

# SOUTHWARK

## ◆ CATHEDRAL ◆

The Planning Officer  
London Borough of Southwark  
Tooley Street  
London  
SE1

27 May 2021

Sir

### **NEW CITY COURT Applications 21/AP/1364 and 21/AP/1361**

The Chapter of Southwark Cathedral via the Fabric Advisory Committee (FAC) has been considering the new designs and applications made by the developers of New City Court, St Thomas Street, SE1. We would wish to place on record our thanks to Great Portland Estates and their agents for the manner in which they have engaged with us following our response to the original proposals. They have displayed a willingness to engage with the Chapter and to take due and proper regard of a development in a location close to a Grade I Listed Building and significant and iconic structure as Southwark Cathedral.

The Minute from the meeting of the Fabric Advisory Committee held on 21 March and attended by representatives of GPE is as follows

*An update was provided by Great Portland Estates, James Shipton and Andrew White, supported by Haydn Thomas for their architects. The ambitions for the project remain as before, of a carbon net zero building with public realm benefits, which would include retail, an elevated roof garden (or woodland in the sky) and affordable work space. Revisions had been made in the light of comments at consultation, particularly in respect of tower height, which has been reduced by 1/3rd. This results in some increase in width, or the bulking of the building. The extra Underground station access remains and is supported by TfL, while the width of the pedestrian routes has been doubled. Vehicular access will be from St Thomas St at restricted hours. The retention of the historic terrace frontages there, including Keats House, remains and their enhancement is revised. There is some softening of the corners of the new build, and the impact of the tower on overshadowing and wind effects on the Cathedral have been improved. The sight line across London Bridge is less intruded upon, and the view from the Cathedral courtyard less dominated by the tower. Stone facing is to be used at lower levels but lighter materials are necessary at height, while maintaining a consistent appearance and fitting better into the streetscape. FAC felt it was not their role to comment on the quality of the architecture, but to consider the scheme in the context of the Cathedral. Noting that the Historic Royal Palaces (for the Tower of*

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*London) and Historic England had welcomed the changes, this was certainly a positive revision to the scheme. The “greening” of the tower, with the involvement of the Bankside Open Spaces Trust, and a rooftop Café also show some commitment to the community. The bulking of the tower is still an issue, although there is relief about the height, and the references to the local Southwark building style are welcome. The project will move to the next stage in April, and with most previous concerns addressed, FAC felt that the opportunity should be taken to secure the overdue public realm benefits.*

The FAC are content with the plans as now being considered for permission and the Chapter is happy to accept their recommendation and give our support to the project.

Yours faithfully

