

MAYOR OF LONDON

Ron Crompton
Friends of Richmond Park
143 Palewell Park
London SW14 8JJ

Our ref: MGLA221116-3813

Date: 05 JAN 2017

Dear Mr Crompton,

Protected view of St Paul's Cathedral from King Henry's Mound, Richmond Park

Thank you for your letter of 18 November 2016 concerning the view of St Paul's Cathedral from King Henry VIII's Mound in Richmond Park. I am sorry for the delay in replying.

I am strongly pro-development when it delivers the homes Londoners need and I want to make it easier to build the homes that are desperately needed to meet London's housing crisis. As a result, I am not against tall buildings per se, however, new development should of course recognise and respect London's exceptional heritage assets.

I therefore instructed my Planning Team to report back to me on the matters you raised when you brought them to my attention in November.

The building in question - Manhattan Loft Gardens, was granted planning permission by the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) in July 2011 after being found acceptable by my predecessor in December 2010. The site of Manhattan Loft Gardens however does not fall within any of the areas where specific additional consultation was or is required to safeguard this strategic view, which was first given planning status in 1991.

There was therefore no planning requirement for the ODA to consult with the Cathedral, English Heritage, the Royal Parks or The Friends of Richmond Park on the application; though of note, the ODA officer report of the 11 June 2010 which recommended that planning permission be granted, does record that English Heritage were consulted, but that no response was received.

In essence, although the Strategic View Management Framework that regulates such long distance views has changed several times since 1991, it appears no one ever anticipated a building so far away from Richmond, and more than 7km (or 4 miles) behind the dome of St Paul's might be visible in this way, and I have no powers to require it to be reduced in height or demolished.

I have therefore been considering whether the London View Management Framework Supplementary Planning Guidance (LVMF SPG) - which sets out existing consultation and notification arrangements should be revised, and I can confirm that I have decided to include this as part of the work involved to produce my new London Plan.

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However, the Statutory Consultees for Protected Vistas are set out in Directions issued by the Secretary of State; and the LVMF SPG merely repeats these, rather than establishing them. This means that updating the SPG would not require local planning authorities (LPAs) to consult me or other relevant bodies in such cases.

Furthermore, the process of changing or updating these Directions currently involves a number of stages. Firstly it requires a draft LVMF SPG to be produced. That would then be consulted on, after which my officers would work with Government to draw up possible amendments. Government would then carry out its own consultation, and only at that stage could the Directions be changed, a new SPG published, and the new arrangements enacted.

I am still waiting for these powers to be devolved to me which would speed up this process. I therefore intend to write to the Secretary of State to press him for a timescale for the devolution of this power, but in the absence of timely devolution, will initiate a review of the current Directions.

I will also write to relevant London LPAs to highlight that given the scale and type of development we are now seeing, additional care should be given to ensure that schemes would not harm the composition of Protected Vistas whether they fall within Wider Setting Consultation Areas or not, and I will ask that LPAs advise me of any applications that might harm a Protected Vista.

Finally, I have asked my officers to produce a map showing extensions to the relevant viewing corridors, which whilst only indicative, will be shared with LPAs to help them identify schemes that may impact on these vistas.

I hope this letter offers some assurance of my ongoing commitment to balance the needs of London's growing population with its historic heritage and will help ensure that the potential impact on Protected Vistas will be fully considered and assessed as part of the planning process.

Please feel free to share my response with those you have copied into your letter.

Thank you again for writing to me.

Yours sincerely,



Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London