

SECTION '2' – Applications meriting special consideration

Application No : 09/03280/FULL1

Ward:
Clock House

Address : 28 Beckenham Road Beckenham BR3
4LS

OS Grid Ref: E: 536553 N: 169572

Applicant : Citygate

Objections : NO

Description of Development:

Two storey extension for disabled access lift and glazed entrance canopy to northern elevation together with refurbishment of building.

Key designations:

Conservation Area: Elm Road

Flood Zone 2

Historic Flooding

Locally Listed Building

Proposal

It is proposed to construct a two storey extension to the side of the host building (northern elevation), to provide a disabled access lift. In addition, a glazed entrance canopy is proposed to an existing entrance door on the northern elevation, together with the refurbishment of the building. The building is currently vacant, and these works are proposed in connection with the Applicant's plans to bring the building back into use as a community arts/media centre.

The details of the works proposed are as follows:

- two storey extension to northern elevation, to provide disabled access lift
- measures approx. 6.1m in width at ground floor level, reducing to 3.2m above with overhanging flat roof
- approx. 9.3m in height and 3.6m in depth
- lift to provide access to basement, ground and first floors which are currently only accessible via steps
- extension to be finished with timber cladding at ground floor level and render above

- contemporary design, attached to main building with glass enclosure
- entrance canopy to be constructed above existing northern entrance to ground floor of building

Members may wish to note that a separate application seeking listed building consent for the above works (together with other external/internal alterations which would not require planning permission) is also to be found on this agenda, under ref. 09/03281/LBC.

In support of the application, the Applicant (Citygate) has submitted a Design and Access Statement (revised statement received 28th May 2010), the main points of which can be summarised as follows:

- building is in a poor state of repair, and it is now proposed to refurbish the entire building and open it once again as a centre for arts and media available to all
- proposed to improve the external appearance of the building returning it (where possible) to its original state
- proposal will continue with similar uses for most areas of the building
- only additional feature will be a disabled access lift
- this structure will not be visible from the road or above the height of the building
- new lift shaft has been designed to look significantly different from the existing building while complying with DDA regulations
- modern look will match other structures nearby but clearly distinguishable from the Victorian style and architecture of the main building

With particular regard to access, the statement makes the following points:

- current access will remain, although changes must be made to conform with Part M of the Building Regulations
- to make use of 28 Beckenham Road as a community centre it must be accessible for all and in line with Citygate's policy of inclusion a Strategic Accessibility Statement was written by an accredited access auditor
- the audit makes clear that access to all floors would be essential to ensure compliance with current regulations and best practice
- the building imposes constraints when considering vertical movement, with access made more difficult for anyone with a disability as the existing entrance is approached by a set of steps approx. 1.4m in height
- while a ramp could be used to access part of the building it would have to be in excess of 30m and could prove unacceptably tiring for wheelchair users
- in light of the above it would be necessary to provide an external lift to give access to the ground floor, although an additional solution would need to be found to provide access to the basement and first floor, i.e. a second lift, either internally, or one external lift to serve all floors
- the configuration of the building is such that access to all floors is difficult to achieve internally

- other aspect to consider is the plan for evacuation in the event of fire – an internal lift would not be usable in the event of a fire and would require the construction of refuge zones and an alternative means of escape (including carry-down procedures which presents several issues)
- to resolve the issues the preferred option for building evacuation would involve the construction of an external lift with a separate power supply to ensure it can be used as a fire-fighting lift
- plans provided show a separate lift shaft set 1.5m from the building, with connecting walkways (1.5m square to allow wheelchairs to turn) designed to be used as refuge zones with access via a suitable fire resisting door
- design also provides stair basement exit for ambulant people as well as access to the lift for anyone with mobility issues

Location

The application site is located on the northern side of Beckenham Road, Beckenham and comprises a grade II listed former technical institute, which had more recently been in use as a community arts/media facility known as 'The Studio', although is currently vacant.

The application site is also located within the Elm Road Conservation Area and falls within Flood Zone 2.

Comments from Local Residents

Nearby owners/occupiers were notified of the application, advertisements were displayed on site and published in the local press, and no representations were received.

Comments from Consultees

English Heritage was notified of the application, and advised that it did not consider this necessary under the relevant statutory provisions.

While the site is located within Flood Zone 2, as a result of the nature of the development under consideration here the application would appear to be subject to the Environment Agency's standing advice and would not need to be referred to them for comment.

Planning Considerations

The main planning policies of relevance to this application are as follows:

- BE1 Design of New Development
- BE8 Statutory Listed Buildings
- BE11 Conservation Areas

BE14 Trees in Conservation Areas
C3 Access to Buildings for People with Disabilities

With regard to trees, it is advised that existing trees within the site are in poor condition and in view of their proximity to the building no objection would be raised to their removal.

