

# DC/10/75448 - 6 Church Rise

I am writing on behalf of the Forest Hill Society to object to the planning application for 6 Church Rise.

## **Background:**

The existing site has suffered from previous attempts by Earlsfield Estates to convert the previous house, which collapsed due to excavation in the basement. As a result we understand that the remaining structure was demolished and the basement was filled with concrete. This collapse caused damage to neighbouring properties which we do not believe has been compensated, nor is it likely to be with the bankruptcy of Earlsfield Estates. This situation has caused concern for local residents, especially those in adjacent properties.

Further concern is justified by the recent collapse of another property belonging to Mincove Global in Waldram Park, just around the corner from this site. The collapse due to excavating the basement in this case led to the death of somebody on site and we will be following the reports on this death with interest to understand the full circumstances of the death. But this situation highlights the threat to adjoining buildings and to construction workers where a similar development is planned.

Removing the concrete in the basement area is likely to cause further movement in the adjoining properties and, given this delicate situation, we feel it is only right for the council to receive details of the construction methods that are intended to safeguard the adjoining properties. We would welcome a local meeting prior to consideration by planning officers so that the developer can reassure local residents that this development will be handled with the utmost care and consideration.

On the substantive planning issues there are a number of concerns.

## **1. External Staircases**

The design of the development includes five external staircases to provide light and access to all of the basement apartments, and an additional external staircase provides access to the rear garden from the family unit on the first floor.

We believe that the number of staircases demonstrates poor design as a result of over-development of the site. This is contrary to council policy URB 3 - Urban Design.

In relation to this we would ask for a calculation of PTAL rating and habitable rooms per hectare, which have not been included in the documents available on the website. We believe that such a calculation would demonstrate that this level of development does not meet the guidance provided by the London Plan Density Matrix.

## **2. Family Garden**

Access to the rear garden is provided for the family unit on the first floor by way of a set of external stairs which lead into a communal garden area. This does not provide a private garden for the family dwelling nor is the rear garden and bicycle parking secure, and possibly not protected from rain.

This is contrary to council policy HSG 7 - Gardens which states that *'The Council will seek in all new dwellings the provision of a readily accessible, secure, private and useable external space. Family dwellings should be provided with their own private garden area. Normally, a minimum garden depth of 9 metres will be required.'*

### **3. Internal Layout**

There are number of instances of living rooms adjoining bedrooms in neighbouring units within the building. These include:

Bed 1 of flat 6 and living room of flat 7

Living room of flat 1 directly above bed 1 in flat 6

Living room/kitchen of flat 3 directly above bed 2 in flat 2

Kitchen of flat 4 directly above bed 1 in flat 3

The relationship between the flats within this development is not of good quality and contrary to council policy HSG 5 - Layout and Design of New Residential Development.

### **4. Off Street Parking**

Whilst we welcome the inclusion of 2 off-street parking places we have some concerns about the suitability of parking space closest to the house and directly adjacent to a stairwell and lightwell. No details have been provided explaining how safety for users of this space, and light for the basement flat, can be ensured.

For the reasons stated above I hope that you will reject this application and in the event that you do approve the application, that conditions are built into the approval to ensure the safety of neighbouring properties during the construction phase.