

Public realm works to the perimeter of the Northern Estate (19/08254/FULL)

30th January 2020

We are satisfied that most of the proposals for the Northern Estate will be beneficial. For members of the public, what is of greatest concern is that the interface between the complex of buildings and the public realm will be improved. This is of course along each external façade, especially along Whitehall, but also at each entrance to the site, whether in use or not. The plans for the various gated entrances are an improvement on the existing.

We do, however, have the following objection to the plans for the Northern Estate Programme:

We object to the 3m high railings along the stretch of Whitehall north of Derby Gate, and as temporary extensions to the existing 'area' railings south of Derby Gate. No such barrier exists at present at the visitor's entrance to Portcullis House so we do not understand why it would be necessary at Richmond House. We question whether the upper level of railings, where every other vertical bar projects almost two metres above the lower range, would actually be effective barriers. They are quite widely spaced and lack an upper stabilising rail. The appearance of these unsupported spikes is uncomfortably aggressive.

WE note also, in 5.1.4, that the Railings will only be needed during the decant period and not afterwards. Why, when the buildings behind them will still be in the same sort of parliamentary use after the return to the Palace. We are worried that it might become 'necessary' to keep the railings in perpetuity.