

Development Management
London Borough of Camden

By email

For the attention of Nathaniel Young

Dear Sirs

Re: Planning Application for Glebe House, Fitzroy Mews (Application ref. 2021/1782/P)

Introduction

We are writing on behalf of the leaseholders of Glebe House to strongly object to the planning application for the erection of an additional storey to create a residential dwelling at Glebe House. The proposed scheme to provide an additional 3-bed flat (145 sqm) at fifth floor level will be across the length of the building. We note that in addition the applicant is seeking alterations at ground floor level to Fitzroy Mews to rationalise the security screens to the garages; and that internally the lift access, currently only the ground to third floors, would be extended throughout the building. As part of the proposals, it is also intended to replace the existing white horizontal cladding at fourth floor with an integral lightweight vertical seamed metal cladding treatment.

As detailed in the response below, the leaseholders of Glebe House object to the proposed extension, which will increase the height of the property above other buildings in the vicinity, impacting on the general character and townscape of the area and on the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area in which the building is located. The scale of the resulting development is also considered to be out of character with the existing Mews. In addition, it is considered that the proposed extension would result in a loss of residential amenity to the existing flats and neighbouring properties, particularly in terms of loss of daylight and sunlight. The leaseholders are also concerned about the impacts of construction in terms of noise, additional traffic and access within the Mews. Further details are set out below.

The scale of the proposed development

The existing building fronts onto Cleveland Street (east side) and onto Fitzroy Mews (west side). As discussed in the supporting documents, it is of a concrete frame with simply supported dark red facing brickwork and some rendered areas to the rear and dates from the 1970s. The Cleveland Street elevation (nos. 92 to 96) comprises retail units at ground floor level, and four storeys above as shown on the existing elevation plan (GA 130 P1). Section AA (GA120 P1) shows the existing height of Glebe House compared to other properties on Cleveland Street (for example, 100-106 to the north and 88 to 90 to south) and demonstrates that Glebe House is already higher than other buildings on Cleveland Street which are typically three and four storeys. Building an additional storey would make Glebe House even more dominant in the street scene along Cleveland Street.

Drawing GA 132 P1 shows the existing elevation of Glebe House on Fitzroy Mews, which is four storeys, with garages at ground floor level in part of the building. Properties within the Mews comprise a variety of building scales and forms. Whilst four and five storey properties terminate each end of the Mews, properties on the east side are typically two and three storeys. The existing property

(Glebe House) is already much taller than other properties in Fitzroy Mews, and a further floor would be out of context with existing properties, particularly those on the east side of the Mews which is faces.

The leaseholders of Glebe House therefore strongly object to the proposed scheme due to the increased height and scale of the building, which will make it very prominent in the local context.

Impact on the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area

The site lies on the western edge of the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area with Cleveland Street forming the boundary of the Conservation Area. Numbers 66, 70-84 (even), 100-104 (even) and 108-126 (even) Cleveland Street are identified as making a positive contribution to the conservation area.

The Fitzroy Square Conservation Area Statement specifically refers at paragraph 6.30 to *“the terraces along the east side of Cleveland Street (which) are predominately three storeys in height with small attic windows within the mansard, although there are some four-storey elements (mainly south of Grafton Way). Nos 66-84 & Nos 100-126 are considered to be groups that contribute to the character of the area, particularly No 106 which is grade II listed and has a fine shopfront. These blocks have a consistent elevational treatment and rhythm of fenestration and consistent plot widths.”* It is considered that increasing the height of Glebe House would have a negative impact on the setting of these buildings and on the townscape and character of the wider Conservation Area.

In regard to the Mews, the Conservation Area Statement notes that these are typically characterised by *“quiet, narrow back lanes to the rear of the principal streets, which originally serviced the grand townhouses. They tend to be smaller in scale, with buildings generally two or three storeys in height and immediately fronting the highway (frequently paved with granite setts). The mews contain a variety of small-scale commercial uses as well as continuing to provide some rear garaging and warehousing. Some properties have been converted to residential accommodation.”* (paragraph 6.30).

