

BROCKLEY SOCIETY

AGM 13 November 2019 - What Brockley Society Planning Committee Does

Background

Planning has always been part of Brockley Society's remit. Brockley itself is a well-preserved, inner Victorian suburb with an extraordinarily rich range of architectural styles. The Society was partly founded in response to the demolition of a number of grand Victorian Villas in Tressillian Crescent in the early 1970s and more particularly when it campaigned successfully in 1972 against Council plans to develop rear gardens to properties in Wickham Road.

Operation

Brockley Society's Planning Group meets once a month (usually on the first Tuesday) and performs a number of functions.

The Society scrutinises and discusses planning applications. It does so to ensure that applications comply with national planning regulations and as set out locally in the Brockley Conservation Area Supplementary Planning Document. The latter is detailed, complicated and, as it is specific to Brockley, is often overlooked by applicants.

Where appropriate, the Society comments on the applications to Lewisham's Planning Department. These take three forms:

- 1 If an application is in breach of planning regulations and/or would have a significant negative impact on the Conservation Area, we will object, outlining why the application should be refused. We also note where applications are of poor quality in terms of drawings or information and ask that they are resubmitted with the correct level of detail.
- 2 Second, we offer comments. These differ from objections and tend to be constructive suggestions about how the application might be improved or altered in order to harmonise with or better contribute to the area.
- 3 Finally, we recommend good quality applications where the scheme makes a positive design contribution to the area. This could be anything from a well-designed, very modern building to replacement windows that faithfully replicate the details of the originals they replace.

Design Advice

The Society also offers free advice - either at pre-planning or planning stages for anyone wishing to build or make alterations to a building in or around the Conservation Area. We have worked closely with everyone from householders to large developers and we provide advice on areas ranging from material selection to design interpretation in a historical context. We sometimes work with applicants right from the outset - and this input has helped to produce buildings which add to their surroundings and can result in more desirable places to live.

We also act as a point of contact for local people who are concerned about developments or applications of any size. Here we provide advice, information, support and act to represent the views of the community. We also attend planning meetings to support and represent local residents.

The Society works closely with Lewisham's Planning Department. Over the years we have built up good relationships with many people on the Council. We have dozens of years of experience and know the Conservation Area Supplementary Document and Brockley's case history well. We are happy to act as a resource for the Planning Department and offer mentoring and training for Planning Group Members who wish to learn more about Brockley. We run conferences and work in liaison with local consultants.

The Brockley Society Website and Newsletters (www.brockleysociety.org.uk) have a repository of planning advice/cases which are regularly updated. We also produce occasional leaflets on the practical aspects of the regulations governing the Conservation Area (such as on shop fronts, replacement windows, roofing materials, living roofs, etc)

Finally, although we aim to act consensually as a community resource with other Conservation Area Amenity Societies across the Borough and nationally via Civic Voice, regrettably not everyone applies for planning permission when it is required. We report breaches of planning to Lewisham's Enforcement Team. We also advise local residents on what constitutes a breach and can help them with the reporting process and on appeals.