

# The Brixton Society

Understanding the Past, Looking to the Future

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21<sup>st</sup> August 2020

*For attention of:*  
Lauren Shallcross,  
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*Your ref:*  
20/02027/FUL

## **81 LOTHIAN ROAD, SW9 – Proposed Redevelopment:**

Dear Miss Shallcross,

Residents have drawn our attention to the above application, but I am disappointed that we were not notified directly, otherwise we would have responded earlier.

This is a prominent site between the Minet Estate Conservation Area and the new Oval Quarter, and the Society **objects** to the proposal on the following grounds:

### **Excessive Height and Bulk:**

Despite the adjacent frontages being continuous at only 4 storeys, this design presents 5 storeys in the main block, plus an extra storey for access to the roof garden, treated as a plain dark cube which emphasises its bulk.

In this context, the maximum acceptable height should be 4 storeys overall, and the proposal is clearly too high for this site.

Despite the applicants' claims, the building would stand forward of the adjacent frontages, reinforcing the impression of height and bulk when seen from street level in Akerman and Lothian Roads.

The design fails to meet Lambeth Local Plan policies Q6(iv), Q7(i) & (ii) and Q26(a).

### **Poor Design in Context:**

The site adjoins the Minet Conservation Area, with the distinctive mansion blocks of Calais Gate at the back of the site. The site is directly opposite the spire of the listed St. John the Divine church seen at the far end of Patmos Road, in the Vassall Conservation Area.

While 110-132 Akerman Road is a modern terrace built as part of the Oval Quarter development, its frontage attempts to echo the formal design of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century terraces in the neighbourhood. The Akerman Health Centre directly opposite the site also has formal elevations with a horizontal emphasis.

Bathgate House is a standard maisonette block of its time, but has a strong horizontal emphasis, slender columns and materials sympathetic to its surroundings. Even the tower block at the corner of Patmos Road is set well back from the main road frontages, so that it does not dominate views from the streets approaching the application site.

In contrast, the proposed design completely fails to fit into its context. There is neither symmetry nor unity in the front elevation visible on the approach from Patmos Road.

The heavy brick-clad columns and beams framing the front balconies are of exaggerated thickness, which only reinforces the bulk of the whole building. In particular, the beams above the 4<sup>th</sup> floor balcony are superfluous structurally and accentuate the contrast in scale and style with surrounding buildings. Section 2.3 of the Design & Access Statement is specious and sloppily written.

There are also random infill panels interrupting the balcony balustrades, but different at each floor level. An opportunity has been missed here to consider the effects of summer evening sunlight on this frontage.

Indeed, environment and sustainability issues do not appear to have influenced the design at all.

In summary, the design fails to meet Lambeth Local Plan policies EN4, Q2(i), Q5(b) & (c), Q7(vi), and Q22(a).

#### **Defective Entrance Design:**

The entrance to the residential element is mean and austere, sandwiched between two refuse stores. It should have been possible to redesign the ground floor frontage so that both refuse stores were at the corners and the entrances to both residential and community elements were more welcoming. Some form of projecting canopy above both entrances would be welcome. The design fails to meet Lambeth Local Plan policies Q1, Q3(a) and Q12.

#### **Daylight and Sunlight issues:**

We are concerned that the daylight infringements to the nearer part of Bathgate House and to 132 Akerman Road have been dismissed too lightly by the applicants.

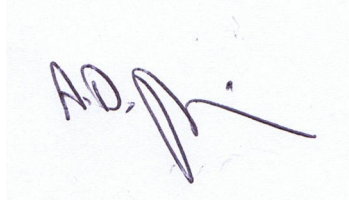
Furthermore, potential daylight, sunlight and overlooking for the Calais Gate mansion flats immediately to the rear have not been addressed at all in the applicant's proposals.

Local Plan policies Q2(iii) & (iv) should be respected.

#### **Affordable Housing:**

We note that this scheme will not in itself provide any affordable housing or meet any specific local needs. Instead it will degrade the street scene. It therefore fails to meet Local Plan policies H2 and H8.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A.D.' followed by a stylized flourish.

Hon. Secretary