

The Brixton Society

Understanding the Past, Looking to the Future

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Development at 141-149 Railton Road, SE24 – Proposed Large HMO:

Dear Mr Goodall,

I am following up the exhibition of proposals for the above site last month at EffraSpace. I regret it was not possible to respond earlier, due to the more urgent demands of several live planning applications within our catchment area.

Fortunately to refresh my memory, one of the local councillors has forwarded to me a pdf file of your exhibition panels. However, these did not include a basement plan, roof plan, rear elevation or cross-sections, so we have had to make some assumptions. Nevertheless, our initial comments are as follows:

Large HMO Use:

Our past experience of large HMO proposals has been problematic, though at least they have been in Town Centre locations and were based on adapting existing buildings.

We consider that they provide sub-standard accommodation and can only be acceptable if they have on-site management and provide for special needs. Tenants merely being young or single would not be sufficient justification for siting a large HMO in a general residential area.

Preferred Site Use:

We were disappointed that the Health Clinic closed, as a result of a policy decision to concentrate "local" health services in a large remote centre on the north-eastern fringe of Brixton.

Our preference for this site would clearly be for it to revert to family housing.

Street Context:

The preferred form should be no more than 3 storeys high, to match the adjacent terrace. Any storey rising above the existing parapet level should be set back from the main façade, or be treated as an attic storey. A double-pitched mansard roof of early 19th century pattern will not be acceptable, and a flat roof will be preferred.

Basement Design:

In the absence of a cross-section, we are unable to judge if this is to be a full basement, or merely a semi-basement as was the case with the original terrace houses.

We would deplore any habitable rooms being sited within a full basement, due to the lack of any outlook, and the more limited scope for daylight and sunlight to penetrate.

I am sure your architects are already aware of the need to provide a basement impact study, including demonstrating effective protection from flooding or ground water.

Please note that the Herne Hill Society also takes an interest in the southern section of Railton Road, so they may wish to comment in the event of a planning application being made for this site.

Yours sincerely,



Secretary.