# Bank of England warns UK against Chinese embassy near London’s financial district over security fears



In a revealing disclosure, the Bank of England has cautioned the UK government against permitting the establishment of a Chinese embassy near London’s financial nerve centres. Intelligence sources from the Trump administration have indicated that this plan could compromise national security, particularly given the strategic location of the proposed site, which lies directly between the City of London and Canary Wharf, and close to essential data centres. The project had previously been halted by the former government due to serious concerns over potential espionage risks highlighted by British intelligence.

The proposed embassy is intended to be a massive facility, potentially the largest in Europe, situated at the historic Royal Mint Court, near the Tower of London. This location has raised alarms among local residents and policymakers, who fear it could invite increased espionage activities. Reports indicate that just weeks after Chancellor Rachel Reeves returned from an official visit to China, objections from Scotland Yard and Tower Hamlets Council mysteriously receded, further fuelling suspicions of political appeasement towards Beijing. This shift has prompted American lawmakers to press UK leaders to prioritise national security considerations when deliberating on the embassy project.

Compounding the situation are documents obtained by opposition Conservatives, which have raised eyebrows regarding the architectural plans for the embassy. Among these documents are mentions of "anonymous unlabelled basement rooms" and an inconspicuous tunnel, the purposes of which remain classified for security reasons. Such specific details have fed into a growing narrative that the embassy could function as somewhat of a surveillance centre, leading to calls for increased scrutiny from the UK government.

The sentiments surrounding this initiative are not isolated to the UK. A US House of Representatives committee has formally expressed its apprehensions, warning that giving China this prominent diplomatic presence would not only reward its controversial human rights record but could also facilitate the intimidation of UK citizens and dissidents. This reflects a broader pattern seen in recent years where nations grapple with the implications of China’s expansive international footprint.

On the ground, local authorities, including Tower Hamlets Council, have expressed unanimous opposition to the plans. Despite their advisory status, these objections reflect a palpable concern regarding the potential for heightened protests and the additional strain it may place on law enforcement resources. Interestingly, the nuances of UK-China relations are complex, with the government facing criticism for perceived indecisiveness between economic interests and security imperatives.

Ultimately, the decision now rests with UK Housing Secretary Angela Rayner, who will determine the fate of this highly contentious proposal following a planning inspectorate hearing. As discussions unfold, many observers are waiting to see whether the UK will prioritise the concerns voiced by its own security establishments, along with allies like the United States, or proceed on a path that raises significant questions about transparency and national security in an increasingly interconnected world.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14746897/Chinese-embassy-Downing-Street-Donald-Trump.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/70151e6c-bd34-4830-a558-bb7de2f296e6> - A US House of Representatives committee has expressed concern over China's plan to build a massive embassy in London, citing significant security risks to the UK's financial services industry. The proposed embassy, intended to be the largest in Europe, would be located near the Tower of London, replacing the current embassy in Marylebone. Local residents and some politicians fear increased espionage activities. Despite initial opposition from the Tower Hamlets local authority, the final decision rests with UK Housing Secretary Angela Rayner, following a planning inspectorate hearing.
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/88129701-0695-406b-b449-131d7fc8de14> - US lawmakers have raised concerns about China's plan to build its largest embassy in Europe, situated in London, due to China's human rights record and alleged transnational repression. They argue that allowing such a significant diplomatic presence would reward China undeservedly and enable intimidation and harassment of UK citizens and dissidents. The proposed embassy site, the former Royal Mint Court, is also problematic due to its proximity to critical communications infrastructure, which could facilitate espionage. The lawmakers urged UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer to address these concerns during his meeting with US President Donald Trump.
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cdd6yydmd03o> - Plans for a new Chinese embassy opposite the Tower of London have been opposed by the local council. Tower Hamlets councillors voted unanimously to reject the scheme at Royal Mint Court, arguing it could present a security risk due to the size of the protests it could attract. The council's verdict is advisory, not binding, as the power to formally approve or reject the proposal has been taken out of their hands by the government. Deputy Prime Minister and Communities Secretary Angela Rayner will decide whether to grant permission or not, following a planning inspectorate hearing in the new year.
5. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/chinese-super-embassy-london-spying-fears-b1222229.html> - Downing Street is under fire over revived plans to build a vast Chinese 'super embassy' in London—a proposal previously blocked by the former Conservative government. Planning documents for the proposed site, located at the historic Royal Mint buildings near the Tower of London, reveal 'two suites of anonymous unlabelled basement rooms and a tunnel,' with their intended purpose redacted 'for security reasons.' The Conservatives have accused the government of 'appeasement' towards Beijing, warning the so-called 'dungeons' could be used for espionage or to intimidate dissidents.
6. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/chinese-embassy-royal-mint-court-london-assembly-tower-hamlets-sadiq-khan-b1200795.html> - Fresh concerns were raised at City Hall over plans for a new Chinese 'super-embassy' next to the Tower of London. London Assembly members urged Sadiq Khan’s policing deputy to join them in opposing the project, arguing that the 'completely unsuitable' location could become a hotspot for protests and take up valuable police officer time. Deputy Mayor Kaya Comer-Schwartz declined to criticise the scheme—despite the Metropolitan Police having themselves objected to it—though she did acknowledge 'the strength of feeling' over the issue.
7. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2022/12/01/chinese-super-embassy-blocked-london-blow-xi-jinping/> - Beijing’s new 'super embassy' in London would be the largest of its kind in Europe and only around three miles away from Westminster. The 700,000 sq ft site was acquired by China for more than £255m in 2018, covering multiple buildings on a plot of land just north of the Thames and a short walk from Tower Bridge. Beijing’s planned presence there would be ten times the size of its current embassy in Marylebone, near Paddington. The development has stirred up huge controversy because of concerns about China’s human rights record, the historical nature of the site, and the impact of such a massive development on local residents.