

Verbal representation given by Chair of FOSKD at the Hearing on 1st December 2022

This is a complex planning application for an embassy, raising issues which the LBTH Council and residents have not had to consider previously. The site:

1. is in a conservation area which contains listed buildings
2. includes a significant archaeological site
3. sits beside the major tower hill road junction
4. has little space for protestors outside the perimeter

It is reasonable to suggest that any embassy is likely to attract protestors. If they spill onto the road, the police will need to close the junction for their safety, causing huge tailbacks of traffic.

We have seen the extensive security precautions taken outside the new American embassy at Nine Elms, ensuring they are safe from attack by hostile vehicles. It is unclear how these issues will be dealt with here. The planning report says they will be considered as conditions, **after** the planning decision is taken, but before occupation of the site. but the security issues both inside and outside the embassy need to be dealt with **together, before** any decision is made and this should be done in consultation with residents who are worried about becoming victims of terrorist attacks on the embassy or getting swept up in protests.

A key security document referenced in item 5.2 of the planning report has restricted access. it's the "informative note" which only a few residents involved in the consultation have seen. That note was written by the Met Police about a blast assessment report which residents asked the council to commission. The full report was written by a sub-contractor of a company, appointed by the Council, whose independence from the applicant we are challenging. the full report is marked "official sensitive" meaning neither you nor we can read it. The blast assessment considered the impact of both vehicle and person borne improvised explosive devices, at the most likely attack locations. The report apparently provides mitigation measures for the council to consider. the Met's counter terrorism security advisor's offered additional measures. neither you nor we know the detail of these or what they will cost.

We do know that the full report concluded that "successful" blast events, in selected locations around the site, would result in injuries and deaths to passers-by as well as structural damage and potential building collapse. the CTSA has advised that **at this current time** there is no information to suggest that the site, when occupied, is at heightened risk from terrorism. Once the site is occupied, it's suggested that there should be counter terrorism testing and exercises involving local residents. "The informative note" has shortcomings which we raised with the Planning team and the Met on 21st November 2022. They undertook to look into them, but did not respond back to us.