

U.S. EMBASSY, NINE ELMS LANE, LONDON, SW8

**CONSULTATION STATEMENT
PREPARED BY M&N COMMUNICATIONS**

APRIL 2009



1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
2.0 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY	4
3.0 CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSALS	6
3.1 Stage One – Stakeholder Research and Initial Contact	6
3.2 Stage Two – Public Consultation	7
3.3 Stage Three – Ongoing Engagement	9
4.0 ANALYSIS OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION	10
4.1 Feedback from the Consultation	10
5.0 RESPONSE TO PUBLIC CONSULTATION	15
6.0 APPENDICES	18

- 1.1 This document outlines the approach and activities undertaken by M&N Communications, on behalf of the U.S. Department of State, to consult with the local community and key stakeholders on the proposals for the new U.S. Embassy in Battersea, in advance of a planning application being submitted to the London Borough of Wandsworth.
- 1.2 M&N followed a strict methodology to engage with and consult the three key audiences for the new Embassy site: the immediate residents/tenants surrounding the site in Nine Elms; the residents of Vauxhall, Battersea and Pimlico; and the wider population of London. Through clear and effective communication, including a newsletter distributed to over 10,300 homes, M&N set out the timetable for consultation and the constraints of public involvement at this stage.
- 1.3 Four full days of public exhibitions were undertaken, in addition to a drop-in session specifically for the immediate residents in Nine Elms, which were promoted widely throughout the area by variety of different methods. Over 160 people attended the consultation events and spoke to members of the professional team and 82 completed questionnaires were received. M&N will continue to engage with the public and stakeholder groups throughout the submission of the planning application and beyond.
- 1.4 The verbal and written feedback received during the consultation exercise has been overwhelmingly in favour of the relocation of the U.S. Embassy to Nine Elms. The headline results from the questionnaire analysis are as follows:
 - **85%** of respondents 'strongly agree' or 'agree' with the relocation of the U.S. Embassy to Nine Elms.
 - **91%** of respondents 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that the U.S. Embassy will contribute to the overall regeneration of Nine Elms.

As with development of any kind, there were issues raised regarding the proposals. Their feedback has been passed back to the team to take on board and is considered further in section 5 of this report.

- 1.5 The professional team responded to many of the issues raised during the consultation exercise verbally during the public exhibitions. A summary of the key questions asked and the team's responses is given in section 5 of this report.

2.0 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The programme of consultation is being managed by specialist community relations consultants, M&N Communications (M&N), on behalf of the U.S. Department of State.
- 2.2 M&N believes that it is important to prepare an overall strategy to successfully achieve consultation objectives. A successful communications and consultation programme on a project such as this must follow a methodology that can be easily communicated to, and understood by, all stakeholders and members of the public.

M&N bases all its consultation exercises on the following principles:

- Communicate and inform early - set out the programme, the constraints, when and how people can engage and what the anticipated outcomes may be;
 - Consult widely and deeply - work to ensure all those who wish to be involved are able to;
 - Report back the outcome of any consultation activities to the community in a timely manner;
 - Consider the feedback and seek to amend proposals where appropriate and feasible;
 - Communicate how the proposals have been influenced by the programme, and where they have not, why not;
 - Communicate the final scheme so everyone is in no doubt of how the plans have progressed.
- 2.3 The unique challenge of this consultation exercise was to communicate effectively to all stakeholders the planning process for the new U.S. Embassy (i.e. the submission of a detailed planning application for the relocation of Ponton Road and related traffic works and an outline application for the Embassy site, with a reserved matters application to follow at a later date) and the concurrent design competition being run in the United States. This challenge was overcome through clearly stating on all the consultation materials the process and timetables involved and, due to the nature of the project, making clear the constraints of community involvement in certain aspects of the process at this stage.
- 2.3 Three distinct audiences were identified to engage with as part of the consultation:
- Immediate residents: the residents of Elm Quay Court and Riverside Court and immediate neighbouring businesses and tenants;
 - Local stakeholders: the residents of Vauxhall, Battersea and Pimlico and the local business community;
 - Greater London: the wider population of London
- 2.4 A range of techniques has been used to identify the individual concerns and queries of stakeholders and residents. Key activities included a 'drop in' session with neighbouring residents; four days of public exhibitions; newsletters; letters; a dedicated project website and a questionnaire.

