

# The Brixton Society

Understanding the Past, Looking to the Future

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20 May 2019

For attention of:  
Sinead Winship,  
[swinship@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:swinship@lambeth.gov.uk)

Your ref:  
19/01481/FUL

## **Hero of Switzerland PH, 142 Loughborough Road SW9 – Proposed Redevelopment**

Dear Ms Winship,

Thank you for your letter about the above application.

Our response has been delayed because this is a large-scale project on a prominent site, but the Society **objects** on the following grounds:

### **1. Overdevelopment:**

This application proposes a dramatic increase in height and bulk in comparison with the present building. The design is a gross over-development of the site, as described more fully in paras. 2 to 7 below.

### **2. Excessive Height:**

We consider that the maximum height in this location should be no more than 8 storeys, after considering the context and relationship to existing apartment blocks. The current proposal rises to 15 storeys overall, and the design treatment reinforces the impression of height and bulk, with no relieving or redeeming features.

This area has not been identified in the Lambeth Local Plan as suitable for tall buildings. The nearest blocks are typically only 3 to 4 storey buildings. The proposal therefore conflicts with Local Plan policies Q2(i), Q5(b) and Q26.

### **3. Limited Transport Capacity:**

A practical limitation here is that City-bound rail services through Loughborough Junction Station are already at full capacity in morning peak hours. Even east-west bus services along Coldharbour Lane encounter congestion at each end of this road.

The present Public Transport Accessibility score is therefore deceptive, and new residents will experience difficulty if they wish to travel to work in Central London at normal hours. Yet that access to Central London will be the main appeal of this location for purchasers of dwellings within this development. As a “car-free” development, residents will not have the option of driving to work either.

Clearly then, the target housing density for new development here should be “urban” rather than “central” as defined in the Mayor’s London Plan.

#### **4. Uncertain future of A4 use:**

We are generally keen to include employment floorspace in developments like this, but it needs to be suitable for modern commercial needs.

Continuing public house or A4 use faces challenges in modern times, and we draw attention to the closure of 3 long-standing public houses nearby around Loughborough Junction – the Green Man, the Warrior and the Crown – within the past 20 years.

The proximity to residential accommodation is likely to restrict the scope for a public house use to continue to be viable in this location. In particular, late-night opening and live entertainment may be difficult to sustain in the face of complaints about noise and disturbance from residents directly above.

Alternatively, some licensed premises have sought to increase trade by expanding their food offer. However, cooking will require effective extract ventilation flues, and these must include odour filters and sound-proofing. Their outlets should be carried up to discharge above residential floors where sited on lower floors of a block like this. The proposed design does not provide for this.

#### **5. Quality of Existing Public House:**

The existing building is a relatively rare example of a 1950s purpose-built public house, provided contemporaneously with the development of the surrounding New Loughborough Estate by the London County Council. CAMRA have drawn our attention to the quality of the interior, which is substantially as built, and the only external change has been inappropriate window replacement.

This building should be retained, as a strong candidate for listing.

#### **6. Lack of Mitigation Measures:**

For a project of this scale, we are disappointed at the lack of measures to mitigate its impact on the surrounding area.

Open space is limited to the dedicated pub garden, and no enhancements are being contributed to the existing streetscape. In itself, this fails to deliver on Local Plan policies Q9 (iv) and Q10 (f).

We might accept these failings if the project was instead making a substantial contribution to the local need for affordable or social rented housing, but the percentage proposed is disappointing.

*External Design/...*

### **7. External Design deficiencies:**

The design claims to be inspired by Le Corbusier's Unite d'Habitation in Marseilles, like the slab blocks on the surrounding estate, but fundamentally misunderstands the original principles. In effect its proportions are based on one of the nearby slab blocks stood on end, resulting in excessive height and bulk. Unlike the original concept, communal amenities provided for residents are minimal and the lower two floors are taken up by the public house use. The design fails to conform to Lambeth Local Plan policies Q8 and Q9.

### **8. Conclusion:**

In summary, this application falls short of Lambeth's planning policy requirements in several important respects, and so should be refused.

Please note that the height of the proposed building may also attract comments from amenity groups a little further afield, e.g. the Camberwell Society, covering the SE5 area to the east of the site.

Yours sincerely,



Hon. Secretary