

Planning Applications
Development Control Department
London Borough of Camden
by email

23rd October 2012

Dear Sirs

**Planning Submission for New Roof Terrace
Top Floor Flat, 20-22 Leather Lane, London, EC1N 7SU**

I am writing to submit a planning application on behalf of Daniel Cavanagh, the owner of the above property, for the addition of a new roof terrace to the building.

Location & Existing Use

The existing building is a four storey terraced building located on the east side of Leather Lane. The building is in A3 use at ground floor level, with individual units at No's 20 and 22, occupied by a café/restaurant and a retail unit. The upper floors of the building are self-contained flats, located at first and second/third floor level.

The immediate area surrounding the site comprises a mix of uses, with Leather Lane being a weekday market. There are a variety of retail, restaurant and café, commercial and residential uses close to the site. The residential uses are primarily located above ground floor level, such as the Beauchamp building (to the west of the site on the opposite side of Leather Lane) and the Johnson building (to the east of the site and fronting onto Hatton Garden).

The application site is located within the Hatton Garden Conservation Area. The building is not listed.

Existing Building

The date of the original building is unknown, probably Victorian, based on the basement and foundations we have surveyed. However the upper floors have been rebuilt at some point in the 1950s, we presume as a result of bomb damage, and the front façade was substantially rebuilt in the 1980s. The resultant existing building is one that has a piecemeal character; while the street façade is broadly traditional in arrangement, the building is clearly modern in terms of roof form, construction and detailing as follows

- It has a flat roof, with precast concrete parapet coping
- A large irregularly shaped stair tower projects through the roof in the south east corner, with blank brick walls to a height of 3m above the new roof level, in two different brick types which do not match the building
- Windows have modern detailing, with flat brick-on-end lintols and cills, typical of 1970s / 80s buildings, and modern metalwork railings
- Modern UPVC RWP's & hoppers on front and rear
- Cavity walls with modern facing red/brown brickwork

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- Rear façade has irregular window arrangement, multiple service ducts/pipework fixed to the façade, finished in 2-3 different types of brickwork and some rendered areas, with the lower storeys projecting at the base to form the rear areas of the ground floor shop.

Please see attached photographs illustrating the front and rear facades.

The building does not match the height, style, width or material finishes of its neighbours immediately to either side or opposite, which is typical of Leather Lane and the area generally, which has a great many different types, styles and size of buildings along its length.

Existing Planning Consent

The building has an existing planning consent, originally granted in 2008 and recently extended to run until 2015, to add an additional storey to the top of the building, containing a new single bedroom flat. The reference for this original consent is 2008/4554/P, the case officer was Jonathan Markwell.

This new storey has a hybrid roof form, being a mansard type roof to the front street façade, but a flat roof at the rear, with the existing rear brick wall of the building being extended straight upwards to a new parapet. The existing large brick stairwell tower, in the southeast corner, will project up through this roof form to a height of approximately 3m above the new roof level.

The addition of this new storey will make the street façade of no. 22 somewhat more in keeping with its neighbours to either side, in terms of height and roof form, when viewed from street level.

Roof Terrace Proposal

This new flat as currently consented would have no external amenity space, and as such we wish to create a small new roof terrace, of approximate area 10sqm, on the northeast corner of the new roof area (ie towards the rear of the building, on the left hand side when viewed from the street). This will greatly enhance to quality of life for the residents of the new flat, and be in line with LB Camden's policies with regard to external amenity space for new residential units. The new roof terrace is proposed to be used by the new top floor flat only, for external amenity use.

Roof Terrace Planning History

We made an original preplanning enquiry with regard to the addition of the new roof terrace on 15.11.2011. The response to this from Carlos Martin (REF CA\2011\ENQ\06893) suggested that if the new roof terrace were invisible from street level, the proposal may be acceptable in terms of its impact on the character & appearance of the host building. Extracts from the response are as follows:

"in this case, according to the submitted section drawing, the proposed terrace does not appear to be visible from the public realm and the council would have difficulties to demonstrate that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host building or the conservation area"

"Overall, although the proposal would not be viewed favourably in principle on design terms, I am of the opinion that, given that the impact on neighbouring amenity may be acceptable and the terrace would not be visible from street level, it would be worth submitting an application."

Following this, we made a planning application for the roof terrace on this basis, with a 20sqm terrace across the full width of the building, with the balustrade set back 1.8m from the roof edge. This application was refused, without any prior contact or discussion from LB Camden during the planning period. We feel was unfortunate, particularly given the pre-application advice received from LB Camden, as we believe an amended design could have resolved the issue without the need to resubmit another full application.