- 2.5 Throughout the process, people have been invited to provide comments on the proposals via a range of different mechanisms: direct to members of the professional team at the exhibitions; by completing one of the questionnaires (either online or at the exhibition); or via M&N Communications directly by phone or email.

3.1 Stage One – Stakeholder Research and Initial Contact

3.1.1 Research

Research was undertaken to identify local groups who were likely to have an interest in the proposals for the new Embassy to ensure they could be kept informed throughout the consultation process.

The initial stakeholder research undertaken by M&N and the professional team identified a number of organisations and individuals with an interest in the proposals for the site, including:

- The Battersea Society
- Friends of Battersea Park
- Wandsworth Chamber of Commerce
- Battersea Power Station Community Group
- New Covent Garden Market
- Residents of the two neighbouring buildings
- Local councillors from Nine Elms, Vauxhall and Pimlico

M&N Communications contacted these stakeholders via letter with a copy of the newsletter (see below) to invite them to engage in the consultation process and to introduce M&N as an ongoing point of contact for enquiries and information. A copy of the letter sent is included in appendix 1.

3.1.2 Newsletter

In order to explain to the community the consultation process and publicise the consultation events, a four page A4 newsletter was distributed to local residents, businesses, stakeholders and the wider community. A copy of this newsletter is included in appendix 2.

3.1.3 Neighbouring Residents

Due to the close proximity to the proposed site of two residential apartment buildings on Nine Elms Lane, the decision was taken to pay special attention to these residents. The management teams/concierges in the two buildings – Riverside Court and Elm Quay Court – were contacted and a door-knocking exercise arranged for Friday 13 February. With the agreement of the concierges and residents' associations, two representatives from M&N visited the buildings and spent time going from door to door to introduce themselves to the residents, hand deliver them a copy of the newsletter, answer any initial questions they had and inform them of plans to hold a meeting specifically for them (see point 3.2.1 below).

3.2 Stage Two – Public Consultation

3.2.1 Residents Drop-In Session

As the closest residents to the proposed site, it was decided to hold a special 'drop in' session for the residents of Riverside Court and Nine Elms Court to address their particular questions. This took place on Saturday 28 February between 10am and 12noon at the City Inn Westminster Hotel. 12 A1 display boards were available to view and questionnaires available for completion. Approximately 56 residents attended this session where they had the opportunity to speak to and ask questions of members of the project team, including a representative of the U.S. Department of State.

3.2.2 Public Exhibitions

Two public exhibitions were organised and took place between 4-8pm on Wednesday 4 March and Thursday 5 March at St. Anne's & All Saints Church Hall, Vauxhall, and 2-6pm on Friday 6 March and 11-4pm on Saturday 7 March at the R.O.S.E. Community Clubhouse, Battersea. These locations, confirmed with officers at the Council, were chosen to ensure that as many people as possible from across the area were able to attend.

3.2.3 Promotion

Approximately 10,300 newsletters were distributed to households in Battersea, Vauxhall and Pimlico inviting them to take part in the consultation process and attend one of the public exhibitions. A copy of the map showing the area the newsletter was dropped to is included in appendix 3. Further copies of the newsletter were given out at Vauxhall and Pimlico stations on the evening of Tuesday 24 February and a quarter page advertisement appeared in the Wandsworth Guardian on 26th February – see appendix 4.

3.2.4 Website

A project website was created online at www.newusembassy-london.co.uk to provide information on the proposals and the consultation process to the local community. This website was launched on 4 March 2009 prior to the public exhibitions. All the information available at the exhibitions, including an online questionnaire, was made available on this site alongside a direct email to M&N Communications at embassy@mncommunications.co.uk. Screen captures of the website are in appendix 5.

3.2.5 Display Material

12 A1 sized display boards were on view at the exhibition giving information about the proposals for the new Embassy, and one A0 board showing an aerial image of the Nine Elms area and the sketch views of the new Embassy. Copies of the exhibition boards are available in appendix 6.

3.2.4 Feedback Mechanism

A questionnaire on the proposals was available to capture attendees' comments, which could be returned to M&N Communications via a freepost address for anyone who wanted to take the feedback form away with them. An online version of this questionnaire was also available on the project website until Wednesday 18 March for completion by anyone who could not attend the public exhibition.

