

**Date:** 24 March 2016  
**Our Ref:** 2015/6643/PRE  
**Contact:** Darlene Dike  
**Direct Line:** 020 7974 1029  
**Email:** [darlene.dike@camden.gov.uk](mailto:darlene.dike@camden.gov.uk)

**Development Management  
Regeneration and Planning**  
London Borough of Camden  
Town Hall  
Argyle Street  
London WC1H 8ND

Sent via email

Tel 020 7974 4444  
[planning@camden.gov.uk](mailto:planning@camden.gov.uk)  
[www.camden.gov.uk/planning](http://www.camden.gov.uk/planning)

Dear Ms Murphy

**Pre-planning application advice 2015/6643/PRE  
Proposed erection of a roof extension to create new 2nd floor level at  
27 Elizabeth Mews**

Thank you for your pre-planning application enquiry received on the 23/11/2015 and our subsequent meeting on 15/12/2015 regarding the erection of a roof extension to create a new second floor level at 27 Elizabeth Mews.

This letter represents an officer's initial view of your proposals and is based on the information available to us at this stage. It should not be interpreted as formal confirmation that your application will be acceptable nor can it be held to prejudice formal determination of any planning application we receive from you on this proposal.

**Site and Surroundings**

The site comprises a two storey building currently used as offices for an architectural practice. It is a prominent corner site on the junction of Primrose Gardens and Elizabeth Mews. The property is not listed but falls within the Belsize Park conservation area, though it is not noted within the Belsize Conservation Area Statement as making a positive contribution to the conservation area.

**Relevant Planning History**

Previous applications at the site relate mainly to change of use and minor works and are not relevant to proposals under consideration within this pre-application enquiry.

Several addresses are cited within the pre-application statement as pointing to a history of extra massing at roof level, namely at numbers 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,19,20 and 25 Elizabeth Mews. For several reasons, however, history at these sites does not form a precedent for the type of roof extension sought at 27 Elizabeth Mews.

Firstly, in the cases of 1-10 Elizabeth Mews, properties fall within the north eastern half of the mews severed from the south west portion that 27 Elizabeth Mews sits within by the road of Primrose Gardens. This separate, north half of the mews that includes numbers 1-10 is therefore read as distinct from the half that 27 Elizabeth

Mews falls within, and as such development at numbers 1-10 has very limited bearing on the very different pattern to the mews south of Primrose Gardens. The north half of the mews containing numbers 1-10 is wider than the south west portion containing number 27, and so roof extensions present here have less visual impact in terms of their scale and dominance. It should also be noted that the roof extensions to this north half of the mews are wholly consistent in their scale and design, in a manner that an isolated roof extension at 27 Elizabeth Mews would not be. Also, the end unit at number 4 Elizabeth Mews has not had a roof extension and remains a subordinate return on Primrose Gardens.

No. 19 Elizabeth Mews, which sits in the same half of the mews as number 27 though on the facing terrace, was refused planning permission for a roof level extension to create an additional second floor under the application 2011/0189/P on the grounds that the proposal failed to respect the character and prevailing scale of the mews.

At 20 Elizabeth Mews the only works permitted at roof level were to replace a flat roof with a low mono-pitched roof under permission 8401849. A further application was made in 1989 for a roof extension to provide a studio/master bedroom and bathroom however this was subsequently withdrawn and so no permission was granted for a roof extension at this address.

In relation to 25 Elizabeth Mews permission was granted under applications 2003/1006/P and 2013/0846/P for extensions to the roof of the main building and not the mews building. As such these decisions are not relevant to the consideration of the proposed works to 27 Elizabeth Mews.

Lastly, the pre-application statement also cites that permission was granted in 1992 under application reference 9201158 for a first floor level extension to what is a prominent corner site at 15 Elizabeth Mews. The consented scheme differs greatly from the proposal outlined in this pre-application enquiry and was not assessed against current policy and guidance. It is noted that the first floor extension that was approved at No. 15 does not protrude above the uppermost part of the existing roof line, whereas the proposals at 27 Elizabeth Mews would. This scheme also created a first floor level infill where the pre-application scheme seeks to create an additional second floor, which would have far greater impact in terms of height, bulk and massing. For these reasons, the consented scheme at 15 Elizabeth Mews cannot be seen to create precedent for the type of roof extension sought at 27 Elizabeth Mews either.

