DC/11/78883/FT: 49 HOUSTON ROAD, LONDON, SE23 2RJ

I am writing on behalf of the Forest Hill Society, a local civic society with around 400 members which works to improve Forest Hill and SE23.

We wish to object to this application on the following grounds:

(1) Overdevelopment, both for the existing building and the local area. 7 units in a house of this size would provide the occupants with poor residential amenity. Units 1, 2 and 3 clearly do not reach the minimum floor area standards for a studio flat as set out in Lewisham's Residential Standards. If the quoted floor space per unit includes kitchens and bathrooms then the other units also do not meet the minimum floor area standard for a bed/sitting room in a studio flat. Houston Road is not near a town centre and this level of density is therefore not justified, and may result in a high level of additional on-street parking.

(2) The poor quality of some units with regard to daylight/sunlight and layout do not meet Lewisham's Residential Standards for outlook (all habitable rooms shall have reasonable daylight and outlook, and rooms without windows are not permitted) and room layout (the size and shape of rooms should allow for the satisfactory arrangement of furniture), for example:

(i) Unit 3: there is no window in the studio room and the only daylight is from the garden door and window at the end of the galley kitchen, which are north-east facing.

(ii) Unit 4: the only daylight is from one window and garden door, both facing north-west and looking out onto the side of the neighbouring property;

(iii) Unit 1: the only space big enough for a bed would be close to the cooker. This is a health and safety risk and very poor internal layout.

(3) Lewisham's Residential Standards state that studio flats in conversions are not encouraged. Policy HSG9 states that at least one family unit (3+ bedrooms) should be provided in every conversion scheme. As both the house and local area are highly suited for family occupation we see no reason why this policy should not apply to this application.