



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 December 2024

by J Davis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 December 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/D/24/3353746

Studio 66, 67A Medfield Street, Wandsworth, London, SW15 4JY

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Glen Tomlin against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Wandsworth.
 - The application Ref is 2024/1295.
 - The development proposed is described as 'proposed ground floor single storey extension to existing building'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the existing building and surrounding area, including on the Roehampton Village Conservation Area; and
 - the effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of existing and neighbouring occupiers.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site is within the Roehampton Village Conservation Area (CA). The Roehampton Village Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy describes the CA as comprising a small cluster of small-scale domestic buildings, around a short commercial high street; two churches, a parish hall, two small schools, four public houses; bounded on two sides by Putney Heath. The cottage style housing along Medfield Street is identified as one of four sub areas.
4. The appeal property comprises a single storey live / work unit to the rear of 67 Medfield Street. Information before me confirms that the site was historically used as a Builder's Yard, before changing use to an artist's studio in 1999. The site subsequently changed use to a live / work unit, formalised through a lawful use certificate issued in 2022¹.

¹ LPA ref. 2021/5864

5. The existing building is modest in size, comprising an open plan live / workspace, with separate bathroom. The proposed extension would provide additional accommodation in association with the existing use.
6. The proposed extension would be single storey and would extend forward of the existing building into the narrow space, currently used as a garden, between the properties at Nos 65 and 67 Medfield Street. The extension would dominate the front of the existing building so that its original form would be obscured. Furthermore, the height of the extension would sit above the eaves of the host building and would appear as a rather awkward 'add-on'.
7. More significantly, the extension would be long and narrow and would relate poorly to the footprint of the existing building such that the extension would not be well integrated with it. Moreover, the extension would extend between the flank walls of the buildings at 65 and 67 Medfield Street and would have an awkward juxtaposition with those residential properties, significantly reducing the sense of openness around those buildings and representing a form and intensity of development that would appear cramped and overdeveloped and out of keeping with the existing pattern of development in the area.
8. I acknowledge that the proposal would significantly improve the amount of space within the existing property but I find that as a form of development, the proposed extension would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property. Whilst views of the extension would not be easily obtainable from outside of the site due to its single storey height and the existing gates between Nos 65 and 67, it would be evident particularly from the upper floors of neighbouring dwellings where it would appear incongruous and out of keeping with the existing garden environment, even considering its sedum roof. The location and independent occupation of the existing building to the rear of properties fronting onto Medfield Street is already an anomaly and the proposed extension would further emphasise its uncharacteristic siting and form.
9. I also acknowledge the historic use of the site as a Builders Yard and have noted within the appellant's case that the site, including the gap between Nos 65 and 67, was at that time occupied by taller structures associated with the use. However, given the historic nature of this previous use and the fact that the use and associated buildings have long since been removed, this consideration is not of sufficient weight to justify the proposed extension to the appeal property.
10. There is a duty imposed by Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requiring decision makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. Despite the resultant harm to the character and appearance of the existing building and the immediate garden environment, the proposed extension would not be readily visible from Medfield Street or the wider CA. The Council did not raise concern regarding the effect of the proposal on the CA and I have no reason to disagree with the Council's finding on this issue.
11. Whilst the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the CA, I conclude that it would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the existing building and its immediate surroundings. Thus, it would be contrary to Policy LP1 of the Wandsworth Local Plan 2023 (LP) which, amongst

other things, requires development to be of a high-quality, sustainable design and layout that enhance and relate positively to the prevailing local character and to ensure urban grain and site layout take account of the existing pattern of development. It would also conflict with Policy LP5 of the LP which (along with other matters) requires extensions and alterations to existing residential properties to complement the form and setting of the host building and to be visually subservient to it.

Living conditions

12. Part of the proposed extension would be adjacent to the garden boundaries of Nos 65 and 67 Medfield Street. Both main parties confirm that a previous application in 1999 to alter and enlarge the studio was subject to a condition stating that there shall be no alterations or reduction in height to the boundary walls abutting the accessway without the prior written consent of the local planning authority. However, although both boundaries remain high, the boundary with No 65 has been altered by way of an area of open trellis whilst the boundary with No 67 includes a section of timber slats. The Council confirm that these changes have taken place without consent.
13. The existing site levels would be lowered, with the proposed extension being set down into the site, with a stepped roof profile. The proposal includes the reinstatement of the boundary treatment to No. 65 so that it would be consistent with the 1999 permission. The height of the proposed extension would not exceed the height of the reinstated boundary and accordingly, would be unlikely to result in significant harm to the occupiers of the property at No 65 with regard to light, outlook or privacy.
14. The height of the extension is also shown to match the height of the boundary with No 67. Although the top section of the boundary comprises of timber slats, these are closely arranged such that little light is likely to pass through them. Whilst the information before me is limited, it seems from the representations that the current timber slats replaced a section of trellis with planting which may have allowed more light into the garden of No 67. However, notwithstanding the changes that may have taken place, in my view, given the relative low height of the proposed extension, it would be unlikely to be significantly overbearing upon the garden area of No 67 or have an particularly appreciable effect on light received in the garden. There would also be benefits in terms of the privacy of all occupants. Based on the information before me, and having regard to all of the above factors, I conclude that the proposal would not result in significant harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of No 67.
15. The existing live / work building is currently lit by 6no. rooflights on its rear elevation, glazed doors on its front elevation and door leading to the side garden. On my site visit I observed that some of the space within the building, such as the kitchen which sits in an alcove, did not appear to be well lit by natural light.
16. The external existing double doors would be removed as part of the appeal proposal. Instead, full length openings are proposed on the side elevation of the extension which would open onto an external courtyard. However, the amount of light received by these openings would be restricted due to the limited size of the external courtyard and their proximity to the high boundary enclosure with 65 Medfield Street. The area of proposed glazing overall would

exceed that of the existing double doors on the front elevation of the building but due to the limited amount of natural light that the proposed windows would receive, it is probable that the existing accommodation would receive less light overall.

17. The proposed kitchen area would also be served by a rooflight, but the amount of light received would be somewhat restricted by the siting of the extension between high flank walls of Nos 65 and 67. Therefore, I find that the existing accommodation would be likely to receive less light than currently is the case and that the proposed new accommodation would be unlikely to receive adequate natural light and accordingly, the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the living conditions of existing / future occupiers of the live / work unit. In this regard, the proposal would conflict with Policy LP2 of the LP which states, amongst other things, that development must not adversely impact the amenity of existing and future occupiers.

Conclusion

18. The proposal is contrary to the development plan as a whole and there are no other material considerations of sufficient weight to indicate a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Davis

INSPECTOR