## **Policy Background**

The policies which are pertinent in the assessment of the proposed scheme are:

CAMDEN CORE STRATEGY

CS5 (Managing the impact of growth and development)

CS14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage)

CAMDEN DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

DP24 (Securing high quality design)  
DP25 (Conserving Camden's heritage)  
DP26 (Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours)

CAMDEN PLANNING GUIDANCE  
CPG1 (Design)  
CPG6 (Amenity)

BELSIZE CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENT 2003

## **ASSESSMENT**

### **Principle of Development**

The proposed roof extension at 27 Elizabeth Mews is considered to be unacceptable. The property sits on a prominent corner site which is very visible in long views along Primrose Gardens, meaning that any upward extension here would be highly pronounced. It also forms the side return of the building that fronts England's Lane; these returns are generally subordinate in scale clearly forming part of a group with a different character to buildings with a prominent frontage.

### **Design and Conservation**

The proposed extension would create an additional storey above the existing building. Guidance within the Belsize Conservation Area Statement cites that 'roof extensions and alterations, which change the shape and form of the roof, can have a harmful impact on the Conservation Area and are unlikely to be acceptable where...the roof is prominent, particularly in long views' (page 41).

The proposed addition would be highly prominent given its projection above the predominant scale of immediately adjoining buildings and is considered to have an overbearing and visually dominant presence on the street scene and wider public realm. The form and scale of the proposed extension also fails to reflect that found in the immediate locality thereby further exacerbating its incongruity. As such, the proposal is considered to be harmful to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The proposals would introduce an undue intervention into a currently unbroken run of roofslopes. The south western section of Elizabeth Mews, which the host site falls within, currently has no roof extensions present and so forms a continuous, homogenous group of buildings. Any addition to the roof along this section of the mews would entirely disrupt this homogeneity of scale which is an important characteristic of this part of the mews, and as such any upward extensions would prove difficult to support given the impact on the street and the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area.

The Belsize Conservation Area Statement makes specific reference to the mews and states that 'the terrace to the south-west retains more of its original character' (page 28), and that development at roof level will be resisted where 'the property forms part of a group or terrace which remains largely, but not completely unimpaired' (page 41). This view is supported by guidance within Camden Planning Guidance 1 – Design which states that 'a roof alteration or addition is likely to be unacceptable' to 'complete terraces or groups of buildings which have a roof line that is largely unimpaired by alterations or extensions' (paragraph 5.8).

The contemporary detailing and choice of materials are not objectionable and reflect guidelines in Camden Planning Guidance 1-Design 'on some contemporary buildings a less traditional form of roof addition may be appropriate' (paragraph 5.8). Notwithstanding, the scale and massing of the extension is not acceptable. As proposed, with a height of 1.6m, the extension rises significantly above the existing roof line and this would add to its prominence in long and short views. The overall bulk of the extension would be unacceptable, with the addition appearing overly dominant and causing 27 Elizabeth Mews to lose its subordination to the main building, and also to detract from the mews at large, as its essential character is 2 storeys.

The proposal would be contrary to recommendations within Camden Planning Guidance 1 – Design which states:

'A roof alteration or addition is likely to be unacceptable in the following circumstances where there is likely to be an adverse effect on the skyline, the appearance of the building or the surrounding street scene:

- Buildings already higher than neighbouring properties where an additional storey would add significantly to the bulk or unbalance the architectural composition;
- Where the scale and proportions of the building would be overwhelmed by additional extension.' (paragraph 5.8).

As 27 Elizabeth Mews is both slightly higher than its neighbouring property, and yet of modest proportions, an additional storey would have a significant effect on its architectural composition, adding inappropriate bulk which would overwhelm the building and its setting within the mews.

## **Amenity**

Initial concerns were raised that proposals could have an adverse effect on the daylight and sunlight entering the rear first floor windows of the property at 28a England's Lane; however this impact has been determined to be negligible as these rear windows serve a bathroom, and not a habitable room. Consequently, the likely harm caused to residential amenity by the proposed scheme would be minimal.

## **Conclusions**

The proposed roof extension is considered to be an unduly dominant addition that would be harmful to the scale and character of the mews and would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of this part of the Conservation Area contrary to policy and guidance. The Council would therefore not support the proposals.

Please note that this document represents an initial informal officer 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.

I trust this information is of assistance. Should you have any further queries, please contact me by telephone on 0207 974 1029.

Yours sincerely

**Darlene Dike**

Planning Technician