1 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ET (24/00977/FULL) 19 March 2024

The Thorney Island Society objects to the granting of planning permission to this scheme because we do not think the design is sufficiently good for this important site. We were interested to read the excerpt from the 'Certificate of Immunity from Listing Report' on p18 and felt that the same criticisms could be used to describe this replacement.

We were pleased to be consulted by the developers on two occasions, and a few of our concerns were addressed, such as the change to the chamfered angles at the important corner between Great Smith Street and Victoria Street, which are now more uniform. It is however a weak response to the design problem at this corner, especially as compared with the Westminster Chambers building that was demolished to make way for the existing block.

We understood the difficulties involved in renovating the existing building, especially the problem with floor levels and the difficulty of providing level access to the existing building. We are, of course, in favour of commercial units along Victoria Street. We hope for, but do not expect an immediate magical effect as illustrated on p98.

The brick treatment on the Abbey Orchard Street façade works well. However, we do not think the design along Victoria Street is adequate, either as to the choice of materials or as to massing. At our second consultation we queried the three-storey section on the eastern end of the Victoria Street façade and found that we were in agreement with the design team that four storeys would actually work better (this is illustrated on p.54 of the DAS). We were told that the reason for the lower façade is to maintain the view of the Abbey's west front from further back on Victoria Street, something that we suggest could be achieved better by setting the whole of that façade back. (Although the building that would be most prominently revealed is the blank side of the Broad Sanctuary building, so we are not sure why this should be such a priority.)

Another important concern is for the occupants of the buildings, particularly flats in the Peabody Estate, that will be overshadowed by the upper floors of the proposed building, albeit that they are set back. The existing open spaces above the car ramps etc allow in a significant amount of light either side of the southern wing. This open space will be filled by the new design. We note that the building steps back to reduce this problem, but we would like to be assured that no neighbouring dwelling is affected by loss of light. We could not find the appropriate document explaining this, apart from the over-technical and difficult to read 'Daylight, Sunlight, Overshadowing, Solar Glare and Light Spillage' Appendices.

We would also like to register our distress at the difficulty we had with the chaotic ordering of the documents and the poor labelling. If there are going to be forty-five parts to the DAS thy should be labelled with their content.