

Date: 05/08/2021

Our reference: 2021/2687/PRE

Contact: Miriam Baptist

Email: miriam.baptist@camden.gov.uk

Dear Alexandra Bamford,

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

Re: 27 Fitzroy Road, London, NW1 8TP

Thank you for submitting the above pre-application request on 28/05/2021 with the correct fee on 03/06/2020. The proposal is for lower and upper ground floor rear extensions, first and second floor outrigger extensions, additional basement level and an outbuilding (garden room) at the end of the garden. The below sets out the council's response to the pre-application scheme at the above site.

Drawings : 21_02 001 Rev PA1, 21_02 100 Rev PA1, 21_02 320 Rev PA1, 21_02 321 Rev PA1, 21_02 UG300 Rev PA1, 21_02 LG300 Rev PA1, 21_02 GG300 Rev PA1, 21_02 301 Rev PA1, 21_02 302 Rev PA1, 21_02 303 Rev PA1, 21_02 304 Rev PA1, 21_02 308 Rev PA1, 21_02 310 Rev PA1, 21_02 311 Rev PA1, 21_02 330X Rev PA1.

Constraints

- Article 4 Basements
- Article 4 Heritage and Conservation
- Primrose Hill Conservation Area
- Basement constraints regarding slope stability and surface water flow

Planning History

27 Fitzroy Road

9003237: Certificate of Established Use of the property as two self-contained maisonettes as shown on drawing no.89-103. **Established use certificate granted 04/07/1990.**

2008/0964/T: BACK GARDEN: 1 x Birch – Fell. No objection decided 02/04/2008.

2017/1184/PRE: Upgrading the front steps with New York stone, adding an internal lobby area to the lower ground floor entrance underneath the ground floor entrance, replacing the existing metal staircase to the lower ground floor level with new stone steps and metal hand rail and infilling the rear lower ground undercroft area to provide additional habitable accommodation. **Pre-application Advice issued 19/05/2017.**

2017/3475/PRE: Alterations to front lightwell steps, vault doors and internalise part lightwell with new doors to create lobby, infill rear lower ground undercroft area, replace rear first floor railings and remove rear steps (Class C3). **Pre-application Advice issued 26/07/2017.**

Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

The London Plan (2021)

Camden Local Plan (2017)

A1 Managing the impact of development
A2 Open Space
A3 Biodiversity
A5 Basements
D1 Design
D2 Heritage
CC3 Water and flooding

Camden Planning Guidance

CPG Home Improvements (2021)

CPG Design (2021)

CPG Basements (2021)

Primrose Hill Conservation Area Statement (2000)

Assessment

Heritage and design considerations

- The application site is located within the Primrose Hill Conservation Area, wherein the Council has a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area, in accordance with Section 72 of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).

- Policy D1 of the Local Plan seeks to secure high quality design which respects local context and character and which preserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets in accordance with Policy D2.
- Policy D2 seeks to preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas and listed buildings.

Lower and upper ground floor rear extension

There are already a number of rear two storey extensions on the terrace at nos. 19-29; nos 27 and 29 are the only two properties without an extension. Notably no.25 next door has a full width extension of similar depth and height as proposed. Thus it is considered that the principle of such a rear extension at the lower 2 floors in terms of location, size and bulk is acceptable.

In terms of the design the architecture proposed is a modern concrete frame with glass. CPG Home Improvements notes that a rear extension should be 'subordinate to the building being extended, in relation to its location, form, footprint, scale, proportions, dimensions and detailing' and should 'respect and preserve the original design and proportions of the building, including its architectural period and style'. The architecture proposed is not convincingly subordinate to the host property: at present the rear elevation treatment is an uncompromising modernist design with unsympathetic concrete. A redesign is advised in order to ensure any development complements the character of the Conservation Area rather than detracting from it. The protruding circular rim of the skylight on the upper ground floor roof extension is also considered too bold.

CPG Home Improvements states that a rear extension should be 'built from materials that are sympathetic to the existing building wherever possible'. Concrete is not a widespread material in the conservation area, although it may be possibly acceptable if other elements of the proposal are acceptable, such as the overall form and design, and if there is evidence of precedents elsewhere.

First and second floor outrigger extension

There is a regular rhythm of first and second storey outrigger extensions/closet wings further south on the street, nos. 31 to 49; these are original. These properties have maintained their original rhythm; a half-width outrigger at ground floor and the closet wing above- there are no additional extensions.

This pattern stops from houses nos. 29 to 19, where there is a break in the terrace, the built form changes and there are no longer any extensions (original or more recent) at a higher level. For this reason, any extension above upper ground floor is not considered acceptable, as it would disrupt the consistent form.

Additional basement level beneath the lower ground floor

A large basement is proposed, beneath the entire main house and extending out beneath the garden. It is noted that the applicant intends to build the basement up to the limit stipulated by Local Plan Policy A5.

