# UK government pledges rigorous security checks amid US concerns over new Chinese embassy



Government officials in the UK are bracing for heightened scrutiny regarding the proposed construction of a large Chinese embassy at Royal Mint Court in central London, following strong objections from the United States. Technology Secretary Peter Kyle has reassured the public that the government intends to handle any security concerns meticulously, especially amidst warnings from the White House regarding potential risks associated with the embassy's location near sensitive communications hubs in the City of London. This site is particularly alarming for US intelligence, as it would bring a major diplomatic footprint close to crucial infrastructure that handles highly-sensitive data.

During a recent appearance on Sky News, Kyle stated that any security issues raised, particularly those concerning the infrastructure around the proposed embassy, would “be taken care of assiduously in the planning process." He highlighted the routine nature of such discussions between the UK and its allies, enhanced by their participation in the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing alliance. However, US officials remain sceptical. A senior figure warned that the embassy could allow Chinese intelligence to intercept vital communications, undermining the security of one of America's closest allies.

The controversy surrounding the embassy, which, if approved, would be China's largest in Europe, has seemingly gained momentum following discussions between Chinese President Xi Jinping and British leaders. The site was previously rejected by the local council of Tower Hamlets in 2022, due to concerns regarding security and community impact. Local apprehensions persist, particularly given that over a thousand demonstrators rallied against the plans earlier this year, citing fears of increased espionage and intimidation of dissidents within the UK.

Opposition to the embassy extends beyond local residents, with significant political pushback from both the UK and US. Notably, lawmakers such as Chris Smith and John Moolenaar have expressed their reservations, suggesting that allowing such a prominent diplomatic entity would reward China's human rights abuses. "We urge the UK not to provide the CCP with a significant presence that could facilitate intimidation of UK citizens," they stated, reflecting bipartisan concerns shared across the Atlantic.

On the ground, the governing dynamics are complex. As deliberations continue, the Metropolitan Police have voiced worries over potential protests surrounding the embassy's construction. The proposed site, an 18th-century Grade II-listed complex, raises logistical concerns for managing large assemblies that may disrupt local traffic and public safety. Despite these challenges, British ministers have indicated a willingness to favour diplomatic expansion, particularly as relations with China are viewed as pivotal for economic revival.

As it stands, the final decision regarding the embassy will be made by UK Housing Secretary Angela Rayner, following a report from the Planning Inspectorate. In the interim, both the public sentiment and international relations continue to oscillate between calls for security reassurances and a cautious approach to fostering diplomatic relations with China.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/uk-will-handle-us-security-concerns-over-new-chinese-embassy-plan-says-kyle/a1598466808.html), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/056c0343-2f8d-4a70-9901-5468894ecf24)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/uk-will-handle-us-security-concerns-over-new-chinese-embassy-plan-says-kyle/a1598466808.html), [[6]](https://selectcommitteeontheccp.house.gov/media/press-releases/chairmen-moolenaar-and-smith-urge-uk-ambassador-reject-ccps-largest-european-0)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.ft.com/content/88129701-0695-406b-b449-131d7fc8de14), [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/70151e6c-bd34-4830-a558-bb7de2f296e6)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.ft.com/content/88129701-0695-406b-b449-131d7fc8de14), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/apr/28/metropolitan-police-concerned-large-protests-china-super-embassy)
* Paragraph 5 – [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/70151e6c-bd34-4830-a558-bb7de2f296e6), [[7]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/dec/02/london-council-tower-hamlets-rejects-new-chinese-embassy-amid-residents-safety-fears)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/uk-will-handle-us-security-concerns-over-new-chinese-embassy-plan-says-kyle/a1598466808.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/056c0343-2f8d-4a70-9901-5468894ecf24> - The United States has raised concerns with the UK government regarding China's plan to construct a massive embassy in Royal Mint Court, London. The proposed 20,000 sq m compound, set to be China’s largest embassy in Europe, is near sensitive communications hubs in the City's financial district, prompting fears of potential espionage. Intelligence officials, including former MI6 head Sir Richard Dearlove, warned that the proximity to critical data cables could allow Chinese intelligence to intercept communications. The US emphasizes the need to consider national security and ensure mitigation strategies as part of any decision-making process, given the intelligence-sharing alliance of Five Eyes. The UK opposition Conservative party has also opposed the embassy, citing national security risks and China’s record of surveillance and intimidation. Although the local council previously rejected the plan on security and community impact grounds, the project has regained traction following pressure from Chinese President Xi Jinping and Foreign Minister Wang Yi. Some UK officials hope that granting approval could improve strained UK-China relations. The British government has yet to comment on the renewed proposal.
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, Chris Smith and John Moolenaar, urged UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer to address these concerns during his meeting with US President Donald Trump. The opposition from UK and US officials comes amid heightened diplomatic engagements between the UK and China, with the Labour government viewing China as a crucial investment partner.
4. <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 security risks to the UK's financial industry. The embassy, which would be the largest in Europe, is proposed near the Tower of London, replacing its current location in Marylebone. Local residents and some politicians fear an increase in espionage activities. Both Chinese President Xi Jinping and Foreign Minister Wang Yi have discussed the project with British leaders. Although the local authority of Tower Hamlets rejected the project on security grounds, the final decision will be made by UK Housing Secretary Angela Rayner. Despite initial opposition from the Metropolitan Police, British ministers have shown support for the project, highlighting the need for diplomatic presences.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/apr/28/metropolitan-police-concerned-large-protests-china-super-embassy> - The Metropolitan Police have expressed concerns about the potential for large protests outside the proposed site of a new Chinese embassy at Royal Mint Court in London. The site, an 18th-century Grade II-listed complex, is near the Tower of London. The police have raised issues about the adequacy of space for demonstrations, with concerns that gatherings could spill into the road, causing traffic disruptions. The local council, Tower Hamlets, had previously rejected the proposal on security grounds, but the decision now rests with UK Housing Secretary Angela Rayner. The final decision will be made following a report from the Planning Inspectorate.
6. <https://selectcommitteeontheccp.house.gov/media/press-releases/chairmen-moolenaar-and-smith-urge-uk-ambassador-reject-ccps-largest-european-0> - Chairmen John Moolenaar and Chris Smith of US congressional committees have urged the UK Ambassador to the United States to reject China's plan to build its largest embassy in Europe at Royal Mint Court in London. They express concerns that granting such a prominent diplomatic presence to the Chinese Communist Party would reward its human rights abuses and efforts to suppress political opposition. The letter was sent ahead of a meeting between UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer and US President Donald Trump, highlighting the significance of the issue in US-UK relations.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/dec/02/london-council-tower-hamlets-rejects-new-chinese-embassy-amid-residents-safety-fears> - Tower Hamlets Council in London has rejected plans for a new Chinese embassy at Royal Mint Court, citing concerns over residents' safety and the site's historical significance. The proposed development includes the partial demolition and restoration of Grade II-listed buildings and a cultural exchange building. Residents and councillors raised objections regarding tourist safety, policing measures, and the site's historical importance, which includes Black Death burial grounds and archaeology from the Royal Navy's first yard in the late 16th century. The council's decision reflects local opposition to the project.