The questionnaire was designed to capture both quantitative feedback on a number of topics and qualitative comments. A visitors' book was also available for attendees to register their details so they could be kept updated with the proposals for the site. Verbal comments received by the team throughout the duration of the exhibition have also been incorporated into M&N's consultation analysis (see section 4). A copy of the questionnaire is available in appendix 7.

3.2.5 Attendance

In total 56 people attended the residents' drop-in session and 111 people attended the public exhibitions. Attendees ranged from immediate residents in Battersea to people across the river in Pimlico, and members of the following also attended:

- The Battersea Society
- Battersea Power Station
- Local Councillors
- Wandsworth Council Officers
- Wandsworth Libraries

All the feedback received from attendees is analysed in detail in section 4 of this report. The images below show members of the public at the exhibition and the display that was available to view:





3.3 Stage Three – Ongoing Engagement

3.3.1 Stakeholder Meetings

Following on from the public consultation events a number of one-to-one meetings are in the process of being arranged with key local stakeholders:

Battersea Society

Further to correspondence received from the Battersea Society (copies of which are included in appendix 9), the offer of a meeting was made by M&N to attend a Society meeting and present the exhibition boards to its membership. After corresponding with the Secretary, it was felt that the membership of the Society had been sufficiently briefed by the public exhibition, but that it might benefit from a meeting once the planning application had been submitted. M&N will follow up with the Society as the proposals progress.

Wandsworth Councillors

A number of Wandsworth Councillors attended the exhibitions and expressed an interest in receiving a private presentation of the proposals. *This meeting is in the process of being arranged.*

3.3.2 Second Newsletter

To coincide with the submission of the detailed and outline planning applications a second newsletter was distributed to feedback to outline the project team's response to the issues raised during the consultation process and the forthcoming timetable. This newsletter was distributed to the same area which received the first newsletter (approximately 10,300 properties) including by hand to the neighbouring residents of Riverside and Elm Quay Court and other local stakeholders, who also received an accompanying letter.

4.0 ANALYSIS OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION

4.1 Feedback from the Consultation

The questionnaire, available at the public exhibitions and online at the project website, enabled the community and key stakeholders to provide both quantitative and qualitative feedback and comments on the proposals. We received 82 completed questionnaires in total. The verbal comments received by the team from members of public have also been incorporated into the analysis below.

Below is an overview of the consultation results, with the key themes and statistics identified. A full breakdown of all comments received via the questionnaires is available in appendix 8, alongside copies of the correspondence received from members of the public and the team's responses in appendix 9.

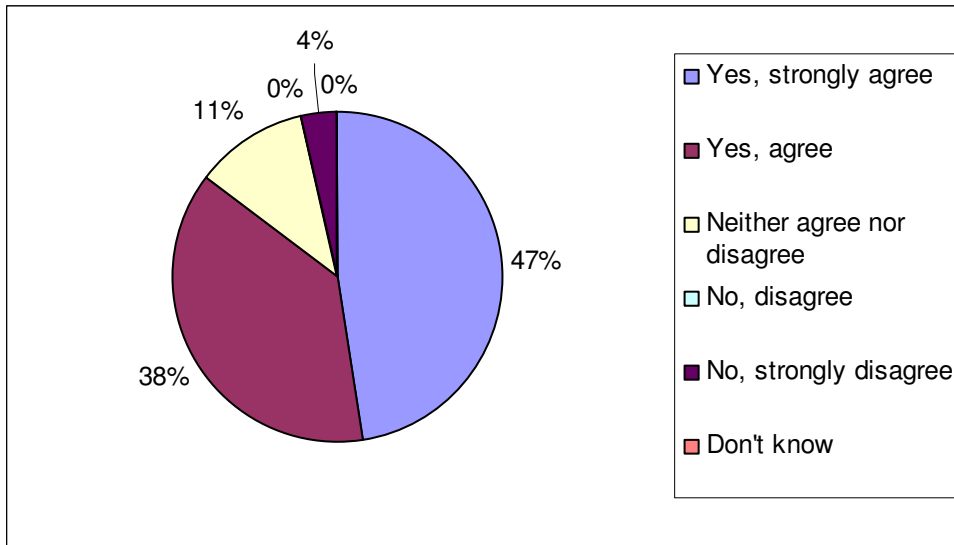
4.1.1 Summary of Results

The headline statistics to emerge from the 82 completed questionnaires are as follows:

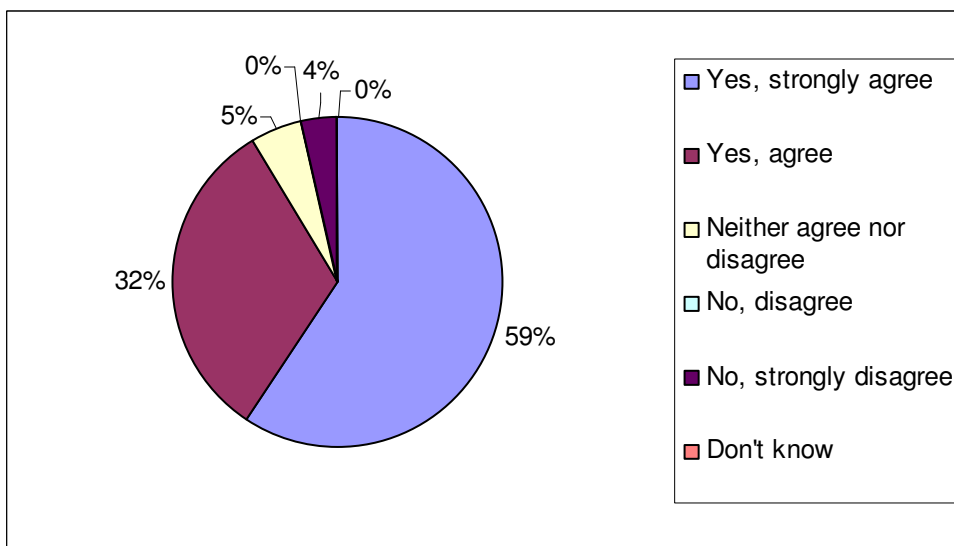
- **85%** of respondents 'strongly agree' or 'agree' with the relocation of the Embassy to Nine Elms;
- **91%** of respondents 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that the U.S. Embassy will contribute to the overall regeneration of Nine Elms;
- **93%** of respondents support the idea of a new public plaza outside the Embassy;
- **98%** of respondents support the inclusion of green space around the new Embassy;
- **68%** of respondents favoured the creation of green space, and the use of trees and planting, in the landscaping surrounding the Embassy, supplemented by other features/facilities;
- **71%** of respondents think the proposed repositioning of Ponton Road is either 'very good' or 'good';
- **77%** of respondents think the indicative new treatment of Nine Elms Lane is either 'very good' or 'good'.

Graphic representation of the responses are provided below.

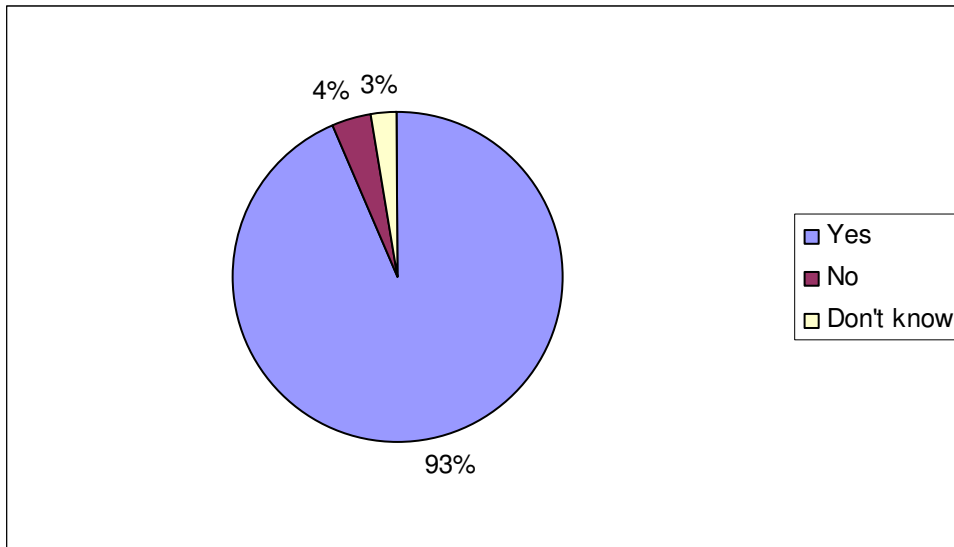
Q1 – Do you support the relocation of the U.S. Embassy to Nine Elms?



