

UK Seeks Full Disclosure from China on Embassy Project

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The British government has requested that China clarify its redevelopment plans for a new embassy at the Royal Mint Court in London. Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner has given Beijing two weeks to justify the redactions in the submitted plans or resubmit them unredacted, with a final decision expected on 9 September.

Ministers have urged China to explain why significant sections of its proposed embassy plans in central London remain redacted, amid growing scrutiny over national security and transparency. The embassy is intended for the Royal Mint Court, a five-acre site near the Tower of London, and would become China's largest diplomatic mission in Europe.

Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner, acting in her capacity as housing secretary, issued a formal request for either a full version of the plans or a detailed explanation of the omissions. The areas in question include buildings labelled the Cultural Exchange Building and Embassy House. Officials are assessing whether the redactions raise security concerns or represent a material change that would require public consultation.

Local planning authorities previously rejected the plans in 2022, citing strong opposition from residents and concerns over safety and disruption. Tower Hamlets Council has flagged issues around surveillance risks, as the site is located near sensitive infrastructure and historic landmarks. The UK Home Office has also advised that any approval would require reinforced security perimeters, which could necessitate further planning procedures.

Critics, including rights groups and members of the Chinese diaspora, continue to express fears that the complex could be used to monitor dissidents or exert political pressure. Demonstrations outside the site have drawn attention to China's treatment of Hong Kong activists and other political exiles, with protestors voicing alarm over potential erosion of civil liberties.

The issue has also attracted international attention. Allies, including the United States, have reportedly warned the UK against approving the

project without full disclosure, suggesting that incomplete plans might obscure potential threats.

With the case now escalated to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the government is under pressure to balance diplomatic relations with national security. A final decision on whether to approve the embassy construction is expected by early September. Until then, China has been asked to provide clear justification for the redactions or submit unedited documents for review.