

Comparison of views of Kensington Forum @24mm wide-angle v 50mm what the eye sees

The Victoria Road Area Residents' Association **objects** to the photographs used by the applicant for the Kensington Forum application (PP/18/03461) as “verified views” which have then been used to assess the impact of the proposed towers on views from the surrounding areas.

The approach – which is widely used – uses a specialist camera with a wide-angle (24mm) lens, to take a photograph from agreed viewpoints using a standardised method. These have been provided for some 30 viewpoints for this application.

The use of a wide-angle lens has the effect of giving more emphasis to the foreground and for buildings in the background, pushing them further away and making them look smaller in relation to the foreground. This tends to minimise the scale of new buildings proposed when seen from a distance.

In this particular case the effect is very obvious because all photographs show the existing hotel building, which allows these “verified view” photographs to be compared with the reality that a person standing at the viewpoint can see. We are fortunate that it is possible to compare the wide-angle view with view as actually seen by a person standing in the street.

To illustrate this point, we have taken pictures of the same scene at the same location, firstly using a wide-angle lens (24mm focal length) and immediately after one with a 50mm lens – which replicates what the human eye sees.

As you will see, there is a major difference – the impact of the existing building on the area is far more pronounced in the second photograph when compared with the one taken with the wide-angle (24mm) lens.

This demonstrates that the use of these “verified views” for the purpose of assessing the impact of tall buildings on the streetscape, townscape and long views is inappropriate – it is not fit for the purpose it is being asked to perform. It does not provide either the assessor or the decision maker with a realistic let alone accurate assessment of the impact.

Recommendation:

The implications are that the current photographs should be heavily discounted or, preferably, not used to assess the impacts, and a new set of photographs at 50mm provided which more accurately reflect the perceived impact of the new buildings.

The Committee should disregard the “verified views” provided by the applicants and reject their interpretation that the impact of the new buildings would not be significant or even “beneficial” when it is evident from views of the existing buildings that the impact would be very significant.

The new buildings, taken together, would be much more dominant, taller, broader and realigned to create a much larger profile due to their increased bulk.

The images on the following pages are provided to illustrate the differences which are quite significant.

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View 30: Victoria Road



Victoria Road/Prince of Wales Terrace: 24mm lens



Victoria Road/Prince of Wales Terrace: 50mm lens

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View 29: De Vere Gardens



De Vere Gardens (northern end): 24mm lens



De Vere Gardens (northern end); 50mm lens

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View 28: Launceston Place/Victoria Grove



Launceston Place from junction with Victoria Grove: 24mm lens



Launceston Place from junction with Victoria Grove: 50mm lens

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Additional View: Victoria Road/St Alban's Grove



Victoria Road at St Alban's Grove: 24mm



Victoria Road at St Alban's Grove: 50mm

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View 27: Launceston Place/Cornwall Gardens



Launceston Place/Cornwall Gardens: 24mm lens



Launceston Place/Cornwall Gardens: 50mm lens