



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 August 2025

by **M Aqbal BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/W/25/3366178

233-235 Lane House, Roehampton Lane, Wandsworth, London SW15 4LB

- 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 Mr Ken George against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Wandsworth.
 - The application Ref is 2022/4545.
 - The development proposed is change of use and alteration from a 2-storey office building to accommodate all residential apartments; new roof with dormers for living accommodation, new two storey rear extension and two additional front bays.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - i) The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, including the Roehampton Village Conservation Area ('CA');
 - ii) Whether the proposal would secure a satisfactory quality of accommodation; and
 - iii) The effect of the proposal on the living conditions of neighbours.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property comprises a two storey brick building, constructed from London stock brick with a slate hipped roof and two short chimney stacks. This is located within the Roehampton Village CA, which is still recognisable as a village that had its origins in the 17th century. More specifically, the appeal site is within the Roehampton Lane sub-area, which is defined by its distinct mixed commercial and community uses. Based on my observations, the significance of the Roehampton Village CA is largely defined by its history, the location and arrangement of its buildings and their quality architecture.
4. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a requirement that special attention should be paid to the desirability that the character or appearance of the conservation area should be preserved or enhanced.

5. The appeal property is broadly divided into two parts: the left half features a historic timber shopfront at ground floor level, while the right half includes two projecting bay windows flanking a central inset entrance porch with a decorative pediment.
6. Situated prominently along Roehampton Lane, a key arterial route, the appeal property commands a highly visible position within the local street scene. Its shopfront not only adds visual interest but also serves as a reminder of the building's historic commercial function, which aligns with the mixed-use character typical of buildings in this sub area of the Roehampton Village CA. Given its strategic location and distinctive features, the appeal property stands as a significant and visually engaging building along Roehampton Lane. Therefore, the appeal property positively contributes to the significance of the Roehampton Village CA.
7. To the rear are simple outrigger extensions of limited architectural interest. The proposed rear additions, including a two-storey extension, rear dormer, and condenser units would not be visible from the street and are designed to remain subservient to the existing building. Collectively, these elements have been deemed acceptable by the Council. I have also considered them and, as far as they relate to the first main issue, also find the proposed alterations acceptable in principle.
8. The proposed green wall and expanded front garden would be visually acceptable. Together, these soft landscaping elements would soften the frontage, offering relief from surrounding hard surfaces and improving the overall setting for residents and passers-by.
9. However, the proposed hip to gable roof alterations would change the form of the appeal property. Furthermore, the proposed five front dormer windows, would dominate this and result in a significantly different new roof form. The proposed plans also appear to indicate that the existing chimney stacks would be altered. Moreover, the proposal includes the removal of the shopfront and the replacement of this with bay windows to match the right side of the elevation.
10. The proposed removal of the existing shopfront would eliminate a key architectural feature that contributes meaningfully to the character of the building and the wider Roehampton Village Conservation Area. This alteration would not only diminish the building's visual appeal but also undermine the street's established character, which includes a limited yet important mix of residential and commercial façades. A full conversion to a purely residential frontage would feel incongruous within this context and erode the area's visual diversity. Combined with the proposed changes to the front elevation and roof, the development would significantly reduce the historic value of the appeal property and result in less than substantial harm to the designated heritage asset (Roehampton Lane Conservation Area).
11. Consequently, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the appeal property and area, and the significance of the Roehampton Lane CA.
12. With regard to heritage assets, the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') says that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight

should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

13. Also, the Framework says that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
14. In this case, I do not dispute that the property has been designated as offices for an extended period and is currently underutilised. However, there is limited evidence that this is becoming derelict despite efforts in the past to let the property. Also, in the absence of any alternative schemes or viability information, I cannot be certain that the proposed scheme represents the optimal viable use of the appeal property.
15. Nonetheless, the proposal would make use of the appeal property and includes the provision of 7 new apartments (4 x 2-bed and 3 x 1-bed). There would also be a minor level of visual enhancement relating to the addition of planting to the front of the property. I attach significant importance to these factors and any associated benefits. Even so, given that this development would fail to provide satisfactory accommodation for its occupants and harms the living conditions of neighbours, I afford only moderate weight to such benefits.
16. On the other hand, I have found less than substantial harm would be caused to the significance of the Roehampton Village CA, and I do not consider the benefits associated with the proposal to be sufficiently forceful to outweigh the less than substantial harm that I have identified and the great weight that must be given to the conservation of heritage assets.
17. For the above reasons, the proposal conflicts with LP Policy LP1, which amongst other things says that development proposals should ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of the development provide a high-quality, sustainable design and layout that enhance and relate positively to the prevailing local character. Accordingly, I also find conflict with LP Policy LP3, which amongst other things says that development proposals will be supported where they sustain, preserve and, wherever possible, enhance the significance, appearance, character, function and setting of any heritage asset (both designated and non-designated), and the historic environment. Therefore, I find conflict with the similar aims of the Framework for conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

