



THE FRIENDS OF ST KATHARINE DOCKS

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86, St Katharine's Way
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4th September 2024

Dear Sir / Madam

As Chair of the Friends of St Katharine Docks (FOSKD) I am writing in respect of **Planning Applications PA/24/01229/A1 & PA/24/01248/NC** for the Embassy development on the 5.4 acre Royal Mint Court site (RMC site) at Tower Hill. I understand that this application is due to be decided by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) Strategic Development Committee on a date yet to be determined.

It is our understanding that the applicant did not request a pre-planning meeting, and has taken the unusual step of re-submitting the applications they filed in 2021 PA/21/01327 & PA/21/01349 without any changes to the proposals. Following the rejection of those applications at a Hearing on 1st December 2022, the applicant did not appeal the decision to Refuse.

On behalf of FOSKD I am repeating the observations on the development proposals that I made against the previous applications, as it is my understanding that none of the issues I raised previously have been addressed by the applicant in the re-submitted applications. For that reason, the current representation being submitted by FOSKD in relation to the new applications, consists of the following four documents:

1. This letter dated 4th September 2024
2. Our previous letter of representation dated 16th November 2022
3. Our interim letter of representation dated 30th July 2021
4. A transcript of the short verbal presentation I gave at the Hearing on 1st December 2022

Our major concerns with the application are:

1. As the RMC site is within the Tower of London Conservation Area, we are concerned about the potential adverse effect of this development on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area
2. The impact on the important archaeological assets on the site, both above and below ground
3. The adverse impact that demonstrations outside the perimeter will have on Highway safety, and the potential inconvenience to road users
4. Security of residents, office workers & members of the public in the area outside the perimeter of the embassy site.
5. Lack of permeability to the site and the plans for vehicular access to the site
6. The adverse effect on the residential amenity of neighbours, which may include nuisance, noise & disturbance and loss of privacy

We have read Historic Royal Palaces letter of representation dated 20th August 2024 on the current planning applications and we agree with their ongoing concerns about public safety and security. We also concur with their view that more could be done in relation to the public realm, especially in Mansell Street, also that the area around the perimeter of the site would benefit from a more holistic and joined up approach to the treatment of the boundary, to provide wider public benefit and to give recognition to the importance of the local setting to the Outstanding Universal Value of the Tower of London World Heritage Site. **We are aware that UNESCO has commissioned a new report on the Tower of London to be completed in Q4 2024 (the last report was in 2014) in order that it can be debated at their next meeting in early 2025. They will be looking very carefully at the immediate setting of the Tower of London. The London Plan makes clear that any Development proposals in World Heritage Sites and their Settings, including any buffer zones, should conserve, promote and enhance their Outstanding Universal Value, including the authenticity, integrity and significance of their attributes, and support their management and protection. It would be very concerning if the Embassy Planning Applications, should they be granted, were to jeopardise in any respect, the World Heritage status of the Tower of London – held to be the “jewel in the crown” of the Borough of Tower Hamlets.**

We have also read the representations from Historic England to the previous application and we note that their archaeology adviser (GLASS) dealing with the “below ground “ aspects is quoted as saying “We are not currently persuaded that the harm is clearly or convincingly justified, so therefore recommend that further information and design changes are sought before the application is determined”. We are not aware that those concerns have been addressed by the applicant.

For all the reasons given in the four documents we have submitted, we continue to assert that the Royal Mint Court site is not suitable as a site for an Embassy. We therefore ask that these Planning Applications be rejected.

Yours faithfully,
Ms S.M. Hughes
Chair, FOSKD