



**Re: Application DC/12/80151/X, 139 Sunderland Road**

The Forest Hill Society is the local civic society for the SE23 postal district in South East London, which includes the areas of Forest Hill and Honor Oak. The Society has over 400 members and campaigns on a range of issues to maintain, improve and upgrade the area. Further information on the society can be found at [www.foresthillsociety.com](http://www.foresthillsociety.com).

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

We welcome the plan to retain the frontage of the house, which recognises its importance to the visual streetscene as one of a block of four substantial Edwardian villas. This was part of the reason for the planning inspector turning down the appeal by the applicant against the previous refusal of permission to demolish and rebuild.

The planning context mentioned in the planning obligations statement is mostly not relevant. 133 Sunderland Road was a modern building which was demolished and replaced with modern houses. These, and other modern buildings mentioned in Sunderland Road, are flanked by modern buildings. 6 Church Rise is a poor example, as the original plan was to retain the frontage, but the developer did not manage to do this. It collapsed and has to be replaced by a modern frontage. We hope this would not be the case at 139 Sunderland Road.

However, despite retention of the frontage, we still have some concerns about the proposals.

**1. Internal layout: overdevelopment**

This is better than the previous proposal, and retains the existing central access, which is good. However, the awkward shapes of the living/kitchen areas in flats 4 and 6, and the access to the garden via a bedroom in flat 1, are indicative of overdevelopment. This is contrary to HSG 5. Flat 1 has only one reception room (which is also the kitchen), yet 3 bedrooms. This is inappropriate for a family unit.

The planning inspector also commented on the overdevelopment in relation to the previous proposal, which was for 5 two bedroomed and 1 three bedroomed flats; 13 bedrooms in total. The current proposal for 6 flats also adds up to 13 bedrooms. The inspector specifically commented that the proposal failed to respect the established rear building line, as does this current proposal.

**2. 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. Although this development includes a single 3 bedroom flat, it is barely adequate (see above) and does not make up for the loss of a large family house. As such this application is contrary to council policy HSG6.

**3. Design and Environmental impact:**

The flats have no natural light or ventilation for the bathrooms. 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”

**4. Parking:**

There are three car parking spaces in front of the building, this will require the removal of the front wall and the lowering of the kerb 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 lamp-post and a tree directly in front of the property as well as a road hump. These obstacles will make parking in front of the property difficult. This design should be carefully considered to prevent damage to cars, lamp-post, or to a lovely mature Plane tree, which forms an important part of the character on this tree lined avenue.

**5. Cycle Storage:**

There is none. Yet the plan is for 6 flats with only 3 parking places.

There is a descriptive error on the website. It refers to 2 four bedroom units, instead of 4 two bedroom units.

Please do not hesitate to let us know if you have any questions in relation to this letter.