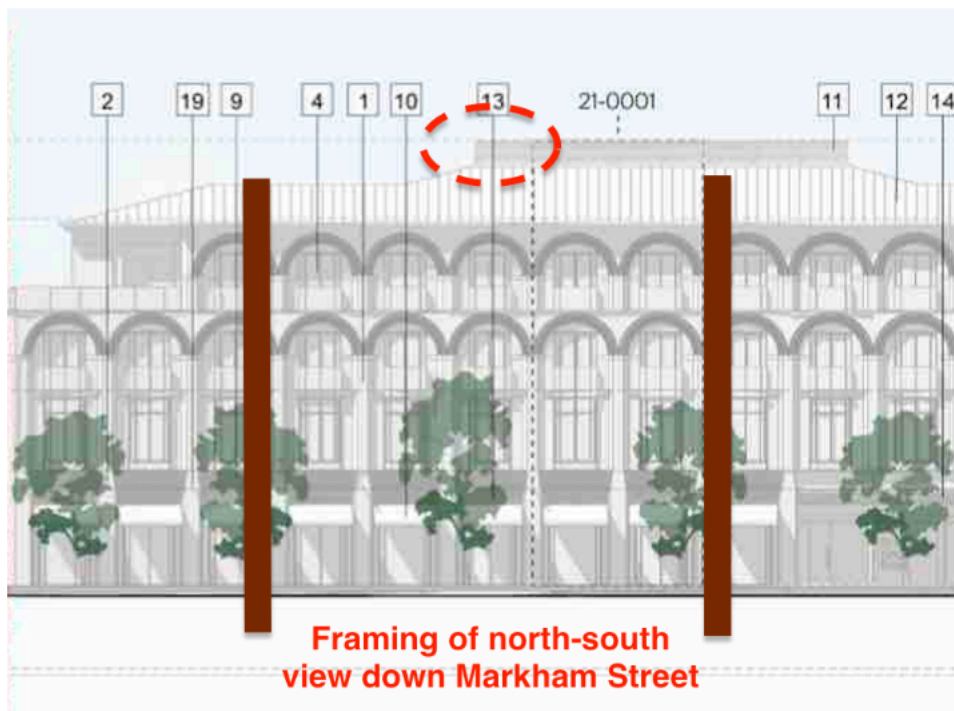
1. Markham Street has cohesive north-south terraces of low-rise houses comprising two storeys, basements and attic rooms under mansard roofs.
2. The street sits in the Chelsea Conservation Area and runs directly south-north from the site, from just a few yards away (across the King's Road), as shown by the image on the previous page and the map below.

