

The Brixton Society

Understanding the Past, Looking to the Future

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Lambeth Planning,
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For attention of:
Lauren Shallcross,
lshallcross@lambeth.gov.uk

Please reply to:
Alan Piper, RIBA,



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12th July 2020

Your ref:
20/03546/FUL

Land between 29 & 31 Blenheim Gardens, SW2 – Redevelopment:

Dear Miss Shallcross,

Thank you for your recent letter about the above revised application. This is a prominent site within the Brixton Hill KIBA and fronting onto the approach to Windmill Gardens, a small but popular public open space in an area of open space deficiency.

Over the years, we have seen a number of proposals for this site, but this latest version does not appear to address previous local concerns, so once again we must **object**.

Sadly, the applicant has failed to highlight any changes from the previous version in his Design and Access Statement.

Excess Height and Bulk:

Given that the blocks close by have pitched roofs, the proposed building will appear at least one-storey higher than the surrounding buildings.

Yet it is also built up to the Blenheim Gardens frontage, resulting in a very substantial 5-storey block, totally dominating a street which is predominantly of 2 and 3 storey buildings.

To be acceptable in the street scene, the development should be reduced by at least one complete storey, i.e. no more than 4 full storeys above ground level, with the top storey set back from the main façade on both east and north elevations.

It is not acceptable for the ground floor shopfront/ business units to crowd forward to the front edge of the site. The ground storey should be set back in line with the upper storeys, to avoid undue enclosure of the existing narrow footway. This would provide an opportunity for some decorative paving or planting to relieve the plain elevation proposed.

Impact on Neighbouring Blocks:

We are unhappy with the proximity of the new block to existing live/work and residential units on 3 sides. This will cause problems of overlooking, loss of daylight, and undue sense of enclosure.

Even buildings to the north, on the opposite side of Blenheim Gardens, will experience a reduction in sunlight in the middle of the day.

Other objectors have already pointed out the omission of effective daylight and sunlight assessments for the surrounding properties.

Relationship to adjacent block at rear:

These proposals appear to conflict with the approved design for the mixed-use building to the rear of the site (ref. 05/00211/FUL, granted permission on 27.3.07). That design included ground floor openings in the north face of the existing building, together with an access lane directly in front.

However, the proposed design would be built up directly against the north face of the existing building, which may invalidate existing consents and means of escape from fire.

The applicant has failed to demonstrate how the existing building can continue to operate safely with the new development in place. Changing a few window openings to obscured glazing does not begin to address these issues.

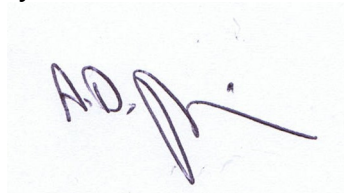
Parking and Deliveries:

The only mitigating factor in the application is the inclusion of B1 floorspace, which would contribute to the existing KIBA, which has already seen a long-term decline in employment floorspace.

However, a major weakness is the lack of provision for delivery vehicles to stop and collect or deliver goods, in an approach road which is already prone to blockage by delivery vehicles, in addition to post office vans going to and from the nearby sorting office.

We must also question the practicality of a "car-free" development, in the context of increased home deliveries, car club use and the expectation that taxis/ mini-cabs should be able to drop off passengers close to the entrance. It is over-optimistic to claim that Brixton Underground and rail stations are within walking distance (D&A Statement, p.13). In practice most residents will have to rely on a connection by bus or bicycle.

Yours sincerely,



Hon. Secretary