

Planning Services
Camden London Borough Council
5 Pancras Square
London
NC1 4AG

My reference:

Your reference:

20th March 2017

Dear Sirs

144 Mill Lane, London NW6 1TF
Application for amendments to scheme granted planning permission (granted on appeal, reference: APP/X5210/D/13/2211011)

1. Planning permission was granted on appeal for demolition of the existing single storey garage and the construction of a new double storey home office and studio accessible via the rear garden at 144 Mill Lane, London NW6 in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref. 2012/4974/P.
2. We now propose a number of amendments to this scheme. They would comprise the replacement of the lightweight glazed box for a more 'solid' appearance, the removal of the approved terrace or balcony to the ground floor roof facing toward No.144 and the infilling of the ground floor recess on its Holmdale Road frontage.
3. The property is not listed nor is it within a conservation area.

Proposed changes – first floor and fenestration

4. Our principal proposed changes to the approved outbuilding relate only to the first floor glass box and the articulation in the floor plan at first floor level. We also propose the removal of the roof balcony at first floor that would look toward the main house at 144 Mill Lane.
5. The Inspector made the following observations regarding this property and, in general, the proposal for the new building on this site:

- The first part of the eastern side of Holmdale Road has a very different character to the remainder of the end of Holmdale Road, as it is dominated by the four storey block of flats adjacent to this site and the Emmanuel Church of England School to the rear.
 - The Inspector considered that there was scope for a building of domestic scale but contemporary in its style to make a positive contribution to the “mixed character” of this area.
 - A combination of the similar sized footprint to the existing garage, increase in height from the garage of only 2 metres, the incorporation of the lightweight glazed box to the building and the retention of the trees would alleviate concerns regarding the need for a subordinate relationship between this building and the house at No.144 and its visual impact on the street scene.
6. The Council did, however, initially have concerns regarding the glazed box, commenting in its delegated report to its decision at the time as follows: *“The proposed glazed box element would be located close to the boundary with Holmdale Road and would also be visible above the boundary fence...would not relate to any surrounding architecture and would appear incongruous in the streetscene, especially if illuminated after dark.”*
 7. This application seeks to address the Council’s initial reservations about the glazed box. It is now proposed to remove this feature from the first floor of the new outbuilding, instead replacing it with a less contemporary fenestration, picking up more on the traditional sash windows found elsewhere amongst houses in Holmdale Road. Notwithstanding that the appeal Inspector referred to the glazed box as a factor that contributed to his decision, there were several other factors that he also referred to, such as the retention of trees and similar sized footprint, which would still exist in combination to mitigate the visual impact of the outbuilding.
 8. The initial scheme would have incorporated a part-recessed first floor, which would have been set in from the front building line of the outbuilding on the Holmdale Road elevation. We now propose to provide a more consistent floor plan at first floor, although our proposals would retain some articulation in this façade by way of detailed design to the window surrounds and the use of timber panelling around the doorway at ground floor level. The proposal would comply with Policy DP24 in its use of high quality materials.
 9. The existing view across the garden of 144 Mill Lane from Holmdale Road is clearly dominated by two large and mature trees that would still easily be seen over the proposed new outbuilding. Therefore, the proposal would still comply with Policy DP24 in having proper regard to *“existing natural features, such as topography and trees.”*
 10. Views of most of the proposed outbuilding would still be partly obscured by the retained boundary trees and planting. In fact, with the granted permission to replace one of the lime trees, this is likely to move the position of the trees together more toward the garden gap between the proposed structure and the existing rear extension to the house. This would reinforce any visual perception of a ‘green gap’ in this building line, and would provide a break in the building line when seen from the corner of Holmdale Road and Mill Lane.

