

Regents Canal Conservation Area Advisory Committee (RCCAAC)  
C/O 34 Park Avenue  
Wood Green  
London  
N22 7EX

[regentscanalcaac@camdenlock.co.uk](mailto:regentscanalcaac@camdenlock.co.uk) <<mailto:regentscanalcaac@camdenlock.co.uk>>

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Ken Bean  
Senior Planning Officer  
Planning Division  
West London Plans & Casework  
Government Office for London  
9th Floor Riverwalk House  
157-161 Millbank  
London  
SW1P 4RR  
Fax: 020 7217 3517  
Email [ken.bean@gol.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ken.bean@gol.gsi.gov.uk) <<mailto:ken.bean@gol.gsi.gov.uk>>

**Kings X Central Planning Applications : 2004/2307/P and 2004/2311/P, 2004/2313/L-2316L; 2004/2317/C-2318C; 2004/2320C-21C submitted to Camden Borough Council by Argent Kings Cross, with particular relation to the Regents Canal Conservation Area**

Dear Mr Bean

This email is sent by way of urgency and a hard copy will be in the post.

We wish to support the other organizations, such as the Kings Cross Conservation Area Advisory Committee, SAVE Britains Heritage, KX Railway Lands Group and Camden Green Party in asking the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to call in the several Kings Cross Central Railway lands planning applications for determination by Public Inquiry.

The community has a number of serious concerns, and we are particularly concerned that various issues around the conservation of the Regents Canal Conservation Area, the oldest section of the Kings Cross railway lands, have not been properly examined.

The decision-making process at the Development Control meetings of the 8th and 9th March was widely perceived to be seriously flawed. One of the reasons given for barring the Regents Canal Conservation Area Advisory Committee from making a deputation was a suggestion that it does not have an interest in planning matters. Given the obvious planning interest of these committees, and the Councils duty to encourage them, it would seem that the way the Council handled these matters could scarcely have been more flawed.

Camden Councils staff refused to supply written reasons for the last minute exclusion of the Regents Canal Conservation Area Advisory Committee deputation from addressing the Camden Planning Committee on these matters until the very last moment. The Kings Cross Conservation Area Advisory Committee was not given extra time to highlight Conservation Area issues to do with the canal. All in all, these issues have been excluded or dismissed, despite the obvious breach of the Councils own planning brief.

The sheer weight of information and the lack of time given to read and understand it, let alone give it the consideration due to such a large, complex and important set of proposals, clearly demonstrates the need for the further consideration that a Public Inquiry would bring.

We feel that the terms of the Inquiry should include various Conservation and Listed Building issues. Not least that the Developer clearly wishes to make great changes to the defined character of part of the Regents Canal Conservation Area in order to create a totally different setting for its development, despite the fact that this location falls outside of the development area.

The outline proposals are merely ideas, which may not even come to fruition, let alone show any signs of satisfying any of the necessary tests before demolition can take place. The rest of the Kings Cross development blueprint will change over its 15 - 20 year construction period. Yet demolitions are scheduled to take place prior to any final ideas or plans being put forward, meaning that demolition may be completely unnecessary.

So far, the discussion of the outline ideas has taken place behind closed doors, so that it is not possible to compare them to the tests found in PPG15. We feel very strongly that these and other matters need to be properly examined, and that this means there is a clear need for an Inquiry.

As the report to the Councillors said, 'the industrial landscape [of Kings Cross] is a major heritage resource both nationally and internationally'. The ecology of the canal and Camley Street Natural Park and would be compromised by the shadow of the eleven-storey blocks that would replace Culross Buildings, and would also be damaged by a proposed bridge. The demolition of the canal walls - which are crucial to the defined character of the Conservation Area - prior to finished ideas, proposals and full planning consent, is totally unacceptable.

If it should be that the Secretary of State decides against call in, we hope that he will at least issue an article 14 of the Town and Country Planning (General Development) Order 1995 Procedure notice to allow Government Office for London and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister time to clarify the many matters left by the planning committee, as not all of these will be covered by s106 negotiations or reserved matters applications.

Yours sincerely

Steve Lucas  
Secretary  
Regents Canal Conservation Area Advisory Committee (RCCAAC)