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| CITY OF WESTMINSTER | | | |
| PLANNING APPLICATIONS SUB COMMITTEE | Date 23 January 2018 | Classification For General Release | |
| Report of Director of Planning | | Ward(s) involved St James's | |
| Subject of Report | Parliament Square, London, SW1P 3JX | | |
| Proposal | Installation of a stone plinth and memorial statue to Margaret Thatcher on the west side of Parliament Square. | | |
| Agent | Mr Timothy Crum | | |
| On behalf of | Mr Ivan Saxton | | |
| Registered Number | 17/03890/FULL | Date amended/ completed | 5 May 2017 |
| Date Application Received | 5 May 2017 | | |
| Historic Building Grade | Unlisted | | |
| Conservation Area | Westminster Abbey And Parliament Square | | |

1. RECOMMENDATION

For Committee's consideration:

1. Does the Committee agree that the particular circumstances of this proposal do not constitute "an exceptionally good reason" to justify a departure from the Council's presumption against new memorials in this part of the City as set out in the "Statues and Monuments in Westminster" Supplementary Planning Document (2008)
2. Subject to 1 above, refuse permission.
3. Subject to 1 and 2 above, advise the applicant Members may, without prejudice, consider an application after the 10 year rule has been met subject to a more appropriate design for the statue and evidence of support from the Thatcher family.

2. SUMMARY

This proposal is for the erection of a statue of Margaret Thatcher on Canning Green in Parliament Square. Parliament Square is in the Westminster Abbey and Parliament Square Conservation Area and is an Area of Special Archaeological Priority. It adjoins the Palace of Westminster, Westminster Abbey and Church of St Margaret World Heritage Site. The buildings around the Square are all listed, many of them being of outstanding international importance. The Square, itself, is included in the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest at Grade II.

The central garden was landscaped in its current form by Grey Wornum in 1949-50 as part of the preparation for the Festival of Britain. The central area was laid to grass with paved terraces and planters to the north and west sides. The statues on the site at that time were re-arranged to the

locations they occupy today. The only additions to the statues on the Square since then have been Smuts (1956), Churchill (1973), Lloyd George (2007), Nelson Mandela (2007) and Gandhi (2014). Planning permission was granted in 2017 for a statue of Millicent Fawcett (due to be erected in 2018) and consideration of a planning application for Emmeline Pankhurst on Canning Green was deferred by the Planning Committee in September 2017 pending the relocation of another statue from Victoria Tower Gardens. The Greater London Authority (GLA) maintain the Square and statues. They recently carried out improvements to the Square, widening pavements and improving pedestrian access to the central garden. Canning Green is an area of raised planter to the west side of the Square and is maintained by Royal Parks.

The proposed statue is by Douglas Jennings, who has an international reputation. Margaret Thatcher is depicted in an upright pose dressed in her State Robes and looking towards the Palace of Westminster. The statue is life size and a half, similar to other statues in the Square, and placed on a tall stone plinth. The statue has already been modelled in wax and cast. The detailed design of the plinth has been twice amended on the advice of the Metropolitan Police to try and overcome some of their concerns about potential vandalism and civil disorder. The plinth is approximately 4m high and has been designed to minimize any ledges or other protuberance that could be used as climbing aids. Sockets have been placed in the granite plinth to accommodate scaffold poles to allow the statue to be more easily encased in hoardings during demonstrations or other potentially sensitive times.

The location on Canning Green is slightly closer to the adjacent Canning statue than that of Lincoln. The applicants have indicated that this location may allow for a future statue to be located in the space between it and the statue of Abraham Lincoln. However, the Council's arboriculturalist has suggested that this would require the removal of a substantial Lime tree which makes a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the Square. The proposal would require the loss of an Indian Bean Tree, but due to its below average form the Council's arboriculturalist does not object to this loss subject to a satisfactory replacement. It is considered that there is sufficient space on Canning Green to accommodate a statue of this size in this location without any detriment to the character and appearance of the Square. However, Committee should be aware that this site is very close to the location of the Emmeline Pankhurst statue that they saw at Committee in September 2017 and deferred for further consideration. It would not be appropriate for two large statues to be located so close to each other in this sensitive location.

