

The Brixton Society

Understanding the Past, Looking to the Future

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Response to Call for Sites

In response to your recent Call for Sites, our comments and suggestions are set out below.

1. Development Pipeline

There is already a substantial number of sites with planning permission, but with no visible progress on development. Developers appear reluctant to commit, confident that in the meantime their land holdings increase in value. Even for public sector sites, progress is glacial – we have been waiting 10 years to see new housing started in Somerleyton Road (Site 16). Therefore we see little urgency in finding new sites, when there is already several years' potential housing supply.

We have previously made detailed submissions on the following sites within our area which were included in the Council's Site Allocations DPD:

Site 17: 330-336 Brixton Road SW9;

Site 20: Tesco, 13 Acre Lane SW2;

Site 21: 51-57 Effra Road SW2;

Site 22: Wellfit Street, Hinton Road & Hardess Street SE24;

Site 23: corner of Coldharbour Lane SW9 & Herne Hill Road SE24.

It is not clear if the Council is looking for additional sites, or for alternatives to the above. Site 22 already has planning consent, but for a co-living scheme quite different in concept to the intended site brief. The proposed briefs for sites 17 and 22 are unduly complex and unlikely to be realised as intended.

2. Housing is not enough

It is too easy to become fixated on housing supply, but effective planning needs consideration of all the other needs and uses which make for a balanced community. Residential uses have long tended to displace business space and local amenities because of the great disparity in site values. Business space for the Creative & Cultural Sector has been one of the quiet successes for Brixton Town Centre over the past decade, but is now facing a

crisis because of the imminent redevelopment of International House, Blue Star House and 374-410 Brixton Road. Floorspace above and behind shops used to meet part of this need, but over the past decade it has tended to revert to self-contained residential use.

3. Sustainability Matters

There is a vague reference to “supporting growth” but as a densely developed Inner London borough, Lambeth has limited scope for further densification. The result can only be a noisy, stressful high-intensity environment which does not make for pleasant living conditions. The lack of consideration for sustainable forms of development is profoundly disappointing.

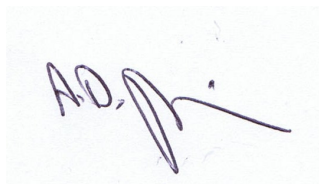
One avenue which should receive more priority is the scope for re-use or retrofit of existing buildings, which can maintain an area’s distinctive character while greatly reducing the carbon dioxide generated during both construction and operation of the buildings concerned.

4. Proposed Site

There are still isolated sites which may have been overlooked because they do not front main roads. One that we can recommend is a small plot of open land on the edge of the Bonham Estate, adjacent to 6 Winterwell Road SW2 and at the rear of Diana House in Bonham Road, SW2.

This has been used as a contractor’s yard during refurbishment works on the estate, though this already appears to be winding down. Normal utility services should be readily available – the adjacent 1880s terrace housing continued up to the corner of Bonham Road before bomb damage during the Second World War.

This relatively quiet location would be particularly suitable for family housing which is much-needed locally.



Hon. Secretary