

# The monstrous carbuncle (Part Two) - Prince Charles condemns architect's Chelsea Barracks plan

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Prince Charles is fighting to stop a controversial modern development in London designed by the architect he famously clashed with 25 years ago.

Lord Rogers has come up with a scheme for 320 luxury apartments on the site of Chelsea Barracks in London. But the Prince says the plan is unsuitable and unsympathetic to the historic surroundings.

Instead he has made a personal plea to the site's owners, Qatari Diar – the development arm of the Qatari royal family – to consider an alternative scheme.



The Prince v the Modernist: Charles opposed a development designed by Lord Rogers (pictured with wife Ruth)

Modernist Lord Rogers is used to being criticised by the Prince.

In 1984, Charles publicly attacked the architect's proposed extension to London's National Gallery as 'a monstrous carbuncle'.

The Prince has written to the Emir of Qatar urging him to reconsider the Chelsea scheme and to look, instead, at a classical design by one of his favourite architects, Quinlan Terry.

In a letter written last month, Charles is understood to have urged caution over the plans and asked Qatari Diar to involve him in discussions over the future of the site.

The Prince's intervention emerged at the opening of the Royal Hospital Infirmity – an event attended by Lady Thatcher, the Prince and Mr Terry, who designed a classical addition to the famous Christopher Wren building.

The Royal Hospital is directly across the road from the site of the former barracks and the Prince took the opportunity of taking Mr Terry to view it.

Mr Terry revealed: 'He told us how unhappy he was with the current proposals.

'He expressed a fervent desire that the scheme should reflect the stunning architecture of Wren's hospital. He made it clear to all of us that he was even more determined to battle over this site in order to protect and enhance this important corner of London.'

Charles says this Chelsea Barracks scheme is unsuitable for the area

Qatari Diar, together with developer Candy & Candy, bought the site from the Ministry of Defence in May 2006 for almost £1 billion.

Lord Rogers was then commissioned to create about 350 luxury flats on the barracks site. The original scheme was for the apartments to be housed in a series of 'pavilions' rising to ten storeys. But the plans were met with outrage by the Belgravia Residents' Association.

As a result, the design was amended and submitted to Westminster Council in February. Changes include increasing the open-space element from two to six acres and lowering some of the buildings, which reduced the total number of flats.

However, there was no compromise on the modernist steel-and-glass design which, opponents claim, is out of keeping with the local area.

In contrast, Mr Terry revealed he has produced sketches of designs using classical-style materials – brick, stone and slate – inspired by the substantial mansions, garden squares and traditional courtyards of Belgravia, Kensington and Chelsea.

He said: 'I have been designing for decades buildings which are classical on the outside but they always incorporate the technological requirements of my many demanding and

high-profile clients. There is no conflict between traditional architecture and sound technology.'

Both Clarence House and Qatari Diar declined to comment.