

UK Seeks Clarification from China Over Withheld Embassy Plans

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The UK government has called on China to explain why significant sections of its plans for a new embassy site in London have been obscured from public view. Officials say the missing details, which include design and security specifications, raise concerns about transparency and the project's compliance with local regulations.

The Chinese government purchased the former Royal Mint site in 2018, with the intention of redeveloping it into a new embassy complex. However, the publicly available planning documents contain extensive redactions. Westminster City Council confirmed that some information was withheld at Beijing's request, citing security grounds.

A Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office spokesperson stated that the UK has asked Chinese officials to account for the omissions, stressing that foreign diplomatic missions must adhere to planning procedures and legal standards in the UK. The spokesperson underscored that Britain values openness and expects the same from other states operating within its borders.

Local opposition to the embassy plan has grown in recent years, with residents and campaign groups raising concerns about the scale of the development and potential security implications. Critics argue that the lack of full disclosure undermines public trust and makes it difficult to assess the impact on the surrounding area.

In a report by the *BBC*, officials from the Chinese Embassy responded: "We have taken into full consideration the UK's planning policy and guidance as well as views of all relevant parties."

The issue comes amid heightened tensions between the UK and China over matters including national security, human rights, and foreign influence. Parliament has previously warned against potential security risks tied to foreign-owned infrastructure projects.

Westminster Council has indicated that any further progress on the embassy site will depend on the planning process meeting all statutory

obligations, including proper consultation and review of all relevant materials.