

From: Cleaver Square, Cleaver Street and Bowden Street Residents' Association

Lambeth County Court: planning application - PLEASE SUBMIT COMMENTS

The Duchy of Cornwall plan to redevelop the former Lambeth County Court in Cleaver Street SE11 – adding a new modern storey and building up an extension at the back to create two offices and nine flats.

Many residents are objecting to the planning application as they feel the development is entirely inappropriate for the building itself (locally-listed), and the conservation area in which it is located.

PLEASE ADD YOUR VOICE.



Current



Proposed

The court was built in 1928 and was in use from that date until its closure in 2017. It is one of three important civic buildings in Kennington. The other two (the Durning Library and the former Lambeth Town Hall) are already Grade II listed.

The court sits at the heart of the Kennington Conservation Area. This area has been designated by the London Borough of Lambeth as “One of the most intact and architecturally coherent areas of architecture and townscape within Lambeth dating from the late 18th century to the early 20th century. The conservation area is considered to have London-wide significance in this respect...[It] has retained its original historic character because so little harmful redevelopment and change has taken place.”

An application for Grade II listing has been made to Historic England (HE), supported by the Twentieth Century Society which considers the building to be ‘of national significance.’ We

have just heard from HE that the developers (Duchy of Cornwall) are challenging our application by applying for a Certificate of Immunity to Listing.

The deadline for comments to Lambeth about the planning application has been extended to 27 August. Here is the link:

<https://planning.lambeth.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=QVTX0UBOKQQ00>

It is important that as many residents as possible send in their comments to Lambeth, expressing their own views (which may be for or against). We continue to work our way through the 41 documents forming the application and will be querying many points in detail. Not everyone will have the time or inclination to do this, so the main documents to look at for an overview are the Design and Access Statement and Planning Statement.

Lambeth will only take into account comments that concern relevant 'material planning considerations'. (<https://beta.lambeth.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-applications/planning-application-process/consultation-your-application>). For this application, these include:

- Design and external appearance of the proposed development (height and bulk in relation to neighbouring properties).
- Effect on listed building and conservation area
- Loss of sunlight, daylight and outlook
- Loss of privacy
- Highway safety

Currently our association's position is:

- Residents are keen to see the court building re-purposed but these proposals represent an inappropriate over-development of the site in the heart of one of Lambeth's most important conservation areas.
- The building is locally listed by Lambeth as a heritage asset. Historic England are considering it for Grade II listing. It would show complete contempt for the protections in place if this development were to be permitted.
- The increased height and massing of the development is grossly out of proportion to its restricted site. The new building is taller than some of the documents indicate, and would overlook and overshadow neighbouring properties, some of which are just a few metres away.

Other points raised by residents:

1. The building could easily be redeveloped without adding a modern storey or an over-large rear extension. Have all other potential uses been explored? It is currently used as gallery space and artists' workshops, so a creative hub could be a possibility.

2. Additional homes are needed in Lambeth, but why blight an historic building by trying to accommodate nine flats when there are thousands being built in the surrounding area (Nine Elms, Oval Village, Elephant and Castle)? None of the nine flats provide Affordable Housing, and none will be accessible for people with disabilities as there is no lift.
3. The scale of the development would mean that throughout construction there would be significant safety risks from large lorries. The site on Cleaver Street is on the main pedestrian/cycle route through Kennington. The proposal to block off the pavement and create a lorry pit lane on this narrow but busy street is a major concern.
4. The community consultation process has not been comprehensive and the developers have been selective in their interpretation of responses. The majority of those taking part oppose the scheme. Residents of Calstock House, mainly social tenants, have been effectively disenfranchised. The flyer circulated to them gave no hint that they might be affected, so prompted little engagement. There was no indication that (a) they would lose privacy and (b) daylight to several ground floor rooms would be reduced below minimum statutory levels.

The Lambeth planning site sometimes goes down and documents are unavailable. If in doubt, copy your comments to the helpful planning officer responsible for this application: Karim Badawi kbadawi@lambeth.gov.uk.

Thank you so much for your support.