



Florence Eshalomi
Member of Parliament for Vauxhall
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Tel: 020 7219 6552

Mr Ben Oates
Principal Planning Officer
Lambeth Council
Lambeth Town Hall
1 Brixton Hill
London SW2 1RW

23 March 2022

Dear Ben,

21/02668/EIAFUL– Redevelopment of The London Television Centre – 60-72 Upper Ground - SE1 9LT

I am writing as the Member of Parliament for Vauxhall to formally object to the above planning application, due to be considered by the Planning Committee on 29 March. Many residents in the local community have contacted me with their concerns about this proposal, and I share their reservations.

I firmly agree that the site in question must be developed, believing that this should be done according to the needs of the area and local community. I welcome the sustainability aspects of this proposal, the jobs it would facilitate in construction and permanent employment, and the funds it would generate in developer contributions towards important public realm improvements and transport accessibility.

However, I am not satisfied that the type of development proposed is aligned to the needs of the area, and I believe that the benefits above could be delivered whilst avoiding the bulk of the harms that this proposal would cause to local properties and heritage assets. Specifically, I object to this application on the following grounds:

Lack of housing provision - There are significant pressures on housing supply across the Borough and an urgent need to provide quality affordable housing to meet the needs of the Lambeth's population both now and in the future. The previously approved proposal on this site was housing-based, but this element has been lost entirely with this application. Furthermore, given the uncertain impacts of the recent Covid-19 pandemic on working patterns in the long-term, I do not believe that office space on this scale is the best use of this space when the growth in popularity of home working is considered.

Affordability and local benefit - I am also disappointed that the commitment to affordable workspace included in this proposal is only marginally above the minimum proportion of 10% as set out in Lambeth Council's policy. This will mean the vast majority of offices will be vastly unaffordable for smaller local enterprises. Whilst any job creation is of course to be welcomed, it is therefore likely that the majority of new employment will benefit those living outside of the area and commuting in. This leaves the immediate community disproportionately impacted by the harms this development will cause, without being the primary beneficiaries of many of the opportunities created.

Daylight reductions – I have been contacted by large numbers of concerned residents within the housing co-operatives adjacent to the site, concerned about the severe impact that this proposal will have on the levels of daylight received in properties to the south of the site. These concerns relate primarily to 95-97 Upper Ground (part of the Iroko Housing Cooperative), comprising maisonettes on the ground, first, and second floors, and 21 duplex flats above. I note with interest that the Officer's report attached to this application acknowledges that "there would be instances of major adverse impact" for these flats. Having visited the properties myself, I support residents in their view that these reductions are unacceptable.



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Heritage harms – I am further concerned that both the Greater London Authority and Heritage England have identified notable harm to a number of vital cultural assets in the immediate locale of the site, caused by the scale, bulk and massing of this proposal. The buildings impacted are among some of the most important protected landmarks in this area of London, including: the IBM Building (Grade II Listed), the Royal National Theatre (II*), Pride Sculpture (II), Somerset House (I), the Royal Festival Hall (I) and St Paul's Cathedral (I). These entities draw in significant commerce for the businesses surrounding the site, and such impacts may adversely affect this in the future.

On balance, I do not believe that the merits of this application outweigh the significant number of negative consequences as set out above. This is a view supported by the overwhelming majority of the large number of public representations made, a fact recognised in the Officer's report which calls the proposal "controversial and extremely unpopular".

I therefore hope that this application will be reconsidered in favour of one which utilises this key strategic site for local benefit without such a substantial degree of unnecessary harm.

Sincerely,

Florence Eshalomi MP
Member of Parliament for Vauxhall

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