Policy DES 7 of the UDP generally welcomes public art and statuary within the City. However, the unprecedented demand for statues and monuments in recent years has led to an over-concentration of memorials in parts of the City and suitable locations are becoming increasingly difficult to find. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document "Statues and Monuments in Westminster" (2008) provides guidance for the erection of new monuments. It identifies a Monument Saturation Zone, covering most of Whitehall and St James's, where applications for new statues and monuments will not be permitted unless there is an exceptionally good reason. Parliament Square falls within this zone. The SPD also introduces a 10 Year principle where "no statues or memorials should be erected before ten years have elapsed from the death of the individual..." However, there have been exceptions permitted to this rule in recent years, such as the statue to Nelson Mandela, but these exceptions tend to be rare. Margaret Thatcher died in 2013 and therefore the statue would have to be considered as an exception to this rule.

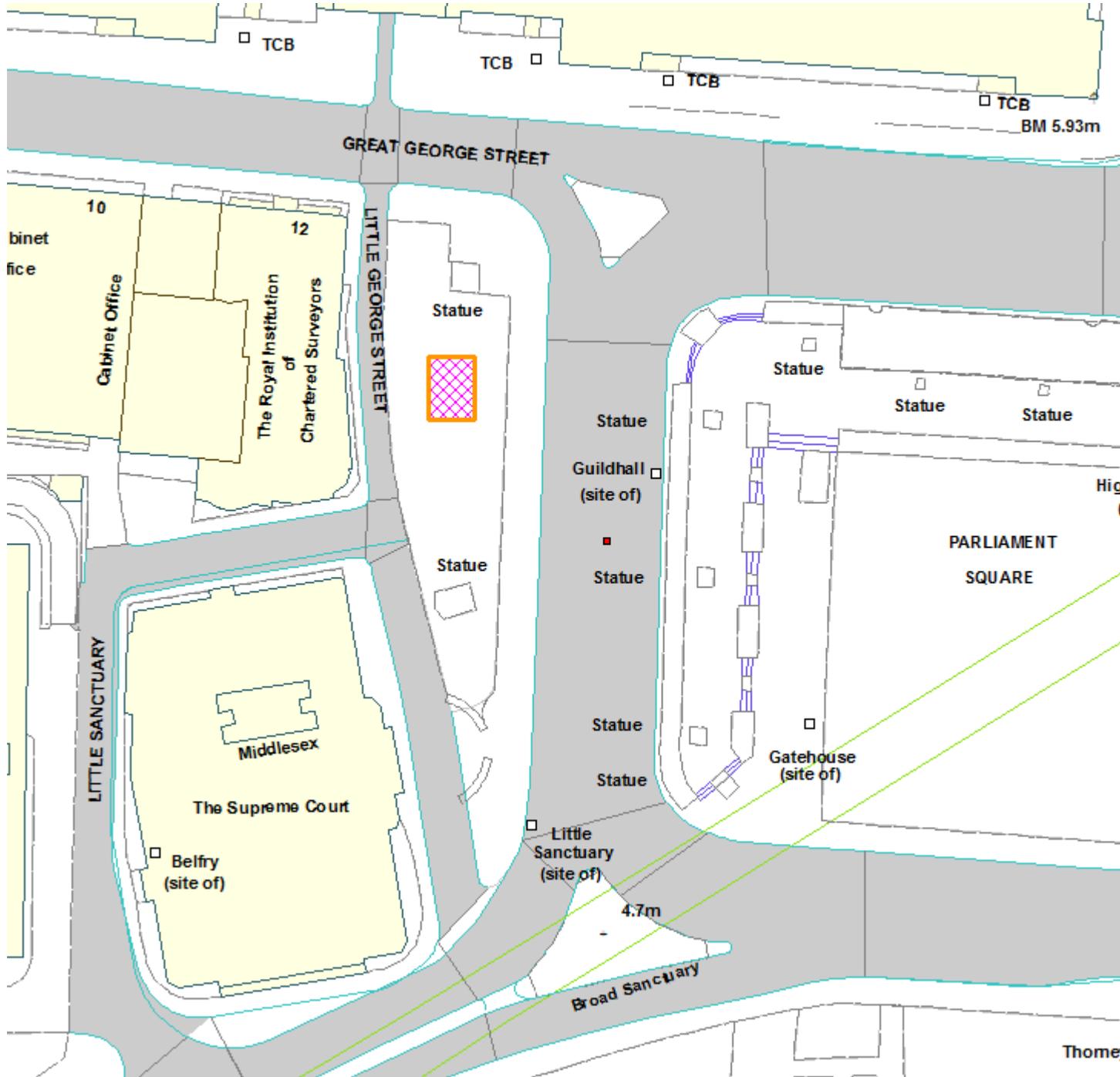
The proposed statue should therefore only proceed if there is an "exceptionally good reason" to