Reasons given for refusal were that the roof terrace (balustrade, stair enclosure and storage shed) would be visible from certain long views at street level, and this would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the building, and the Hatton Garden Conservation Area:

"It is considered that an additional storey and associated balustrade above the approved mansard would be visible in long views from the square opposite and would appear as an incongruous feature at roof level, to the detriment of the appearance of the host building and wider conservation area".

We discussed the detail of this with the case officer Fergus Freeney, and he confirmed that the long views in question were from a small area of Beauchamp street / Beauchamp Square, opposite the site, at street level. Following this we resubmitted an amended design for further pre-planning feedback with design changes made to ensure that the roof terrace would also not be visible from this small area at street level, as follows

- height of stair access enclosure was reduced from 2.5m above new roof level to 1.2m above new roof level, to be designed as glazed lantern with sliding access window.
- area of roof terrace was reduced to north east corner only, so that metal balustrade on street side is set back 3000mm from roof edge, and stops at the north side of stair tower (ie only goes ½ way across width of roof).
- storage sheds were omitted

We received a response to this (ref CA/2012/ENQ/05801, planning officer Craig Raybould) confirming that the amendments were welcomed and were an improvement, but stating that he felt the roof terrace structures would be visible from

- Beauchamp street / Beauchamp Square
- the upper floors of other properties on Leather Lane, Beauchamp street and Dorrington street
- other properties to the rear of the site, on Hatton Gardens

Consequently he felt the works were not considered to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and that further design amendments and/or explanation of the material considerations would be required to make a successful planning application. We spoke to Craig Raybould to discuss the detail of this, and he further advised that

- of these issues the street views are considered the most important, with views from high level private windows being considered but "hold less weight"
- in terms of impact on views, and lack of conformity with the main building roof form, bulk and mass are considered the most important aspect, ie the lantern's mass is considered relatively more detrimental than the open metal balustrade.

We have now made further amendments to the design to help address these issues, and we are providing more detail within this submission that we hope demonstrates that the roof terrace structures will not be visible at all from street level, and that the impact in terms of character from other views from windows and the rear is very minor, and should not be considered significant in planning terms in this context.

Roof Terrace Proposal – design amendments

Access to the new roof terrace would be via an access window, above the existing stair core. This access window is proposed to project approximately 250mm above the height of the roof, as the minimum required for weathering, to minimise any visible mass. The storage sheds have been omitted altogether.

The balustrade for the new roof terrace is proposed as a 1.1m high open metal balustrade, painted black. It is proposed to be set back 3m from the edge of the mansard roof on the street side (ie 4m

back from the face of the building at street level), so to avoid being visible at all from street level, and reduce any visibility from high level windows along the opposite side of Leather Lane.

Please see attached proposed drawings showing this design.

Views from street level and rear courtyard

As illustrated previously, the new balustrade and access window will not be visible Leather Lane itself due to the set back (see section drawing P102). Keeping the balustrade to the north side of the roof only also means that it will also not be visible from any points further away on Beauchamp Street or Beauchamp Square. As you move west along Beauchamp street, away from Leather Lane, the view of the north side of the roof of no. 22 is progressively concealed by the Beauchamp Building, directly opposite it across Leather Lane. At 36m away from the facade of no. 22 ('point A' on diagram SK-005A), the entire north half of the roof of no. 22 is concealed in this way. At this distance it can be demonstrated in sectional that the height of the balustrade and access window are concealed below the line of the new roof edge and so will be invisible. (see SK-006 and drawing P102 showing this).

The new balustrade continues perpendicular to the street, along the north party wall. There are existing nearby buildings on both the west and east sides of Leather Lane which are 1-3 storeys taller than no. 22, including no.18 immediately to the south on the same side, and no. 26 to the north on the same side. These and the set back means that long views to the side of the new balustrade, from up and down Leather Lane itself, are completely obscured behind these. We understand this point has been accepted on the response to the previous application.

The new balustrade will be visible from ground level in the rear courtyard of the block itself, however we propose that this does not cause any problem in terms of planning policy, because

- the new storey, which has already been granted consent, has a contemporary form with a flat roof when viewed from the rear, and so a balustrade railing to the top is visually in keeping with this, and very common in this area.
- The views of the rear of no. 22 and the buildings to either side is extremely piecemeal and informal in character, having multiple heights and set backs, a wide variety of different facings materials and window types and sizes, and numerous service flues and pipes fixed to the façades. The addition of the balustrade will make no significant impact on this character.
- The area of courtyard from which this view is visible is small and not generally accessed by the public.