From the conservation point of view, it is acknowledged that the external lift would appear to be the only means of achieving the access the Applicant seeks to provide. However, at present concerns are raised regarding the design and appearance. While a contemporary approach may be acceptable, the design could be sleeker and the bulk reduced (with particular regard to the roof canopy). Accordingly it is recommended that the detailed design and appearance, and materials be controlled by condition should permission be granted.

Planning History

Under ref. 06/02935, planning permission was granted for a disabled access lift (external platform type).

Under ref. 06/02937, listed building consent was granted for external disabled access and internal alterations.

Conclusions

The main issues for Members to consider in this case will be the impact of the proposed extension for the access lift and entrance canopy on the character, appearance and special interest of the statutory listed host building, and to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The refurbishment works proposed are predominantly covered and dealt with by the application for listed building consent, which is also under consideration and to be found elsewhere on this agenda.

Members will note that the proposed two storey extension for the lift is proposed as a result of detailed consideration as to how best to achieve the desired level of disabled access to the building while respecting the fact that it is of historic interest, reflected in the statutory listed status. At present, the building is only accessible via steps, with the ground floor being set approx. 1.4m above natural ground level. Accordingly, it is inevitable that some alterations to the fabric of the building would be required in order to facilitate disabled access, which is of course seen to be necessary in view of the community use of the building that is proposed.

The Applicant submits that the current proposal for an external lift, which would facilitate disabled access to the basement, ground and first floors via a single lift and point of access, is the most appropriate solution to solving the issues surrounding provision of disabled access balanced with the need to preserve the character,

appearance and special interest of the listed building. The proposed lift would involve a single addition to the building and avoid the need for complex internal alterations, and would, in view of its design, appear to read as a contemporary and distinct addition to the building, featuring a contemporary look and materials which represent a departure from the traditional brick construction of the host building. In addition, due to the siting of the lift shaft which would be detached from the main building and linked with glazed walkways, it is intended that the lift could also be used in case of fire to facilitate emergency egress for disabled persons.

Members will need to carefully consider the acceptability of the proposed lift extension in view of the case put forward by the Applicant (and summarised at the beginning of the report), however may agree that the approach adopted would preserve the character, appearance and special interest of the listed building in principle since the extension would clearly appear as a contemporary addition and does not seek to replicate the original design and features of the building itself. Furthermore, the extension would be attached to the main building via glazed walkways, which may serve to soften the link between the original and contemporary elements of the extended building. Final details of the design, appearance and materials proposed to be used for the external surfaces of the extension could be secured by appropriately worded conditions.

In more general planning terms, the lift extension would be subservient to the host building, and would be sited away from the Beckenham Road elevation and set back from the main elevation, and may not therefore appear unduly prominent within the surrounding area. Accordingly Members may agree that the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would be preserved in this case. With regard to residential amenities, Members may agree that in view of the nature and siting of the proposed lift extension, the amenities of nearby residential properties are unlikely to be harmed.

Finally, the proposed entrance canopy may be considered a modest addition to the host building that would not unduly compromise the character, appearance and special interest of the listed building in view of the fact that it will serve an existing entrance and may be easily removed from the building. Given its siting on the northern elevation and not highly visible within the surrounding area, again it may be considered that the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would be preserved.

Background papers referred to during production of this report comprise all correspondence on files refs. 09/03280, 09/03281, 06/02935 and 06/02937, excluding exempt information.

as amended by documents received on 28.05.2010

RECOMMENDATION: PERMISSION

Subject to the following conditions:

- 1 ACA01 Commencement of development within 3 yrs
 ACA01R A01 Reason 3 years
- 2 ACC01 Satisfactory materials (ext'nl surfaces)
 ACC01R Reason C01
- 3 ACC06 Mortar details
 ACC06R Reason C06
- 4 ACC08 Satisfactory materials (all surfaces)
 ACC08R Reason C08
- 5 Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, details of the design and external appearance of the lift extension hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The extension shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In order to comply with Policies BE1 and BE8 of the Unitary Development Plan and in the interests of the character, appearance and special interest of the listed building.

Reasons for granting permission:

In granting permission the Local Planning Authority had regard to the following policies of the Unitary Development Plan:

- BE1 Design of New Development
- BE8 Statutory Listed Buildings
- BE11 Conservation Areas
- BE14 Trees in Conservation Areas
- C3 Access to Buildings for People with Disabilities

The development is considered to be satisfactory in relation to the following:

- (a) the relationship of the development to adjacent properties
- (b) the character of the development in the surrounding area
- (c) the impact on the amenities of the occupiers of adjacent and nearby properties
- (d) the contemporary design of the proposed lift extension
- (e) the preservation of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area
- (f) the preservation of the character, appearance and special interest of the listed building
- (g) the impact of the development to trees within the site
- (h) the design and conservation policies of the Unitary Development Plan

and having regard to all other matters raised.

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