



Re: Application DC/08/69950/x, 139 Sunderland Road

Dear Mr. Whittington,

On behalf of the Forest Hill Society I wish to object to this planning application.

1. Character of the Building:

The existing building is one of a set of four large houses on Sunderland Road which together make a significant positive impact on the area. The Forest Hill Society has discussed with officers and with local residents the prospect of setting up a conservation area in this location to preserve excellent examples of Christmas houses and other large residential houses, of which this is one. Had it not been for a shortage of staff within Lewisham planning department, we believe that this area would now be a conservation area and this building would be protected. Although this building is clearly not in a conservation area we would like the council to consider the positive nature of the existing building within the context of the local area. The loss of this building would have a detrimental effect on any future plans to create a conservation area in this location. We believe that this development is contrary to **council policy HSG 9 b**: “The conversion of dwellings will not be permitted where: ...
(b) the character of the buildings or neighbourhood ... would be adversely affected”

2. Social Housing:

Lewisham council and the GLA recommends that any large development (over 10 units) include 50% social housing provision. The application states that 10 of the units will be market housing with only a single, one bedroom unit being for social housing. This single one bed flat is in fact a studio flat, which is not the main requirement for social housing in Lewisham.

As a development of 11 units, we do not believe that the provision of a single studio flat for social housing is acceptable and is **contrary to council and London planning guidance**.

3. Mixed Tenure:

As stated above, the only social housing provision planned in this development is a single studio flat, the only studio flat in the development. This is contrary to **policy HSG 5d** which states: “in schemes of mixed tenure ensures through overall design quality that social and private housing cannot be distinguished from each other”

4. Family Dwellings:

The existing building is a large family dwelling with nine bedrooms. Council policy HSG6 recognises the shortage of houses with more than three bedrooms: “*In terms of family accommodation Lewisham suffers from a shortage of larger housing units, particularly 3+ bed properties, as indicated by the mismatch between household size and the size of dwelling in Table H2. Provision of family housing is therefore particularly valuable in Lewisham.*” Although this development includes a single 3 bedroom flat, this does not make up for the loss of a large family house. As such this application is contrary to **council policy HSG6**.

5. Design and Environmental impact:

Flats 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 have no light or ventilation for the kitchens and none of the bathrooms have natural light or ventilation in any of the flats. This is contrary to **council policy HSG 5 a and e** which state that “The Council will, therefore, only permit new residential development which:

- a) provides a satisfactory level of privacy, outlook and natural lighting ...
- e) would encourage energy and natural resource efficiency”

6. **Overlooking:**

Although some care has been taken to reduce overlooking in this development, and no external windows face the neighbouring dwellings, the rear external terraces on first and third floors would overlook the neighbouring properties. This is a particular concern as the new building will be substantially deeper than the two adjacent properties at the rear.

We would ask that provision is made to make sure that overlooking does not occur from the sides of these terraces so that they conform with council policy HSG 7 which states: “For non-family dwellings, it may be more appropriate to provide individual balconies ... provided this does not lead to problems of overlooking and loss of privacy to adjacent properties and gardens.”

7. **Parking:**

There are four car parking spaces in front of the building, this will require the removal of the front wall and the lowering of the curb in front of the entire property. We do not believe this is a good design when considering pedestrian safety, particularly with a primary school within 200 metres on this side of Sunderland Road.

From the plans you will see that there is a lamppost and a tree directly in front of the property. A visual inspection of the property suggests that the indication of the position of tree T1 is inaccurate and that these two obstacles will make parking in front of the property difficult. This design should be carefully considered to prevent damage to cars or to a lovely mature Plane tree, which forms an important part of the character on this tree lined avenue.

8. **Cycle Storage:**

Cycle storage has been designated in a small area of the corridor leading to the 3 bedroom flat and the gardens. We do not believe this is an acceptable position for the number of cycles that should be encouraged in such a development. This is contrary to **council policy TRN 14** which requires parking for one cycle for each unit in such a development.

9. **View from Public Road:**

We would seek clarification from the officers regarding section 21 of the application form (http://acolnet.lewisham.gov.uk/ACOLLATEDOCS/39246_1.pdf) which states that the site cannot be seen from a public road. Unless this is interpreted in some way of which I am not familiar, it seems clear that the site can be seen from Sunderland Road. If this is a mistake in the application we would ask that this is corrected prior to consideration by the council.

10. **Local Meeting:**

As of 16th November 2008, there have been 12 objections to this application from neighbours. We believe that with this many objections a local meeting should be held so that the applicant and the objectors can meet to discuss the concerns of local residents prior to consideration by the council.

For the reasons stated above I hope that you will reject this application.

Yours Sincerely,

Michael Abrahams

Vice-Chair, Forest Hill Society