11. As observed by the appeal Inspector, views of the existing house are framed by two dominant and more contemporary structures. The first of these is the Emmanuel Church of England School on Mill Lane, with its prominent white 'chimneys'/outlets to the roof and its purple brick facing. The second prominent structure is the four storey brick-faced apartment block adjacent to the site to the south. In contrast to the west side of Holmdale Road close to this junction, these dominant structures provide an eclectic and contemporary backdrop to this junction, which is a visual context within which this house on Mill Lane should be considered.
12. As one walks down Holmdale Road, views to the buildings behind would naturally put this building in context with not only the houses in Mill Lane but the purple brick faced and the dominant and more contemporary appearance of Emmanuel Church of England School. The School has glass and steel framed balconies and the proposed structure here would therefore reflect the range of materials, finishes and palette to be found within the immediate visual context of the site.
13. Therefore, the proposal would be in accordance with Policy DP24 in that it would respect the *"character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings."*
14. Although the existing garage is not quite ramshackle in its appearance, it adds nothing to the character of the main house. In accordance with Policy DP24, this proposal would make use of high quality materials which would improve the quality of the streetscene and would also provide a *"visually interesting frontage at street level"*, particularly in context with the views of the mature trees behind, the trees and boundary planting to the site and the visual break that all of these elements when viewed together would offer in contrast to the 'heavy' appearance of the white-painted rendered walls to the house and its ground floor side extension.
15. The existing house and building are not within a conservation area.
16. Therefore, although a material consideration, no special regard should be had to protecting or enhancing the character or appearance of the area; it is an area which has no special local character or appearance and this corner of Mill Lane and Holmdale Road in particular reflects a range of building styles, forms, materials and finishes that would not be harmed by the proposed outbuilding. There are no affected heritage assets and the proposed building would therefore respect local context and character in accordance with Policy CS14 and Policy DP24.

Pre-application discussions

17. Pre-application advice has been sought from officers; reference 2016/6184/PRE. The proposals canvassed with officers included a proposal for an additional floor to the approved outbuilding thus making it a 3-storey structure. We have had regard to the comments of officers and respond accordingly as follows:
 - The proposed structure would be less visually subordinate and would be more dominant due to a combination of increased height and more 'solid' appearance. *This proposal retains the two-storey height of the scheme granted permission on appeal and would incorporate a similar amount of glazing to the Holmdale Road elevation as was approved.*
 - The GIA of the proposed outbuilding would be almost as much as the main house, thus eroding its subordinate relationship. *The floor area will now be no different to that which was approved on appeal, as these proposals do not incorporate an extra storey.*

- External appearance should reflect good, contemporary design and be sympathetic to local context, with a vertical hierarchy and alignment in fenestrations. *This building would be seen in context with both at 33-39 Holmdale Road, the Emmanuel Church of England Primary School at 158 Mill Lane and is also near to a new house recently granted planning permission at 33A Mill Lane ('Modus House') [LPA reference: 2013/0680/P]. In respect of the latter, the approved materials included not only glazing, but also render, and metal (bronze). The proposed design and materials would reflect materials and a palette consistent with and sympathetic to these buildings.*
- Possible harm to trees. *This comment no longer applies without the proposed additional storey.*
- Residential amenity. *The proposed outbuilding would remain ancillary in its use to the existing house at No.144 Mill Lane. As no increase in height is now proposed, then the Council's comments regarding overshadowing impact to the garden of No.146 do not now apply.*
- Transport and Highways. *The proposal relates to an amendment to an existing permission in respect of which no conditions or obligations applied in respect of the replacement of the existing crossover. Similarly, no CMP is required as this was not sought initially and the impact of this development is unlikely to be so significant as to justify this. No CMP was required in respect of the permission on 33A Mill Lane and it would be inconsistent to then seek a CMP in this case.*

Overall, therefore, we submit that the development would be of a high standard of design that would respect the local context and character of this area, and would therefore comply with Policy CS14 and Policy DP24, in particular, along with all other relevant policies and with regard to the Council's supplementary planning guidance.

Yours faithfully,

David Kemp BSc(Hons) PGDL MRICS
Director
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