

◆ DIGBY MANSIONS (39-58A) RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION LIMITED ◆

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27th September 2010

Nigel Pallace
Director of Environment
London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
Town Hall Extension
King Street
London W6 9JU

Dear Mr Pallace

Re: Hammersmith Town Hall Development

I am writing in my capacity as a Director and Company Secretary of Digby Mansions (39-58A) Residents Association Ltd. As such, I represent the 32 households in Flats 39 - 58A Digby Mansions, the two blocks of Digby Mansions nearest the river.

We wish to voice our deep concerns about the currently proposed plans for the Hammersmith Town Hall Development and King Street Regeneration scheme.

We had been led to believe that this would be a relatively low-rise, low density development, but this now appears not to be the case. The currently proposed scheme is much larger and more extensive than originally envisaged and we feel very strongly that it is totally out of character with this part of Hammersmith and will have a severe detrimental effect on the neighbourhood and its residents.

Specifically, we are concerned about:

- **The height and density of the proposed development**
- **The number and type of apartments and lack of social or affordable housing**
- **The compulsory purchase and demolition of the Thomas Pocklington Trust properties**
- **The demolition of the cinema and the building of a new supermarket**
- **The size and position of the proposed footbridge**

1. The height and density of the proposed development:

When the development was first proposed, we understood that the scheme would take into consideration and protect the views of the site from the river, the Hammersmith Mall Conservation Area and the surrounding residential streets. In particular, we believed that none of the new buildings would be any taller than the height of the existing Town Hall extension at maximum.

We now find that in addition to two new buildings housing Council offices and shops up to a height of 9 storeys, there are to be two new 14+ storey buildings containing luxury apartments. All of these buildings are considerably taller than the existing Town Hall extension and are completely at odds with what local residents were led to expect.

A group of buildings of this size will totally dominate the area, dwarf the 1930s Town Hall and will be visible from many parts of Hammersmith and further beyond.

The development will destroy the spectacular panorama of the Mall Conservation Area from the river, particularly the setting of the listed buildings of Dove Passage, Dove Pier and Furnival Gardens.

The area of Hammersmith adjacent to the Town Hall is not a city centre. The surrounding streets are primarily residential and the Mall Conservation Area to the south is a pleasant riverside community, with open spaces and historic listed buildings. A development in this area on the scale proposed is totally inappropriate.

2. The number and type of apartments and lack of social or affordable housing:

We do not feel that Hammersmith needs 320 new luxury apartments.

This will mean an additional 500 or more residents moving about the area, using public transport, driving cars and using public services. This will all place a considerable and unnecessary strain on the area.

It is nothing short of scandalous that the Council should even consider a development of this size which does not include any social or affordable housing. This effectively rules out any possibility that the vast majority of Hammersmith residents will be able to live in these apartments. The new housing will therefore be of absolutely no benefit to most local people.

3. The compulsory purchase and demolition of the Thomas Pocklington Trust properties:

The proposal to compulsorily purchase the Thomas Pocklington Trust building, against the wishes of the Trust, and the resulting eviction of the tenants from their homes, seems a particularly cruel and unnecessary way to treat some of the most vulnerable people in the local community and will also be destructive to the long term interests of the Trust.

For the blind tenants especially, who will be forcibly re-settled, against their will, in a new and unfamiliar environment, this will be extremely traumatic and is likely to have a severe and long-term detrimental effect on the quality of their lives.

As the scheme contains no social or affordable housing and makes no provision for incorporating housing for these tenants, there is no possibility for these people to return to homes in the locality once the development has been completed.

4. The demolition of the cinema and the building of a new supermarket:

Demolishing the cinema is detrimental to the interests of Hammersmith residents. There are no other cinemas nearby, but there are several supermarkets and many local shops within easy walking distance. The cinema is useful - there is no need for another supermarket.

5. The size and position of the proposed footbridge:

It appears that the proposed footbridge is going to be at a considerable height above the A4 and will enter Furnival Gardens at a very high level right beside Sussex House, a Grade 2* listed building. The footbridge will be extremely prominent when viewed from the river and Furnival Gardens and will totally spoil the appearance of Dove Passage and Sussex House.

Furnival Gardens is a very important and much used open space. The ramps providing step-free access to the footbridge will take up a considerable area of the Gardens, resulting in a severe loss of amenity for Hammersmith residents and visitors to the area alike.

The existing subways are unobtrusive and could easily be re-furbished. The proposed footbridge is therefore an unnecessary eyesore, which will take up a great deal of space in this important local park.

In short, we feel very strongly that, for the reasons given above, the proposed scheme is entirely inappropriate for the location and is not in the best interests of Hammersmith residents.

In our view, this development will harm the environment and the local community, rather than enhancing and benefitting it.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Bain
Director & Secretary

c.c. Andy Slaughter MP
Cllr Mike Cartwright
Cllr. Stephen Cowan
Cllr. P.J. Murphy
Cllr. Lucy Ivimy
Barbara Woda, Head of Urban Design & Conservation, LBHF
Save Our Skyline
HAMRA