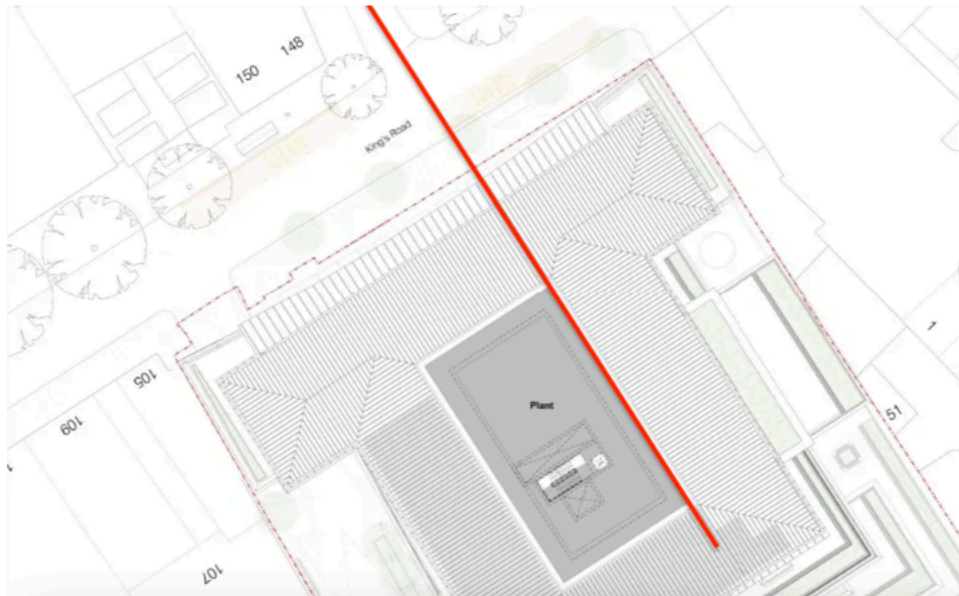
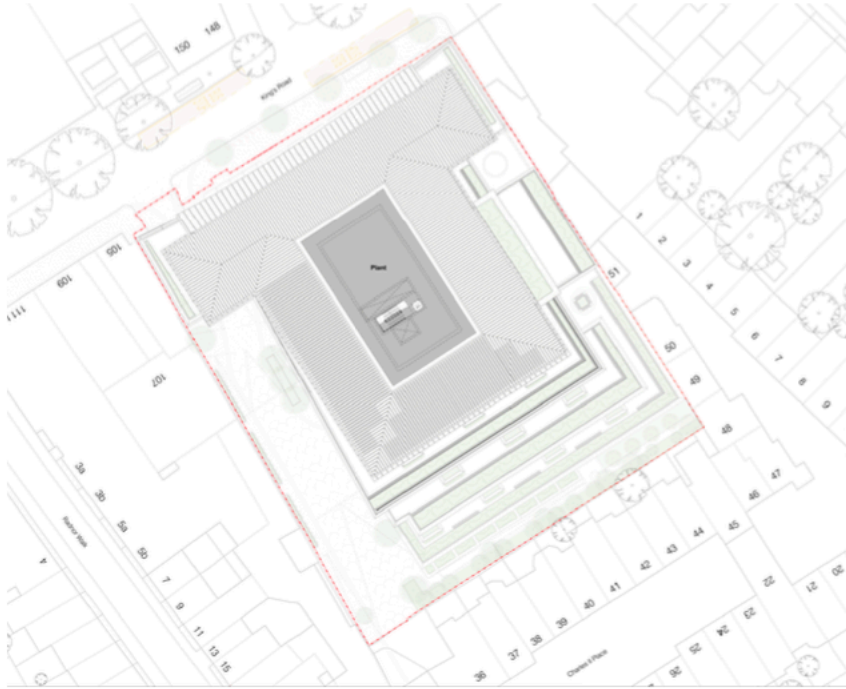


3. The cherished views along Markham Street, between Chelsea Green and the King's Road, would be forever impaired by these plans. The design of the proposed roofline at the south end of Markham Street, which would be visible along the low-rise street's entire length, would alter the whole feeling of the street, for the worse. The proposed roofline would be overbearing in height and jarringly asymmetric.
4. The visual of what the view would look like, which the applicants submitted – see overleaf – is misleading. Note the masking trees and the smoothed roofline:

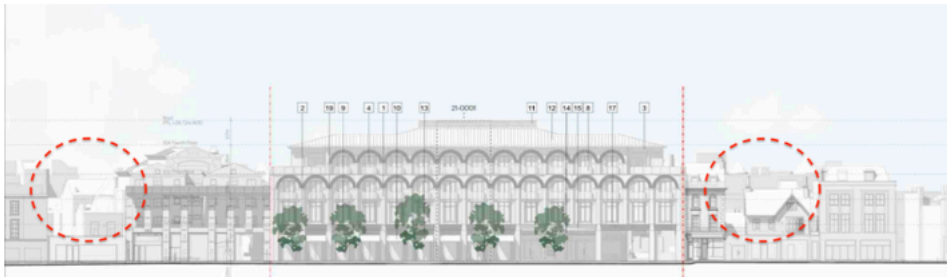


5. I believe the roofline will 'pop up' asymmetrically to house 'plant', as depicted below and as shown by the architect's plan, overleaf. (I have superimposed a red line on a copy of this plan to make clear where the plant 'pops' up in relation to the view down Markham Street – once again, see overleaf.)





