

DON'T LET THEM DESTROY WHITELEYS, SAY PROTESTORS

Protest from major conservation groups and 1,000 local residents has greeted a plan to demolish London's first department store. A wealthy Brunei-based private family trust wants to turn the historic Whiteleys shopping centre in Bayswater into a 10-storey block of luxury flats, with no affordable homes included.

Though some facades would be retained, the store, founded in the Victorian era and rebuilt in 1912, would be gutted and its distinctive Edwardian glass domes removed. The proposal is the centrepiece of a £1 billion project to clean up Queensway, which has gone from chic to shabby in 20 years.

Westminster council planners will rule next week on whether Whiteleys can be demolished leaving only its stucco facades in Queensway and Porchester Gardens standing.

Three new basement levels are planned in the Grade II-listed building and as well as 103 new homes, there will be shops, a gym, a boutique hotel, a cinema, a large car park and a creche.

The homes are likely to sell for sums which only the world's richest could consider. At The Lancasters, the only comparable development locally, a four-bedroom flat is for sale at £24 million.



Luxurious: the remodelled centre would have a giant glass-topped atrium, top-spec homes a cinema hotel and shops

(Full Evening Standard story at: homesandproperty.co.uk)