Quality of the proposed accommodation

18. The rear-facing windows of Apartment E would be obscure glazed up to a height of 1.7 metres, significantly limiting outward views. The only other window, a side-facing one looks directly onto a blank wall just 8 metres away. This constrained arrangement would result in a bleak and oppressive outlook for future occupiers of Apartment E.
19. Moreover, north-facing windows typically receive minimal direct sunlight and reduced levels of natural daylight. The use of obscure glazing further diminishes daylight penetration. While the appellant claims that the proposed residential units would receive plenty of light, this assertion lacks credible supporting evidence.

20. In addition, none of the proposed residential units would benefit from private outdoor space. The scheme's prioritisation of internal floorspace over outdoor amenity undermines long-term wellbeing. Although nearby public open spaces may offer some recreational value, they cannot replace dedicated private amenity provision, as required by the development plan. While a communal front garden is proposed, it falls short of policy expectations for individual outdoor space.
21. Assertions that balconies or rooftop gardens are unsuitable due to the site's Conservation Area designation are unsubstantiated. Comparisons to nearby developments are similarly unsupported by verified assessments and do not justify the poor outlook and lack of amenity space in the current proposal.
22. Consequently, the proposed scheme would offer a less than acceptable standard of living conditions for future occupants, contrary to LP Policy LP27. Amongst other things, this Policy says that all new residential development, including new-build dwellings, conversions and change-of-use schemes where new dwellings are created, will need to meet all requirements for housing standards and private internal space set out in Policy D6 of the London Plan and provide for an acceptable level of daylight for each habitable room, and optimise the opportunity for enabling direct sunlight.

Living conditions of neighbours

23. I have found that the proposed two-storey rear extension would not harm the character and appearance of the area. Despite this and its flat roofed design, the three rear-facing first-floor windows within this extension, would sit approximately 7 metres from residential windows at ground, first, and second-floor levels in the building behind. Although obscure glazing may reduce direct views, it does not eliminate the sense of being overlooked, especially given the number and proximity of windows. While mutual overlooking may occur in older mews-style developments, it does not justify introducing new privacy intrusions.
24. Combined with the extension's scale and closeness, this would create an overbearing presence and further restrict an already limited outlook, significantly affecting the living conditions of the occupiers of the building to the rear of the appeal site.
25. The proposed rear extension is also likely to reduce daylight and sunlight to the existing building to the rear. While the additional loss might be tolerable in isolation, when combined with the extension's visual dominance and perceived overlooking, the cumulative impact would be unacceptable.
26. The proposal includes external air source heat pump units at the rear, positioned close to neighbouring homes. These raise potential noise concerns. However, this could be addressed through a planning condition requiring a noise impact assessment and appropriate mitigation if the appeal were to succeed.
27. Nevertheless, for the above reasons, the proposal fails to accord with Policy LP2 of the LP, which amongst other things requires that development avoids unacceptable levels of overlooking (or perceived overlooking) and undue sense of enclosure onto the private amenity space of neighbouring properties.

Other Matters

28. Although the Framework supports upward extensions, this is conditional on sensitive design, which is not the case in this instance.
29. The claim that this proposal supports the Alton Renewal Plan cannot be verified, as the full details of that plan are not available.
30. The parties have referred to a scheme allowed on appeal for 235 Roehampton Lane; however, that permission has since lapsed, and little information is available in respect of this. As such, this is of limited relevance and does not alter my findings on the main issues.

Conclusion

31. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

M Aqbal

INSPECTOR