See photos attached illustrating this issue.

Views from windows of other buildings

In our opinion, the impact of the proposed balustrade and access rooflight, in terms of the character of the building and area, when viewed from the from windows on upper levels of neighbouring buildings, is not significant enough in planning terms to constitute reasonable grounds for refusal.

This is because:

- The overall character of the building, even once the mansard roof form is added to the street side, is contemporary, with a history of piecemeal change. It is not a building of particular historic interest, or indeed great visual merit, and is clearly modern in terms of overall composition, roof form, and detailing, for the reasons noted on page 1 of this statement.
- A large irregularly shaped brick stair tower projects through the roof in the south east corner, with blank brick walls to a height of 3m above the new roof level, finished in two different brick types which do not match the main building. This means that the roof form, when viewed from high level, will not have the appearance of a coherent mansard roof in

any case. This is also true to a lesser degree of the consented flue extension to the rear façade, which projects above roof level, visible at high level.

- The views from high level windows of existing buildings along Leather Lane are to very varied styles, materials, shapes and heights of roof forms. They include a large number of existing roof terraces & balconies with balustrades, foliage etc, for example on 3rd and 4th floors of no. 32 to the north, and the terraced balconies on the upper 2 floors of the Beachamp Building opposite on Leather Lane.
- It is quite common for views from high level windows to existing roofs, including those with mansard form, to include smaller features or elements within the overall roof form, such as example chimneys, fineals, service access, etc. For example no. 24 immediately to the north includes a large, solid service box on the mansard roof, approx 1.2m high, very clearly visible at high level (see photo)
- Views of the street side of the new roof of no. 22 will only be available from a relatively small number of windows, above 3rd floor level along Leather Lane, due to the building height and 'bookending' of the site noted on page 4 of this statement. These views are by their nature private, and in many cases also obscured or oblique, and should hold less weight in planning terms than public views from street level.
- When viewed from high level windows to the rear of the site, the new storey which has already been granted consent has a contemporary form with a flat roof. As noted above, adding an open metal railing to the top is visually in keeping with this character, and again is very common in this area. There are other examples of roof terraces being granted consent, as part of a mansard roof structure, visible from the rear (eg 2003/0953/P at no. 16 Leather Lane)
- The views from high level windows of the rear of no. 22 and the buildings to either side are extremely piecemeal and informal in character, having multiple heights and set backs, a wide variety of different facings materials and window types and sizes, and numerous service flues and pipes fixed to the façades. The addition of the balustrade will make no significant impact on this character.
- We also note that only one letter was received from neighbours in relation to the original application, relating to security, and that this was not felt to be significant by the case officer.

See photos attached illustrating this issue.

Privacy & Light

The distance across Leather Lane, from the windows on upper storeys opposite to the edge of the proposed roof terrace, is approximately 21m. This is in keeping with a normal London street condition. Because the balustrade will be set well back from the roof edge, it will not have any significant impact on the light to the windows on lower storeys of the buildings opposite, when compared to the new extension for which permission is already granted. To the rear the nearest buildings are approximately 40m away and so impact on privacy and light is not a significant issue. The Case Officer's report to original application supports this:

"It is not considered that the proposal would impact upon the amenity of adjoining occupiers in terms of overlooking or loss of sunlight/daylight".

Materials

The floor finish to the roof terrace would be timber decking. Balustrades are proposed as open metal railings, painted black, in keeping with the style of those on the existing property, and advice received from the case officers at LBC. The access window over the stair, which is located towards the centre of the roof plan and so not visible from street level, would be glazed, with a low upstand (250mm above roof) finished in powder coated black metal, so as to be in keeping with other metal detailing on the building.

We attach the existing and proposed drawing package from the existing planning consent, photographs of the existing site and surroundings, location plan, and plan, section and elevation

drawings showing the proposals for the new roof terrace – these are at 1:100 scale at A3, in line with the original application drawings.

We hope that you consider the case put forward in this statement sufficiently detailed, clear and well-reasoned to be able support the application. Given the three-dimensional nature of the site and surrounding buildings it may be useful to meet on site to discuss any issues, which I would be very happy to do.

Please can you confirm receipt of this application and advise if you require any further information at this stage.

Yours sincerely

Hugo Braddick

Director, MeadowcroftGriffin Architects