

## **APPENDIX 8.5 to THURLOE OWNERS AND LEASEHOLDERS ASSOCIATION OBJECTION**

### **EMS Review of South Kensington Station Development, Application Refs. PP/20/03216 and LB/20/03217**

I am the consultant architect for the Anstruther Kensington Estate Estate Management System, which adjoins the proposed development at Thurloe Bridge, and I wish to object to this application on their behalf.

As a general note, the EMS is supportive of the intention to improve circulation and reduce congestion at South Kensington Station, and welcomes the creation of new homes in the borough. However our primary area of concern is the proposed new building adjoining Thurloe Square, and the effect this will have on the Anstruther Kensington Estate and the Thurloe and Smiths Charity Conservation Area.

#### **1. New Building on Thurloe Bridge**

1.1 Part of the proposed South Kensington Station development project involves a new residential building to the south west corner of Thurloe Square, which is intended to act as a reinstatement of a lost part of the terrace adjacent to the current No.52 Thurloe Square, which was demolished as part of the original station development.

1.2 The extent of input in the design from the residents of Thurloe Square and the EMS is difficult to gauge. According to the submitted Statement of Community Involvement, a meeting with the TOLA was held on 25 April 2019, however no minutes are included in the statement and the Chair of TOLA at that time has no recollection of this meeting, so it can be assumed that in reality no meetings with TOLA have taken place.

1.3 There is evidence in the submitted Design and Access Statement that the design for the proposed new buildings over the 'Thurloe Bridge' has evolved from something wholly unsuitable to the current proposal, through various pre-applications with RBKC and other design panels. However, in design terms, the proposed new building on the Thurloe Bridge requires further refinement and clarification in a number of ways as outlined below.

#### **2. Elevation Design**

2.1 The elevation study in the design statement notes that the width ratio of proposed vertical glazing to masonry is out of proportion on the proposed elevation, whereby the proposed full height windows appear too wide in comparison to the existing. The proposed window bays should be slimmer to better reference the pattern of Thurloe Square and reduce excessive glazing, while the hierarchy of the different floors is missing and should be incorporated.

2.2 In terms of materials to the main elevations, the 'stone' elements will be reconstituted stone/pre-cast concrete, and areas of brick will be pre-cast cladding panels applied with brick facing. While these elements claim to reference the existing historic palette, clarification is required as to how will these non-traditional materials will age and be maintained. For example, does the faux brickwork require repointing, and how long will it last before requiring replacement? Whilst convenient for speed and ease of construction, their long term appearance adjacent to Thurloe Square and their long term quality is unknown, and are deemed inappropriate in their proximity to Thurloe Square and to the conservation area

2.3 When real bricks are laid on a building site, the brick palettes invariably require mixing to prevent unsightly patches of similar tones of brick. Explanation is required for how this is to be avoided when the proposed brick facing is applied to the pre-cast cladding panels off site out of context.

2.4 The proposed brick colour which is to '*match surrounding context*', requires a method statement and sample panels, as the historic brickwork to the 1840's Thurloe Square elevations have been affected by almost 200 years of pollution and soot which has created the character now displayed. The brickwork to the adjacent No.52 Thurloe Square is a mixture of red and London yellow stock, is this what is being matched?

2.5 The side elevation facing No.52 Thurloe Square requires further design explanation, as it will be very visible in views along South Terrace.

### **3. Thurloe Bridge Building Height**

3.1 The proposed Thurloe Bridge buildings, which are suggested in the application to be reinstating the 1840's houses which once stood here for approximately 20 years, on what was then called Pelham Place North, are significantly taller and more dense than the houses which were actually on this site based on the information provided in the application.

3.2 The Design and Access Statement includes unsubstantiated information on page 106 in the form of the '*Thurloe Square Western elevation showing full terrace 1845-1868*' drawing, as there is no evidence provided that this terrace ever appeared in this form or at this height:

3.2.1 From the older map shown on page 103 of the Design and Access Statement, it is clear from the footprint of the 6 houses on the east facing side of Pelham Place North that they each had a different footprint to the adjoining houses facing onto Thurloe Square.

3.2.2 The adjoining house which did face Thurloe Square clearly projects forward as a finale to the intended taller houses facing the square, which were more desirable and expensive, and is where the present No.52 Thurloe Square now stands.

3.2.3 The Heritage Statement includes a photo on page 79 of the actual house type found on Pelham Place North, which correlates with the adjoining curving Pelham Place opposite, and as the only visual record of Pelham Place North provided in the application it should be assumed that the houses which once stood across from those in the photo were of the same scale and proportion.

3.2.4 The Heritage Statement also notes on page 69 that '*It is not known whether the buildings along the north of Pelham Road (Street) were ever completed to Basevi's designs or whether they reflect the more modest proportions and finishes of the houses along the southern side of the road. Without Basevi's tight control...it is not known whether his plans were implemented... photographic evidence...seems to show a terrace of houses on Pelham Street similar to the surviving houses on the south side of the street rather than the villas planned by Basevi.*' It is therefore also possible that the houses on the adjacent Pelham Place North may not have been to Basevi's designs either, and that they would likely not have been as tall as the houses in Thurloe Square as suggested in this application.

3.2.5 No.29 Pelham Place has been much altered and has clearly had an additional storey built above the original parapet level. The '*Thurloe Square Western elevation showing full terrace 1845-1868*' drawing includes this later addition in the historic view, which is likely inaccurate and further suggests the terrace at Pelham Place North may have been taller than all the apparent evidence to the contrary indicated above.