6. When these points were put to architect Pilbrow & Partners in emails dated March 28 and April 3 2023 (with Council planning team members copied), the architect did not have an answer.
7. I am also concerned about the overall dominance of the proposed frontage as seen from Markham Street and its junction with the King's Road. In light of this, I find the manipulation of the north elevation, shown below, to be particularly concerning. The architect appears to have superimposed erroneous buildings and rooflines, circled, to make the proposed new frontage look relatively less dominant:



8. The elevation should, for the sake of realism, look more like the following, revealing how relatively more dominant the proposed new building would be:



9. Taking a closer look at Venchi, no. 71 King's Road (left circle above), and KOBOX and IKKS, no.s 107 and 109 (right circle above):

Venchi

Reality:

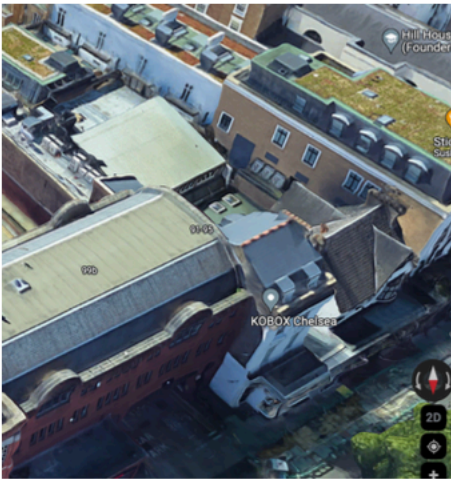


Presented as:



KOBOX and IKKS

Reality:

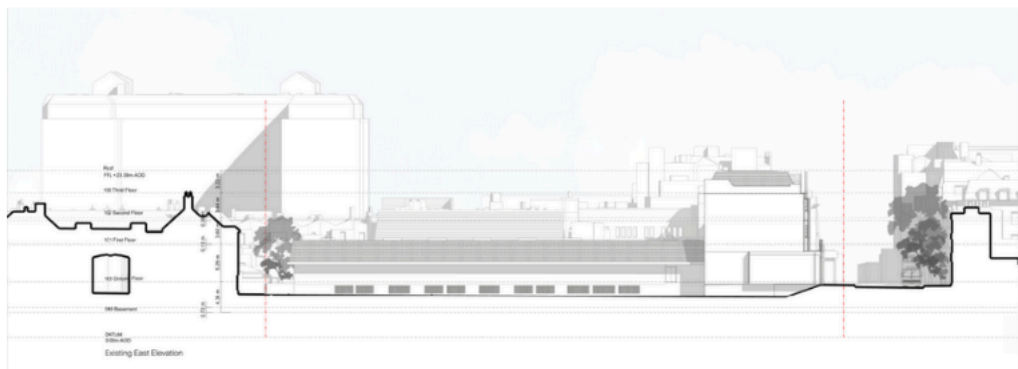
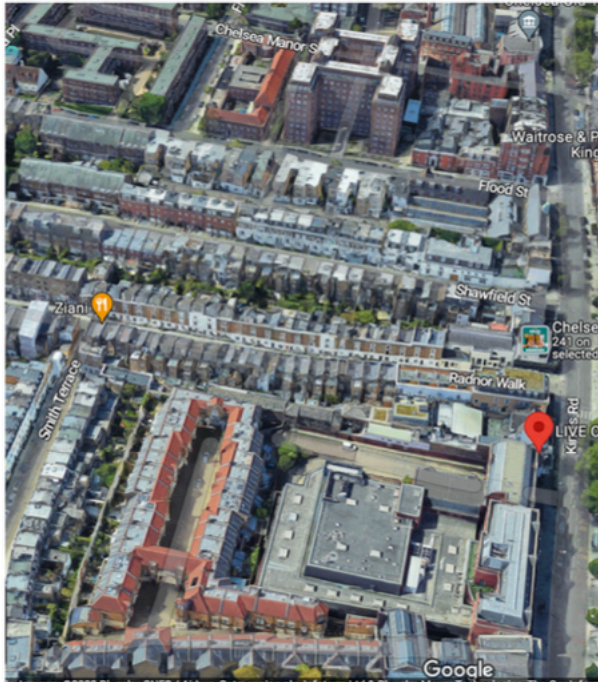


Presented as:

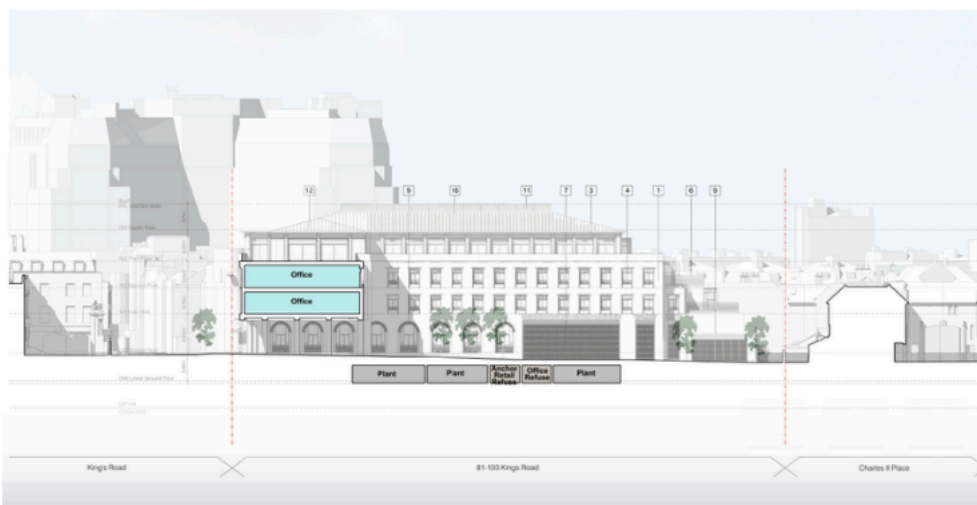


10. There are similarly misleading east and west elevations, with monster-sized buildings added into the backgrounds, presumably to make the proposed larger structure on the site appear more reasonable:

East elevation reality, and presentation:



West elevation reality, and presentation:



11. It is not easy, given the confusing way in which the design is presented, to infer how tall the new building would be, but the increase in height would clearly be significant. The proposed building would be at least one storey taller than the existing building, and taller than any of the buildings nearby. The increase in 'heft' (scale) and the feeling of dominance are even harder to

gauge. Point 1.9 of the Planning Statement says that the gross internal area would be 16,138 sq. m.. Page 10 of the same document (going by numbers at the bottoms of pages) says the existing building comprises 1,150 sq. m retail floorspace on the ground and basement floors and 1,100 sq. m office above – 2,250 sq. m in total(?) – which implies an astonishing 7+ times increase in space. Yet point 1.3 says the total floor space of the existing building fact 9,790 sq. m.. What is correct?

12. Regardless, the proposed structure will clearly be a much larger building, and contrary to Policies CL1 (Context and Character), CL3 (Conservation Areas and Historic Spaces) and CL 5 (Living Conditions), in addition to aforementioned CL12, all in the current Local Plan, as well as Policy CD1 (Context and Character) in the new Plan.
13. I appreciate that there are precedents for tall buildings in the wider area, for example, the King's Walk project. However, Markham Street is lower rise. The King's Walk project faces four-storey Royal Avenue. Markham Street is two storeys (at the limit, three, if you include the attic rooms under mansard roofs). Indeed, the addition of this structure to the other tall buildings that have been permitted on the King's Road would only serve to create an unfortunate "canyonisation" effect in this world famous thoroughfare.
14. The building that currently houses Marks & Spencer, constructed in the late 1980s and shown overleaf, remains respectful towards the scale and aesthetic of the street. It respects both what came before (below) and Council policy.





15. Elsewhere in the Borough, brick buildings have been attractively and thoughtfully reused, for example the new Apple Store on Brompton Road by Foster + Partners.



16. The demolition of the existing building 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. The existing building is relatively new, perfectly serviceable and not unattractive in appearance. There is no exceptional case for demolition – for example, social or community benefits that couldn't otherwise be provided for. Indeed, it involves a supermarket and offices, both of which already exist on the site.

17. The plan for managing traffic during the construction phase appears to envisage closing part of the King's Road carriageway and its reduction to one-way traffic for a period of up to two years. This is not acceptable. We have seen from the recent experience of the King's Walk project what such a closure means. There would at times be total gridlock the whole length of the road from Sloane Square to Oakley Street. The King's Road is one of the busiest streets in Chelsea; it is highly disingenuous of the applicant to claim that "traffic flows along the King's Road are low". The resulting damage to air quality would be a major health risk to everyone, but especially to the young, the old and the otherwise vulnerable.
18. Please (i) refuse this inappropriate application that breaches so many policies, and (ii) require that applicants make complete, accurate and clear submissions.

23rd April 2023.