Paragraph 6.33 of the Conservation Area Statement notes that *“Fitzroy Mews retains its granite sett surface but has no buildings of note. The three-storey 20th century houses and offices on the eastern side take on a mews character and have large ground-floor openings with timber doors. Some of the brickwork has been painted and cedar cladding has been applied to articulate elements of the facades as part of a recent upgrade. There is also a three-storey late 20th century mews house built in stock brick to a neo-Victorian style that terminates the view to the north. These buildings are constructed from a buff brick consistent with the character of the area. The view to the south is terminated by the rear elevation of No 80 Grafton Way (listed grade II) which is in London stock brick and has a distinctive double-height slate mansard roof. The eastern side of the mews is dominated by five-storey red brick blocks of flats which have access walkways and balconies to the rear above first floor level.”* It is considered that the addition of an extra storey to Glebe House would make it even more prominent within the Mews and detract from the character and appearance of the Mews and the wider conservation area.

The Conservation Area Statement notes at paragraph 12.4 that alterations and extensions have a detrimental impact cumulatively and individually on the character and appearance of the area. This includes, for example, inappropriate roof level extensions, particularly where this interrupts the consistency of a uniform terrace of the prevailing scale and character of a block or where they are overly prominent in the street. It is felt that the proposed roof extension to Glebe House would interrupt the street scene and result in an overly prominent building along Cleveland Street and within the Mews.

It is therefore considered that the proposed roof extension to Glebe House would not accord with

paragraph 13.16 of the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area Statement and Camden's policies on heritage and conservation which require that development proposals must preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area.

Impact on Residential Amenity

The existing building comprises commercial units at the ground floor of the property. There is an access from Fitzroy Mews to the upper floors which are residential - flats 1-4 on first floor; flats 5-8 on second floor; flats 9-12 on third floor; and flats 14 and 15 on the fourth floor. The accompanying structural report states that a portal steel frame will be used to span over the existing structure to form the new fifth floor and provide stability to the extension, with a secondary frame above to support the new roof. These frames are supported by columns in the Fitzroy Mews elevation that also support the steel required to support this new elevation. The new structure will have timbers floors and roof with a lightweight membrane covering to minimise the loads added to the existing structure. The lift and stair enclosure are extended up to the new roof level, and beyond as needed to allow the lift to serve fifth floor, and support any "pop-up" in roof level around the core.

From the submitted application drawings, we note that the new floor and steel frame will bridge over the existing building, just above the lightweight structure forming the current top fourth floor housing two flats.

It also appears from the submitted drawings that one of the columns of the frame will be placed right in front of the rear-facing windows serving the living/dining room at Flat 14. Also, the rear section of the proposed new floor will extend over the rear terraces which serve flats 14 and 15, to be aligned with the existing building's rear elevation. This will overshadow these terraces and also obstruct sky visibility enjoyed by all the rear-facing windows of these properties, resulting in a loss of daylight and sunlight to the existing rooms. In addition, the new structure will build over two skylights in flat 15 and one skylight in flat 14 and also reduce the ventilation to the existing bathrooms. This will clearly impact on living conditions in both flats.

The submitted Design and Access Statement and Heritage Statement states that the frame "*will extend to the rear walls but the windows to the floor below, with one exception, are only to non-habitable rooms, and supplementary*". This is not correct as there are sole windows serving a bedroom and kitchen at Flat 15, a secondary window serving a living/dining room at Flat 15, a secondary window serving a living/dining room at Flat 14 and a secondary bedroom window at Flat 14, in addition to one bathroom window there. It is therefore anticipated that the proposal will impact on the level of daylight and sunlight in the existing flats and in particular on the single-aspect kitchen and bedroom. The applicant should be asked to submit a detailed Daylight/Sunlight Assessment to confirm that there will be no impact on the existing homes within Glebe House or on adjoining properties; and that there will be no additional overshadowing of the Mews itself.

Construction Impacts

The leaseholders further object to the scheme due to the impact and disturbance the construction of the new flat will result in. This will be particularly bad for the flats which are currently on the top floor of Glebe House as the constructions works will result in noise and vibration to these flats which are currently occupied. No details have been provided with the application on the proposed Construction Methodology to be adopted and we would ask that the Council request a Construction Management Plan as part of the application. It is anticipated that there will be increased noise, disturbance and traffic during the construction period, to the detriment of those already living in Glebe House, and particularly for flats 14 and 15.

Summary and Conclusion

As set out above, the leaseholders of Glebe House object to the application to extend Globe House through an additional floor as this will increase the height and scale of the existing building and will impact on the surrounding townscape and character of the conservation area. The leaseholders have further concerns regarding the loss of daylight and sunlight to existing homes as a result of the roof extension; and to the potential construction impacts, notably noise and construction traffic.

We trust that you will take these comments into account when assessing the planning application.

Yours faithfully



Frances Young
Director

c.c. Leaseholders of Glebe House