

27 November 2020

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Development Management
Planning
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T 0203 268 2018

By email only

FAO Kristina Smith

Dear Kristina,

**Re: South Hampstead Synagogue
Proposed Awning to Roof Terrace – Pre-Application Advice**

We write to request pre-application advice in relation to development at South Hampstead Synagogue, Eton Road, NW3.

Background

As you are aware South Hampstead Synagogue has recently re-opened following redevelopment which officers were closely involved in. You are aware of the design and layout of the synagogue and its local sensitivity.

Like so many other businesses and communities the synagogue has had to adapt to the pandemic. Use of the synagogue has been fettered by the pandemic which has been of particular concern to the congregation's elder members who are fearful of worshipping in a confined space.

Consequently and very many months since lockdown restrictions and measures to prevent spread of the Covid virus were introduced, to enable social distancing and prevent use of confined spaces, the entire second floor including the terrace and adjoining classroom has been used for daily prayer services.

Temporary gazebos have been installed on the terrace to keep out the weather but these are not entirely effective and unsatisfactory when it rains, making the terrace unusable. This means on wet days the synagogue cannot offer safe prayer spaces for all.

The synagogue therefore wishes to pursue planning permission for a permanent awning on the terrace which would enable its all-weather use. We would also seek to amend any necessary planning conditions to enable the use of the terrace for prayer.

Along with the daily use for prayer the terrace has been used for high holy days which have included evening services with a choir, singing and with the shofar being blown. No complaints have been received about the use of the terrace; there's no indication anyone has even noticed. As we anticipated, the high walls enclosing the terrace and its height above the street seem to ensure that local residents are not disturbed by its use. The awning would likely reduce noise transmission even further.



We therefore wish to open discussions with you on a confidential basis for now, although we continue to engage with the Community Working Group and Cllr Jones.

Proposals

Detailed proposals are still being developed, but we will soon deliver you a package of information that illustrates the proposals, including drawings (incl. sections) that demonstrate that the terrace would not be readily visible from the street or from neighbouring properties.

We also intend to seek advice on the acoustics of the use of the terrace. We welcome your advice on what instructions we should be giving to our acoustic consultants and what we should be seeking to demonstrate through such evidence.

Balustrade

We also intend to address the outstanding issue of the balustrade on the terrace.

You will recall that condition 15 of the planning (as varied) requires an obscured-glazed screen to be implemented around the terrace in accordance with approved drawing 882_07_526_NE.

The condition places no time by which the screen must be implemented.

The exact nature of the screen has been subject of detailed discussions between SHS, LBC and the CWG. Its final design was intended to be discussed at a meeting with the CWG in March 2020, but the pandemic intervened. The intent was to resolve a screen design and submit a revised application under s73 to amend its design.

As the issue remains unresolved we now wish to address this through these pre-application discussions as well and include it in any planning application we make to address the use of the terrace and awning.

Please contact me if you have any questions about the content of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

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