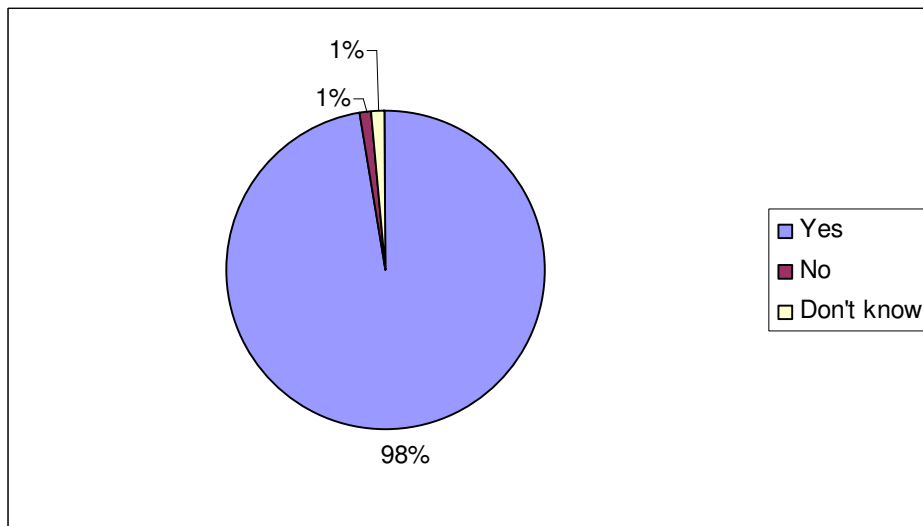
Q2 – Do you agree that a new U.S. Embassy will contribute to the overall regeneration of the Nine Elms area?



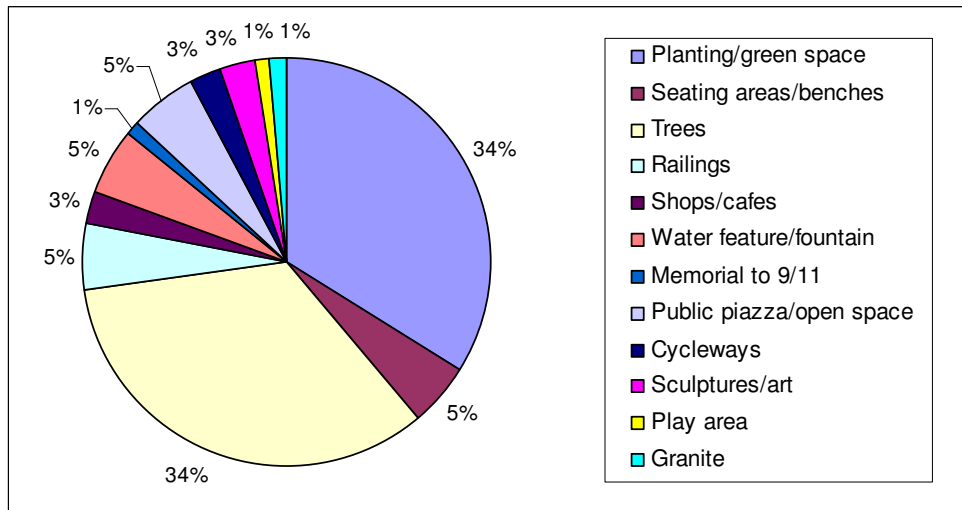
Q3 – Do you support the idea of a new public plaza outside the new Embassy, which could form part of a new gateway from Vauxhall to Battersea Power Station?



