

Controversial Chiswick redevelopment changes hands

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Great Marlborough Estates has acquired Empire House, a vacant office site in Chiswick, west London, from Lendlease.

The location has planning permission for 137 homes, granted in January 2015, which allows the conversion of an existing 11-storey tower for residential use and the addition of several new buildings.

Plans to redevelop the one-acre site have been the subject of sustained local opposition, including an unsuccessful bid for a judicial review of Hounslow Council's planning approval. The legal challenge, funded by residents and led by a local QC, was rejected by the High Court in November 2015.

The request for judicial review had argued that the council did not properly apply local planning policies nor adequately consult with local residents. Lendlease subsequently put the site up for sale in March 2018.

Great Marlborough Estates (GME) said its acquisition was negotiated during lockdown and marked one of the largest residential transactions to take place since the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

It said the Empire House building will be converted into 66 apartments. Additional buildings of up to eight storeys, including four town houses, will provide the remaining residential units. In addition, 9,000 square feet of retail and leisure space will be added.

GME co-founder Grant Lipton said: “Whilst COVID-19 has undoubtedly created some uncertainty, we remain committed to the long-term outlook for London and the capital’s property market thanks to strong underlying fundamentals. London will remain a preeminent global hub for business, culture and leisure, all of which will feed into demand for housing in the city.”