### **4. Mansard and Roof Design**

4.1 There is a lack of clarity as to the material for the proposed balcony edge protection to the roof, which will be seen in views of the square. It appears from drawings to be both glazed and metal in design on the front and rear elevations but the notes do not confirm this. Glazed balconies are not permitted on the Square due to the unavoidable pollution build ups, dirt and glare, and should not be used here. Clear 1:50 elevations with all materials noted to the entire new elevations next to the Square in context are required including all projecting roof plant, not just selected parts of the proposed elevation.

4.2 Confirmation is also required that the proposed new building roof will only be accessible for maintenance, and that residents of the apartments will not have access to hold parties causing noise issues with neighbours.

4.3 The fourth floors, which are only slightly recessed, should make more reference to the prevailing mansard style of the square by providing sloping party walls to break the horizontal lines and help the overall building resemble the established town house rhythm which we

understand from the elevation study to be important to the design process. No's 46-51 Thurloe Square have a defined sloping party wall which breaks the uniformity at this level.

4.4 Clarification is required regarding the central panel to the fourth floor bays, if they are intended to be blacked-out glass this typically stands out and is more jarring than say a solid panel and is inappropriate. Excessive glazing should be reduced.

4.5 The proposed fourth floor balustrade should only be used in front of actual windows and be omitted in front of the central panel to assist with the design intent outlined in the elevation study, and to reduce clutter to the elevation.

4.6 There is incorrect information on page 107 of the Design and Access Statement, whereby mansard roofs have been photo-shopped to Nos.6 and 7 Thurloe Square, using the mansard of No.8 Thurloe Square. This may be an attempt to suggest all houses in Thurloe Square have mansard roofs, but not all do.

4.7 Furthermore, the historic drawings of Thurloe Square on page 103 of the Design and Access Statement indicate that the original terraces either had a small central dormer window or no dormer window at all. Whereas the mansards shown on the 'Thurloe Square Western elevation showing full terrace 1845-1868' drawing on page 106 of the Design and Access Statement shows two dormers per house which clearly wouldn't have been there at that time.

## **5. Other Comments on Proposals Affecting Thurloe Square**

5.1 Not mentioned in the Design and Access Statement are any details for the proposed refuse store at ground level, which is set back but adjacent to No.52 Thurloe Square. Clarification is required for arrangements for ventilation and the proposed appearance and roof of this refuse store. Facing a prominent vista east along South Terrace from Thurloe Square, this refuse store will be too visible and potential odours could spread to the public footpath as well as No.52 Thurloe Square. Minimal information is provided within the Construction Environmental Management Plan or within the Delivery, Servicing and Waste Management Plan regarding this refuse store, and it is deemed inappropriate for this prominent location facing the square.

5.2 There are no views of the proposed building from within the square, and in order to allow greater assessment of its impact these must be provided.

5.3 In terms of effects on the use of Thurloe Square as a new exit from the station, clarification is required that this will only be used in the event of an emergency and that it won't become, for example, an overflow exit during peak times resulting in an adverse effect on the residents and character of Thurloe Square.

5.4 Within the Noise and Vibration Assessment, section 7 notes '*At the time of writing, details of the construction programme, methods and machinery are not yet known. For this reason, no assessment of construction noise and vibration is presented within this report.*' Piling and pad foundations for the Thurloe Street Deck works are noted in section 6.1 of the Construction Environmental Management Plan, so clearly the construction process at this location is part known, and section 7.1 of the same report notes that some works will need to be carried out between 00.50 to 05.10am Monday to Friday. Due to the inevitable noise and vibration caused by the construction process, including construction vehicles, prior to any approvals this report must be updated to include the actual impact the proposed development will have on Thurloe Square together with all the other affected streets, otherwise both residents and RBKC officers do not have a fully presented proposal.

5.5 Within the Construction Traffic Management Plan for Thurloe Street, Appendix B notes the proposed routes for construction traffic using Thurloe Street and part of Thurloe Square, and Appendix C clarifies that as well as the disruption from the construction vehicles there will also be a loss of 27m worth of parking bays for at least two and a half years. This is an unacceptable level of disturbance and loss of amenity for the EMS. Surely the number of proposed construction vehicle movements listed here and within the Delivery, Servicing and Waste Management Plan could be utilised for the Noise and Vibration Assessment for impact on potential movement to the historic buildings and noise.

5.6 Within the Construction Traffic Management Plan for Pelham Street and Thurloe Square, Appendix B notes the proposed routes for construction traffic using part of Thurloe Square, and Appendix D clarifies that as well as the disruption from the construction vehicles there will also be a loss of 5 parking bays for around a year and a half. This is an unacceptable level of disturbance and loss of amenity for the EMS. Surely the number of proposed construction vehicle movements listed here and within the Delivery, Servicing and Waste Management Plan could be utilised for the Noise and Vibration Assessment for impact on potential movement to the historic buildings and noise.

## **6. Conclusion – Objection**

6.1 In summary, the proposed height and massing of the Thurloe Bridge building is clearly based on an assumed terrace which once stood here, on the presumed design of unrecorded houses on Pelham Place North. The proposal is too tall for this location based on the historic information submitted with this application, and should be no taller than the known houses to have existed on the west facing side of Pelham Place North which would line through with the original Basevi design for the Pelham Place houses.

6.2 Elements of the submitted drawings also suggest confusion over where mansards currently exist in Thurloe Square and their original design, and together with this the proposed materials, refuse store, glazed roof balustrade, and all other points noted above will not complement the conservation area or the listed buildings of Thurloe Square. I therefore wish to object to applications PP/20/03216 and LB/20/03217 on behalf of the Anstruther Kensington Estate Estate Management System.