



For Immediate Release: 1 September 2022

Secretary of State calls-in ‘The Slab’

Local campaigners welcome the intervention of Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities, Rt. Hon Greg Clark MP who has used his powers to call in a planning application for ‘The Slab’, a proposed re-development of the former ITV Studios, 72 Upper Ground on London’s South Bank.

The Secretary of State said that he wants a public inquiry to look in particular at:

- a) is the proposal in accordance with statutory development plans;
- b) the extent to which the proposed development (including its scale and massing) is consistent with the Government policies for conserving and enhancing the historic environment, in respect of designated heritage assets;
- c) any other matters the Inspector considers relevant.

His action follows Lambeth Council support of the proposals in March 2022 and the London Mayor’s decision last week not to intervene.

Greg Clark's call in followed a campaign with support from across the political spectrum, including those living and working locally, Londoners, and others who care about our city.

Local resident and SOS Save Our South Bank Action Group Co-Chair Hannah Quigley said: “We welcome the local inquiry and will fully participate in the process to find a more suitable proposal for this important heritage location. The South Bank deserves better for its neighbouring residents and millions of visitors to the area alike”.

Michael Ball, WCDG said: “Mitsubishi’s plans are unsustainable, overbearing, and just plain ugly. This decision by the Secretary of State is an acknowledgement that neither Lambeth council nor the Mayor of London properly scrutinised the impact on listed national buildings, on some of the capital’s greatest views, or on the climate emergency. Thanks to Greg Clark, these plans will be suitably examined at last”.

David Hopkins, Coin Street Community Builders said: “We are relieved the Secretary of State’s decision now means these overbearing office proposals will receive the scrutiny they deserve. We’ve raised serious concerns about the harm this development would cause in wiping out daylight to neighbouring social housing and casting the riverside into shadow. The National Theatre, Historic England and the 20th Century Society have rightly pointed out the damage ‘The Slab’ would do to the views along the South Bank. Vauxhall MP Florence Eshalomi has questioned whether more offices on this site are more important than housing, which does not feature at all. We thank Greg Clark MP for listening to more than 4,680 people who have called for a public inquiry, underlining what a special place the South Bank has in the hearts of this nation”.

[End]

Notes to editors



***View from Stamford Street (L) and the north bank of the Thames (R).
Computer generated images of the proposed development extracted from the
72 Upper Ground planning application: Environmental Statement July 2021***

1. **Coin Street Community Builders (CSCB)** is a social enterprise working in Waterloo and North Southwark. CSCB owns, manages, and maintains the riverside walkway between the National Theatre and Sea Containers, Bernie Spain Gardens, Oxo Tower Wharf, Gabriel's Wharf, and Coin Street neighbourhood centre. It is freehold owner of the Iroko, Mulberry, Palm and Redwood housing developments which are leased to primary co-operatives managed by their tenants. <https://coinstreet.org/>

CSCB stated in its advice to decision makers Lambeth Council: "The scale, bulk and siting of the proposed development is excessive, overbearing and overly dominant. The impact on daylight received by adjacent Coin Street housing co-operatives will be severe. The riverside walkway and gardens to the north of the proposed development currently enjoy sunshine throughout the lunchtime peak and afternoon but would be cast into shadow by this development. The wanton disregard of the South Bank, one of London's most popular amenities, is unacceptable and short-sighted!"

2. **Waterloo Community Development Group (WCDG)** was founded in 1972. WCDG is a charity led by Waterloo residents to maintain and develop a healthy and sustainable community, for more land for homes and amenities such as shops and open space, for the benefit of present and future generations. wcdg.org.uk

WCDG stated in its advice to decision makers Lambeth Council: "The government's Building Beautiful Commission called for an overt focus on beauty and refusing ugliness as a primary purpose of the planning system. National planning policy puts the creation of beautiful and sustainable buildings and places at the heart of the planning process. These proposals are grotesquery on steroids, a swollen deformity for the South Bank".

3. **South Bank and Waterloo Neighbours (SoWN)** is the community body that represents residents, workers, businesses of all sizes and voluntary organisations in the South Bank and Waterloo Neighbourhood Plan formally approved in February 2020. SoWN was responsible for the wide consultation involved in identifying the key issues, for writing the plan and seeing it through to adoption. It represents the local community in monitoring how the plan is implemented, within the wider context of the Lambeth local plan and the London Plan. www.sowneighbours.org

SoWN objectives are:

- to promote high standard of planning and architecture in or affecting the area of benefit
- to educate the public in the geography, history, natural history, culture and architecture of the area of benefit
- to secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of feature areas or areas of historic or public interest in the area of benefit

SoWN stated in its advice to decision makers Lambeth Council: “The mass of the proposed building would be overbearing when experienced from neighbouring streets and public spaces. The proposed building would dominate the local street scene and the conservation area to the detriment.

