



Press Release dated 20 July 2023

## **South Bank Campaigners Welcome Gove's M&S Decision**

Organisations campaigning against Mitsubishi's proposals for 72 Upper Ground (formerly the headquarters of ITV and the London Television Centre) have welcomed the Secretary of State's decision to refuse an application to demolish the Marks & Spencer building in Oxford Street.

Michael Gove's decision, published today, states: *"He does not consider that the applicant has demonstrated that refurbishment would not be deliverable or viable and nor has the applicant satisfied the Secretary of State that options for retaining the buildings have been fully explored, or that there is a compelling justification for demolition and rebuilding."*

Michael Gove has announced that he will take his decision on Mitsubishi's 72 Upper Ground proposals "on or before 8 August". Mitsubishi proposes the demolition of all buildings on the South Bank site, including the ITV tower, and their replacement by a massive office development described in the national press as *"an aggressive behemoth"*, *"a grotesque monstrosity"*, *"a brute of a building"*, *"the slab"* and *"a forthcoming monster"*.

Campaigners, including local MP Florence Eshalomi, have called for any scheme on this 'brownfield' South Bank site to include a substantial number of new homes. Cross-examined at the public inquiry as to why the ITV tower could not be refurbished for flats, Mitsubishi's architect readily admitted that it could be "but my brief was for grade A offices".

The Mitsubishi scheme will also rob adjacent housing of daylight, cast its shadow on the South Bank riverside walkway and Bernie Spain Gardens, and destroy views of the riverside and heritage buildings.

**[Ends]**

## Notes to editors

### Michael Gove MP

Gove issued a warning in [November 2022](#) when he said his department would block new-build schemes that were not aesthetically 'high quality'.

'We will use all the powers we have, including call-in powers, in order to make sure that developments which are not aesthetically of high quality don't go ahead,' Gove was reported as saying at the time.

Michael Gove told MPs on 4 November 2021: "We want to have a planning system where people can feel confident that beauty is taken seriously, confident that the environment is benefitting, confident that the money will be there to support infrastructure, and confident that the community has a role ultimately in determining what is right". He added, "We want to be in a position where communities accept and welcome new development".

Faced with opposition to house building elsewhere, the Government is looking for homes to be built on 'brownfield' sites wherever possible.

### About us

**The SOS Save Our South Bank Action Group** consists of local residents, organisations and groups who came together to ensure that local people are consulted on the redevelopment of the former ITV Studios at 60-72 Upper Ground. They are campaigning against Mitsubishi Estate's 'Slab' office scheme designed by Make Architects and developer CO-RE.

Find the [petition](#) and visit the website [here](#)

**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. It organises extensive community programmes and activities <https://coinstreet.org/>

**CSCB's view:** "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. This wanton disregard of the South Bank riverside, one of London's most popular amenities, is unacceptable and short-sighted!"

**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](http://wcdg.org.uk)

**WCDG's view:** "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".

### **The Public Inquiry**

The Public Inquiry opened on Tuesday 6 December 2022 and concluded on 27 January 2023.

The Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has stated that Michael Gove MP will make his decision on or before the **8 August 2023**.

### **For more information**

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