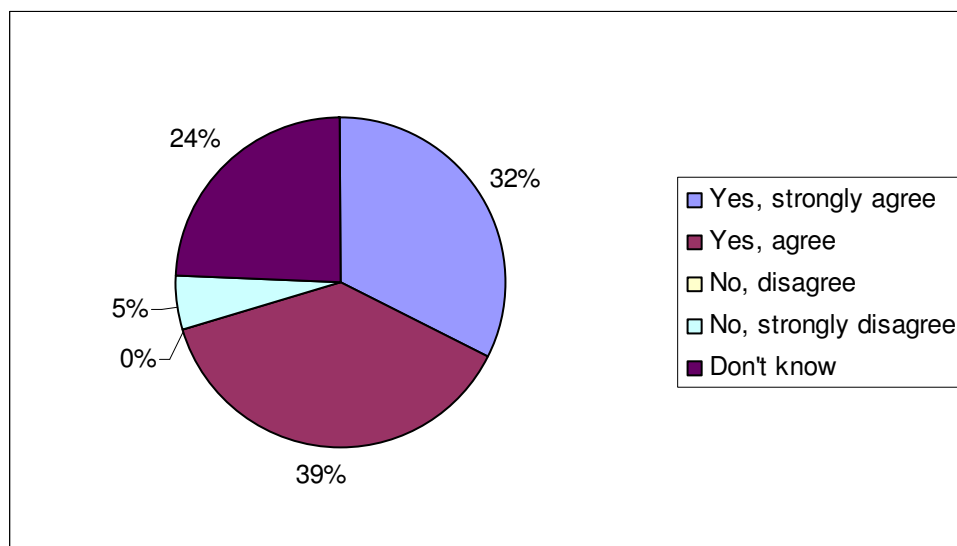
Q 4 – Do you support the inclusion of green space around the new Embassy building?



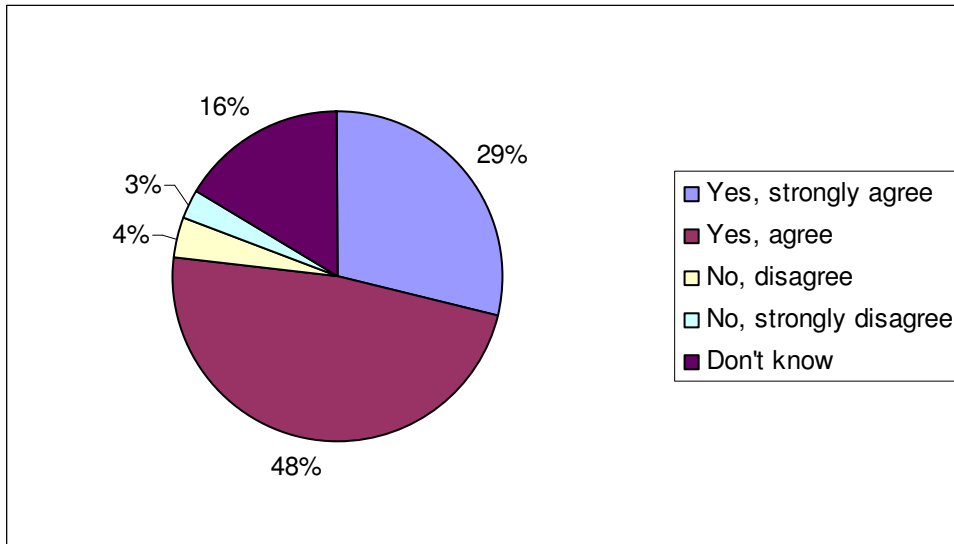
Q5 – What type of landscaping treatments would you like to see used in and around the new Embassy? (This question allowed for an open response and some respondents gave multiple answers)



Q6 – What do you think of the proposed repositioning of Ponton Road?



Q 7 – What do you think of the indicative new treatment of Nine Elms Lane?



4.1.2 Key Themes

A number of themes emerged both from conversations with the community and stakeholders during the consultation exercise and through the written feedback received:

- What will the Embassy building look like and how tall will it be?
- What security measures will be put in place and where will protestors congregate?
- What employment opportunities will there be for local people?
- What will the impact be on existing businesses?
- What will the impact be on nearby residents?
- How will the Embassy integrate with the surrounding area in terms of transport and pedestrian links?

The specific issues raised within these themes are addressed in section 5.1 of this report.