justify exemption to our normal guidance. While there is no doubt as to the historic significance of Margaret Thatcher as a political leader, the 10-year rule was designed to allow for a designated period of reflection to take place before decisions are made over erecting statues of recently deceased figures to commemorate them. This rule was put in place for good reason in order to “allow partisan passions to cool and enable sober reflection.” The applicants have been asked to indicate the support of the Thatcher family for the proposal, but have not been able to produce evidence of any such support. There is also a view that the depiction of the figure in her State Robes does not reflect her role as Prime Minister, for which she is being memorialized, and therefore is an inappropriate depiction of the subject. It should also be noted that there is already a statue of Margaret Thatcher in the House of Commons which is on view to any visiting member of the public.

There have been a number of objections from the Royal Parks, the Parliamentary Strategic Estates, the Westminster Society, the Thorney Island Society, the adjacent Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and third parties. The grounds of objection relate to the appropriateness of the subject matter, the concern over possible civil disobedience and vandalism, the depiction of the figure in State Robes, the 10-year rule should be observed and the existence of another statue of the same subject in the House of Commons means that there is not sufficient justification to overrule the Saturation Zone policy. The Metropolitan Police have not raised objection, but have raised concerns over possible civil disobedience and requested certain changes to the design of the plinth which have been accommodated in the revised designs. However, they still indicate a preference for further security measures such as cctv and improved lighting. However, these do not form part of the current application. No letters of support have been received.

In summary, it is considered that there is space for a statue of this size in this location in Parliament Square without necessarily detracting from the character and appearance of the Square. However, it is considered that there are a number of concerns over the proposed statue – particularly the failure to comply with the 10-year rule, the depiction of the figure in State Robes and the existence of another statue of the same subject nearby. Given these concerns, it is considered that there is not “an exceptionally good reason” to justify overturning the Council’s policy presumption against new memorials in the Saturation Zone.

3. LOCATION PLAN



4. PHOTOGRAPHS



5. CONSULTATIONS

HISTORIC ENGLAND (Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas)

Do not wish to comment in detail.

HISTORIC ENGLAND (Archaeology)

No objection, no conditions required

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY (GLA)

Any response received to be reported verbally.

THE ROYAL PARKS

Object, no permission has been granted for the installation of a statue, applicant has failed to give assurances the Royal Parks has sought, the proposal has not been put to their Board

THE GARDENS TRUST

Do not wish to comment

THORNEY ISLAND SOCIETY

Object, the 10-year rule should be adhered to, the quality of the sculpture does not do justice to the subject or the site.

WESTMINSTER SOCIETY

Object, other statues of the subject are in existence including one in the Palace of Westminster, a more fitting place. The depiction of her does not reflect her personality in the manner most people will remember her.

