

Our Response to Planning Application for Removal and Relocation of Emmeline Pankhurst sculpture

18/05778/FULL – 29th August 2018

The Victoria Tower Gardens, Millbank, London SW1P 3YB

While we understand the genesis of this proposal, which is that the statue is sadly neglected at the moment, we feel that its place is in Victoria Tower Gardens and not outside a private university in Regent's Park.

We note that the application claims that the 'location of the statue was purely the result of negotiation and bureaucracy in 1929; the suffragettes had no connections with the gardens and no significant events in which the Pankhursts participated took place there'. These arguments are an affront to the political activity by and periods of imprisonment of Emmeline Pankhurst, every aspect of which was associated with the rights of women to vote for members of Parliament, who sat in the very building adjacent to where the statue is currently situated.

We agree that the present setting of the statue is severely compromised by the presence of the education centre in the background and the re-landscaping around it, but the solution to this will be the ultimate removal of the education centre (due in 2023) and the maintenance of the shrubbery behind the statue, of which the Royal Parks gardeners are very capable.

It is suggested that the private Regents University would be a suitable location for Emmeline Pankhurst simply because the building once housed Bedford College for women, with which the Pankhursts had no connection. Moving the statue there would be to consign her and the suffragette movement to obscurity. Her place is next to Parliament, with which Emmeline Pankhurst did have a connection.