Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR (Ref. No: 25/06171/FULL) 3 October 2025

Hotel use of the building has its advantages, such as the introduction of a cafe and restaurant in an area with surprisingly few alternative outlets. However, the scale of this scheme is worrying, and there are a number of elements of the project which worry us:

Change of use from offices

We do not think that the loss of another office building in this area is desirable, and it goes against planning policy. There is some doubt as to whether this building could or could not be retained in office use. The developers maintain that there is no demand, but its proximity to Parliament would suggest that it would not be difficult to let as offices. We also understand that the offices in 4 Millbank have been let recently, and 7 Millbank is being rebuilt as offices, indicating confidence in the market for offices.

Effect on the Smith Square Conservation Area

There would be a negative effect from a 650-room hotel on the Smith Square Conservation Area, where residents and workers currently enjoy relative tranquillity. The anticipated footfall is likely to be high, especially at night, which is why we welcome the restriction imposed that the Smith Square entrances doors are only used for staff. In the event that planning permission is granted, we ask that a Condition be imposed to ensure that this restriction is maintained.

Site limits

Apart from the basement servicing area, the proposed working areas (site offices, staff welfare etc) at street level are not defined. We assume that scaffolding will be needed, and yet it is not evident where scaffolding can be erected other than in Smith Square, which is considered out of bounds for construction traffic. We doubt that all movement of construction materials can be made from the basement area, and therefore the Construction Logistics Plan (CLP) is impractical.

Traffic

Traffic in Smith Square has increased substantially following the new turning restrictions at Millbank/Lambeth Bridge. Rat-running through Smith Square has unfortunately become common. The extra traffic generated by the on-street drop-off area in Dean Stanley St and servicing deliveries to Dean Bradley Street will worsen this situation and affect the amenity of Smith Square, both for the residents and visitors to the Concert Hall. Equally, the heavy use of Dean Bradley Street for all Construction and then servicing access will affect the residential buildings in that area too.

The CLP, under ‘Site Access’ (p.8), suggests the use of Dean Stanley Street as a holding bay for vehicles waiting to enter the site – which implies severe congestion, especially as 7 Millbank is still under construction. This use also conflicts with the statement in ‘Delivery Routes’ (p11) that says ‘No construction traffic will be permitted to turn into Dean Stanley Street from Millbank or circulate through Smith Square at any time.’

Hours of Operation

The hours of operation of the hotel, especially the 1am closure of the Bar, will inevitably cause disturbance to the residential neighbours, as will refuse collection every day between 6.00 and 8.00 am, and food and beverage deliveries in 'early morning hours'.

It is noted that the waste collection routine will be a 'continuation of the existing strategy', but the amount of waste generated by a large hotel is very different from an office block, and the conditions at street level are totally unsuited to the collection of this amount of waste.

During the construction period, deliveries between 07.30 and 10.30 will be disturbing to neighbours, starting earlier than the 8.00 am limit to construction time.

Conditions

Because of the unsuitability of this site for a hotel and the complexities of the site, we consider that there are many inherent problems. If you decide to give planning permission, we suggest that you impose conditions that will make it impossible for the applicants to come back later with amendments detrimental to the neighbourhood. In addition to the normal Conditions such as working hours we suggest additional ones:

- Smith Square will not be used for Construction traffic or for operational deliveries
- The Hotel bar hours of operation should be restricted to a closure time of 11pm
- The guest entrance will remain on Millbank, with access to the Smith Square entrances being restricted to employees only