As outlined in the CPG Basements, it is noted that generally '*a basement development that does not extend beyond the footprint of the original building and is no deeper than one full storey below ground level is often the most appropriate way to extend a building below ground.*' In terms of the basement under the rear garden, '*larger basements can have a greater impact on the water environment by reducing the area for water to runoff and soak away. Basement development that extends below garden space can also reduce the ability of that garden to support trees and other vegetation leading to poorer quality gardens, a loss in amenity and the character of the area, and potentially a reduction in biodiversity*' (CPG Basements).

Local Plan Policy A5 (L) also stipulates that sufficient margins should be left between the site boundaries and any basement construction to enable water drainage and sustain growth of vegetation/trees. There does not seem to be evidence of a sufficient buffer in the plans put forward. At present it is considered that, although the basement has been designed up to the limits of Local Plan Policy A5, it should be reduced in size to be more appropriate for the constraints of the site, and in context of the required buffer with neighbouring boundaries where it extends beyond the footprint of the existing house.

CPG Basements notes that any exposed area of basement (i.e. the lightwell) should be subordinate to the host building; it should respect the original design and proportions of the building; and the proposal should retain a reasonable sized garden. It is also noted that illumination and light spill from a skylight can harm the appearance of a garden setting. It is advised that the basement lightwell void be reduced in size to protect the amount of usable natural garden space at original lower ground level.

You will need to submit a Basement Impact Assessment (BIA) which is specific to your site and proposal as part of a formal planning application. An independent audit will be undertaken by the Council's engineering consultants at the applicant's expense, because the application site is within an area of concern regarding slope stability and surface water flow. Given the size and nature of this new basement storey, the audit may recommend that a Basement Construction Plan is required by a S106 legal agreement.

Outbuilding (garden room) at rear end of garden

The development of the outbuilding in addition to the basement is considered over-development: it is considered overbearing and reduces the garden space, and its amenity value and effectiveness in terms of water run-off and biodiversity value even further. The proposed outbuilding does not meet the requirements set out in CPG Home Improvements, section 5.5. Outbuildings. Key concerns are that it does not

retain space around it for suitable soft landscaping, and that its proposed footprint does not ensure retention of garden/amenity space and detracts from the open character and generally 'soft' and green nature of neighbouring gardens in the wider surrounding area.

In the absence of a basement, an outbuilding in principle is more likely to be accepted. There is concern with this scheme on the cumulative impact of overdevelopment on water run-off and biodiversity value. There are other examples of approved outbuildings in the vicinity, but none of which seem to be added in conjunction with a basement. Among these examples, there is a green roof, a border sufficient to accommodate trees, and the few that are full width are situated in longer gardens or have more open space to the rear.

Neighbouring Amenity

The proposed two storey infill extension on both lower and upper ground floors at the rear of the property would not extend any further, or be any taller, than the existing outriggers/ extensions of properties directly adjacent and therefore is not considered to have any harmful effects in terms of loss of daylight, sunlight, outlook or privacy. The proposed outbuilding (garden room) is below fence levels on either side so there should be no loss of light/outlook or privacy to neighbours. There could be some negative impact to immediate neighbouring amenity in terms of light spill from the proposed basement lightwell, rooflight and highly glazed rear façade of the lower/upper ground floor extension, and this will need to be checked further.

Given the overall size of the new basement floor and the associated amount of excavation, plus the constrained nature of the site, the proposal will be likely to cause significant disruption to neighbour amenity and highway conditions and a Construction Management Plan will be required and secured by S106 to mitigate any harm caused.

Conclusion

The proposal in its current form is considered overdevelopment. The lower ground and ground floor extension is considered acceptable in terms of scale and in context of the other properties in the terrace, but the main concerns regarding the remaining elements of the scheme are summarised as follows:

- The design of lower ground and ground floor extension is not considered acceptable in terms of façade treatment: it has an uncompromising contemporary design and care has not been taken to ensure it complements the character of the Conservation Area.
- The closet wing for the staircase is considered unacceptable, it would disrupt the consistent form of the terrace that it is a part of; none of the other properties have any additions above upper ground level.

- A basement may be acceptable in principle but we would highlight the impacts of large basements with regard to the neighbouring boundaries, water runoff, vegetation, biodiversity and amenity.
- The addition of the outbuilding reduces the value of garden space. Although the basement meets Local Plan Policy A5, the garden is effectively being reduced even further by the addition of the large outbuilding and associated hard landscaping: nearly all the garden is being developed, either under the surface or on top.

This document represents an initial informal view of your proposals based on the information available to us at this stage and would not be binding upon the Council, nor prejudice any future planning application decisions made by the council.

Thank you for using Camden's pre-application advice service.

Yours sincerely,

Miriam Baptist
Planning Officer