



Statement for immediate release – 26 January 2023

Last Chance Saloon for the Mitsubishi Monster

On the final day of the public inquiry into Mitsubishi Estates' proposed redevelopment of the former London Television Centre (60-72 Upper Ground), community organisations told the Inspector that a once in a lifetime opportunity will be wasted and irreparable harm to London's South Bank caused if planning permission is granted to what has been described in the national press as 'a brute of a building' (Rowan Moore in *The Observer*), 'an aggressive behemoth' (Sir Simon Jenkins in *The Guardian*), and 'a grotesque monstrosity' (Richard Morrison in *The Times*). Locals are even less complimentary.

Mitsubishi's development would destroy the special character of the South Bank, introducing a massive office development which would dominate riverside views, cast shadows over the riverside walkway and Bernie Spain Gardens, rob daylight from adjacent housing co-operatives, and adversely impact heritage assets like the National Theatre, St Paul's, and local conservation areas.

Michael Ball, Save Our South Bank and Waterloo Community Development Group says: "What people want are buildings that reflect the history, character and identity of their community and that belong in their surroundings: here on the South Bank, not just anywhere. Michael Gove, the Secretary of State who will take the decision, has made it clear that developers need to design *beautiful* buildings that are supported by the communities that must live alongside them".

David Hopkins, Director of Community at CSCB says: "Michael Gove has said that it is vital to build many more homes and, wherever possible, these should be built on *brownfield* sites. In some places communities are against new housing. Here on the South Bank, we want more. Yet this vast development of a brownfield site doesn't offer a single home to address London's severe housing shortage. We are confident that Michael Gove will see this as exactly the *wrong sort of development* for this sensitive South Bank site and will send Mitsubishi back to the drawing board".

The Inspector's report is expected to go to the Secretary of State in the Spring with a decision announced this Summer.

[Ends]

Notes to editors

Local people in SE1 have been campaigning against this redevelopment for over 18 months with the support of 5,500 people who signed the online petition. This is not sustainable development. The plans fail to accord with the development plan and the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Adjacent homes will be deprived of daylight, affecting residents' well-being and mental health if it goes ahead.

CSCB and WDCG welcome redevelopment with form, beauty of mixed use with new homes which could be achieved without having an adverse effect on significant landmarks like the National Theatre, and the views from other significant landmarks on the Thames including Somerset House, and St Paul's Cathedral. Local people, workers and visitors want to protect the public areas beside the Thames, Queen's Walk and Bernie Spain Gardens from being cast into shade at times when people most want to use them.

For information about the public inquiry

Transcripts of closing statements and all documents relating to the public inquiry go to : <https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/planning-building-control/planning-applications/public-inquiry-60-72-upper-ground>

About us

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 previous 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!".

#SOS Save Our South Bank action group is formed of local residents, politicians and others campaigning against Mitsubishi Estate's 'The Slab' office scheme designed by Make Architects for 60-72 Upper Ground, SE1 9LT.

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 previous 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”.

Press Contact

Keith Winestein (CSCB)
k.winestein@coinstreet.org
020 0721 1681