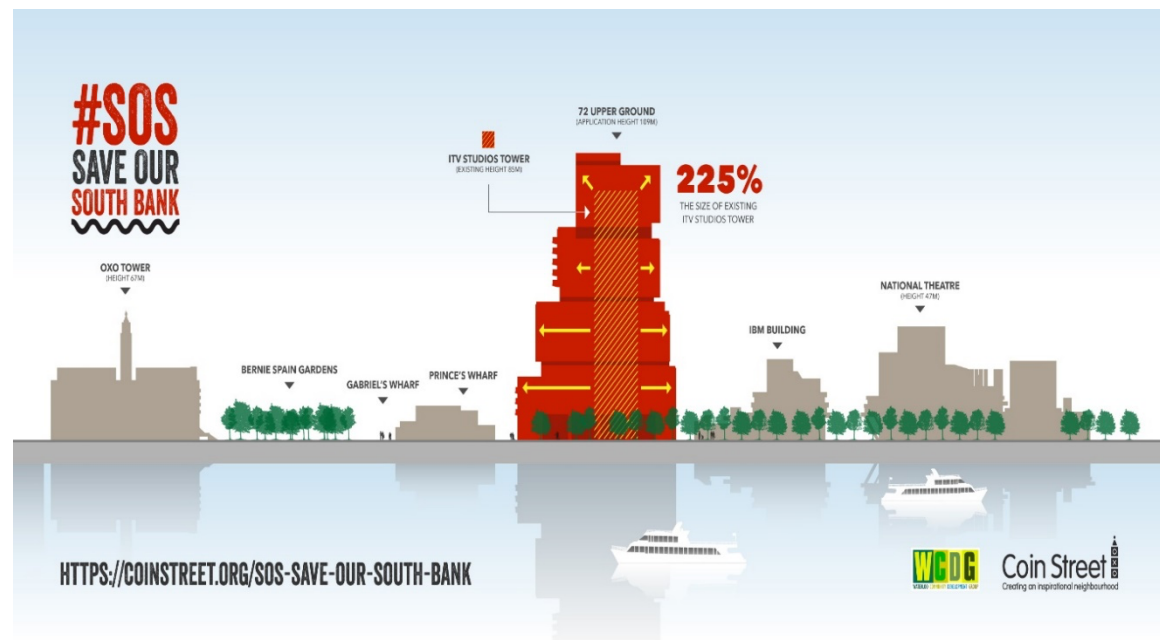
The scale and form of the building would cause harm to important local heritage assets, such as the South Bank Conservation area, IBM building, National Theatre, and the Roupell Street conversation area. The proposed building would result in a significant loss of daylight for several residents. The proposed building would result in a very significant loss of sunlight across important spaces, primarily the Queens walk and Bernie Spain Gardens.”

4. **The Twentieth Century Society stated in its advice to decision makers Lambeth Council:** “...considers the currently proposed new building to be an over-development of a site within a sensitive historic environment. Compared to the existing building, the massing of the proposed new building will be further forward on the riverfront side.

The new development will impact close views of the listed buildings from the Queen’s Walk and it will also impede wide views, particularly views of the National Theatre from Blackfriars Bridge to the east...The Society’s Casework Committee believes the proposed new building in its current form would harm the setting of the listed buildings on the site and harm the special character and appearance of the riverfront site, which is both a designated conservation area and positive contributor to a strategic view in London. We therefore urge the local authority to refuse planning permission and encourage the applicant to revise the design to substantially reduce the building’s front massing.”

5. **Historic England stated in its advice to decision makers Lambeth Council:** “There would be harm to the Grade II listed IBM building and Grade II listed National Theatre because of the close proximity of the proposed buildings and their impact on the importance of these designated heritage assets in river views. We have identified further harm through the 26-storey tower on the Roupell Street Conservation Area, through an increase in height and massing which compete with and distract from the Georgian domestic architecture in views within the conservation area...We continue to encourage you to explore refinements to the design to minimise the harm identified, including careful consideration being given to a reduction in the height and massing of the proposed buildings.”
6. **National Theatre stated in its advice to decision makers Lambeth Council:** “The National Theatre is sited within the cultural quarter of the South Bank, established by a number of important post-war structures, including the Royal Festival Hall, Hayward Gallery and Queen Elizabeth Hall. Together, they form a highly significant ensemble of mid-20th century cultural buildings which are characterised by a strong horizontal emphasis and high-level pedestrian connections.

The National also has a strong compositional relationship with the Grade I and II* listed structures of Somerset House and Waterloo Bridge. The National's siting on the South Bank as the river bends allows a panorama of the City of London that stretches from St Pauls round to Somerset House and onto Westminster Abbey. Its desirability as a location with uninterrupted views up and down the river will be severely impacted. The National considers the impact on the public's views of the National are also severely impacted by the proposed development."



7. **The former London Television Centre** site at 72 Upper Ground was secured by Mitsubishi Estate and CO-RE for **£145.6m in November 2019**. The application for planning consent was submitted to Lambeth Council in July 2021. The scheme is designed by Make Architects. It was approved by the Planning Application Committee on **Tuesday 29 March 2022** with 6 votes in favour to 1 in opposition.
8. **Public responses to the planning application** were received by the decision makers Lambeth Council. They included: **264** objections and **46** supporting. Responses can be accessed at www.bit.ly/3i9LyQb
9. The public continue to support our opposition to this planning application by signing the petition at: <https://www.change.org/SaveOurSouthBank> So far **over 4,680** people have signed the petition.
10. **The significant impacts of this scheme have been reported in national broadcast and press including:**
 - **Rowan Moore, The Observer**, 24 April 2022, who describe the proposal as “a brute of a building”
 - **Richard Morrison, The Times**, 6 May 2022, who describe the proposal as a “grotesque monstrosity”
 - **Sir Simon Jenkins, The Guardian**, 6 May 2022, who describes the proposal as an “aggressive behemoth” and nicknamed it ‘The Slab’

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