HIGHWAYS PLANNING MANAGER

No objection

ARBORICULTURAL MANAGER

No objection, subject to conditions. The loss of the Indian Bean Tree is acceptable subject to provision of a suitable replacement

METROPOLITAN POLICE (Designing Out Crime)

Original application - statue is likely to be a focus for protesters and vulnerable to criminal damage, recommend changes to the design of the plinth to deter climbing, lighting and cctv should be improved, fixture points for temporary hoardings to be erected around the statue should be provided.

Revised submission – redesign of the plinth is better than originally proposed and fixture points around the perimeter now provided. Lighting and cctv improvements still recommended.

ADJOINING OWNERS/OCCUPIERS AND OTHER REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

No. Consulted: 17; Total No. of replies: 4
No. of objections: 4
No. in support: 0

Objections have been received on the basis of possible vandalism and its proximity to the RICS building, the subject is too divisive to have a statue erected in her honour, to the principle of such a memorial in time of austerity, the 10-year principle should be adhered to and there is already a statue of Margaret Thatcher in the House of Commons open to any visiting members of the public.

PRESS ADVERTISEMENT / SITE NOTICE: Yes

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Application form
2. Letter from Historic England dated 15 May 2017
3. Letter from Historic England (Archaeology), dated 16 October 2017
4. Letter from The Royal Parks dated 17 May 2017
5. Letter from The Gardens Trust dated 31 May 2017
6. Online comments from Thorney Island Society dated 30 May 2017 and 28 September 2017
7. Online comments from Westminster Society dated 23 May 2017 and 5 October 2017
8. Email from Metropolitan Police, Design out Crime officer dated 4 August 2017 and letter dated 17 October 2017
9. Highways Planning Manager memorandum dated 16 May 2017
10. Arboricultural Manager memorandum dated 22 July 2017
11. On-line comments from Parliamentary Strategic Estates, Westminster, dated 7 June 2017
12. Online comments from occupier of 233 Holly Court, Greenroof Way, dated 17 May 2017
13. Online comments from occupier of 62 Press Court, 77 Marlborough Grove, dated 15 May 2017
14. Online comments from occupier of 12 Great George Street, Westminster, dated 9 August 2017

(Please note: All the application drawings and other relevant documents and Background Papers are available to view on the Council's website)

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES ABOUT THIS REPORT PLEASE CONTACT THE PRESENTING OFFICER: AMANDA JACKSON BY EMAIL AT ajackson@westminster.gov.uk

7. KEY DRAWINGS



DRAFT DECISION LETTER

Address: Parliament Square, London, SW1P 3JX

Proposal: Installation of a stone plinth and memorial statue to Margaret Thatcher on the west side of Parliament Square.

Reference: 17/03890/FULL

Plan Nos: 240-0.001 (rev B), 002 (rev B), 003 (rev C), 100 (rev C) and 200 (rev B), 240-1.003 (rev C), 100 (rev C), 200 (rev B) and 300 (rev B), 240-3.100, 101, 102, 103 (all rev C), 104 (rev B) and 106 (rev A), 240-5.001, 002, 003 and 004 (all rev B) and 240-8.001 (rev A).

Case Officer: David Clegg

Direct Tel. No. 020 7641 3014

Recommended Condition(s) and Reason(s)

1. The particular circumstances of the proposal do not comply with the requirements of the Statues and Monuments in Westminster Supplementary Planning Document and as such there is no "exceptionally good reason" to allow for an exemption to the presumption against new statues and memorials within the Monument Saturation Zone.

Informative

- 1 A revised application with a more appropriate design and the support of the Thatcher family may be considered more favourably if submitted after the expiry of the 10-year period following the death of the subject.

Please note: the full text for informatives can be found in the Council's Conditions, Reasons & Policies handbook, copies of which can be found in the Committee Room whilst the meeting is in progress, and on the Council's website.