5.0 RESPONSE TO PUBLIC CONSULTATION

5.1 On the following pages is the project team's response to the main comments raised during the consultation process.

Comment	Response
How will the Embassy be designed to ensure the security of the surrounding area and nearby residents?	The 30m perimeter zone around the Embassy building will provide a secure safety buffer for nearby residents. Extensive security measures will be integrated within the design of the building, but we are unable to make these details public. All these measures will be within the perimeter of the Embassy fence, so there will be no impact on surrounding roads and buildings. Please see the Design & Access Statement for further information.
Will the Embassy building be sustainable?	The U.S. Government is committed to ensuring the new Embassy building meets the highest standards in sustainability, it has therefore set a target of achieving a BREEAM Excellent rating in the design brief which will be provided to the appointed design team. Please see the Design & Access Statement for further information.
Where will protestors gather?	Protests require permission from the British authorities and are policed by them with the cooperation of the relevant highways authorities and the British Diplomatic Service. The U.S. Embassy is party to discussions and preparations but has no direct control over where protests happen as they are outside of its jurisdiction.
What will the building look like?	A design competition is currently underway to appoint a lead design team who will then proceed to draw up detailed proposals for the buildings within the parameters set by the outline planning application. However, The U.S. Department of State is committed to creating a building that meets the highest possible standards of design. Please see the Visual Impact Assessment for further information.

<p>How tall will the building be?</p>	<p>The maximum height any part of the Embassy building can be is approximately 90m, however, this is only in one small part of the site; it is possible that the bulk of the final building would be lower than this. The intention is to provide as much flexibility as possible for the designers. Please see the Design & Access Statement for further information.</p>
<p>What affect will the Embassy have on local transport?</p>	<p>Due to the excellent public transport links in the area, the Embassy is likely to generate less than a 2% increase in traffic on Nine Elms Lane between 7am and 7pm. Please see the Transport Assessment (T.A.) for further information.</p>
<p>Where will visitors park?</p>	<p>In order to ensure that the new Embassy is sustainable, staff and visitors will be expected to use the already excellent transport links in the area. Parking will only be provided for essential operational needs and the mobility impaired – approximately 130 spaces. Please see the T.A. for further information.</p>
<p>How will the relocation of Ponton Road affect residents' vehicular access to Elm Quay Court?</p>	<p>The entrance to the new Ponton Road will be regulated by a new set of traffic lights on Nine Elms Lane. The access to Elm Quay Court will be in part controlled by these lights; however there will no longer be a set of lights specifically to regulate access. Please see the T.A. for further information.</p>
<p>The Embassy will help to revitalise this area of London and attract further investment to Battersea.</p>	<p>That is the intention. The Embassy is just one piece in the Nine Elms Opportunity Area puzzle, and will hopefully act as a catalyst for further investment in the area.</p>
<p>How many jobs will the Embassy create for local people?</p>	<p>The majority of the people who work within the existing Embassy are British nationals who live in London. It is foreseen that a number of employment opportunities will be created for local people.</p>
<p>The area around the Embassy should include green planting to make it as attractive and welcoming as possible.</p>	<p>Agreed; the landscaping will form part of the reserved matters application which will be drawn up by the lead design team when they are appointed. Please see the Design & Access Statement for further information.</p>

<p>How will pedestrian routes to the Embassy integrate with the surrounding area?</p>	<p>Future proposals in the area may include a greenway from Vauxhall to the Power Station – a green pedestrianised route across Nine Elms, running right beside the Embassy. Further pedestrian links are also likely to come forward as further development progresses. Please see the Design and Access Statement for further information.</p>
<p>What will the impact be on Elm Quay Court during construction?</p>	<p>It is intended to minimise the impact on Elm Quay Court during construction through a series of measures. Construction on the relocated Ponton Road and the new traffic lights and access to Elm Quay Court will be completed before the existing road is closed to ensure the impact on the local transport network is minimal. During construction a management plan will be put in place to address issues such as delivery times and vehicle movements etc, to ensure that the new Embassy is a considerate neighbour.</p>
<p>The perimeter should be a fence, not a wall.</p>	<p>Agreed; it is proposed that a primarily transparent fencing treatment will be used to allow sight lines in and across the Embassy grounds.</p>
<p>What is the timetable for development?</p>	<p>The final timetable depends on the planning process, but if all goes to plan construction should start on site in 2013, with completion circa. 2016.</p>

Appendix No.	Content
1	Letter to stakeholders
2	Community newsletter, February 2009
3	Distribution area map
4	Advertisement for the Wandsworth Guardian
5	Project website
6	Exhibition boards
7	Questionnaire
8	The feedback in full
9	Correspondence
10	Community newsletter, May 2009