

Officer Report

Application Number:	HGY/2024/1089
Application Type:	Full planning permission
Address:	Wood Green Central Library, High Road, Wood Green, London, N22 6XD
Proposal:	Installation of balustrading with raised planter and decking on first, second and third floor terraces of the library to facilitate safe use of the terraces. Erection of metal shed and greenhouse on first floor.
Case Officer:	Roland Sheldon
Valid Date:	18/04/2024
Applicant:	Pippa Gueterbock
Agent:	Sam Neal

RECOMMENDATION

Approve with Conditions

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site contains the five-storey Wood Green Central Library located on the western side of Wood Green High Road, N22. The surrounding uses - being located within the Wood Green Metropolitan Centre – are a mix of retail-related commercial. The site does not contain a listed building and is not located within a conservation area.

2. THE PROPOSAL

The proposal is to install balustrading with raised planter and decking on first, second and third floor terraces of the library to facilitate safe use of the terraces. Erection of metal shed and greenhouse on first floor.

3. Relevant Planning and Enforcement History

No relevant planning history.

4. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal & External Consultees

The following were consulted on the planning application:

- LBH Design Officer: No comments received.
- LBH Arboricultural Officer: No comments received.

- LBH Regeneration: No comments received.
- LBH Property Services: No comments received.

Neighbour Consultation

The number of representations received from neighbours in response to notification and publicity of the application were as follows:

No of individual responses: 1

Objecting: 1

Support: 0

Neither: 0

The following issues were raised in the public consultation that are material to the determination of the planning application:

- Use of terraces is commended
- Insufficient detail to allow an informed assessment of the proposed on the building to be assessed
- Poor quality proposed materials.

5. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- Principle of development;
- Design and character and;
- Impact on neighbouring amenity.

Principle of development

London Plan policy SD6 outlines that the vitality and viability of London's varied town centres should be promoted and enhanced by amongst other things:

1) encouraging strong, resilient, accessible and inclusive hubs with a diverse range of uses that meet the needs of Londoners, including main town centre uses, night-time economy, civic, community, social and residential uses.

Local Plan policy SP10 indicates that the Council will promote and encourage development of retail, office, community, leisure, entertainment facilities, recreation uses, arts and cultural activities within its town centres according to the borough's town centre hierarchy. Wood Green Metropolitan Town Centre will be the principal focus of growth accommodating an extensive range of the types of development set out above, which should help to shape Wood Green into a thriving and vibrant centre for north London.

'Eat Wood Green' is an initiative between the Council and two local organisations 'Ubele Initiative' and 'Black Rootz' which is seeking to provide a new community garden and food growing space within the borough. The intention of the initiative is also to provide volunteering and training opportunities for the local communities and for various activities to take place on site.

Eat Wood Green is envisaged to become a focal point of community activity. People will be encouraged to plant, harvest and eat together, to grow a more positive future for Wood Green. The preferred destination for the project home is the roof of the Bury Road multi-storey car park, but it is not possible to bring this forward in the foreseeable future, so the Wood Green Library has been identified as the appropriate location for the project in the interim period.

The works here are in association with the continued existing use of the building as a community facility that would not constitute a material change of use. The principle of development to use this part of the building to aid this community initiative is welcomed by the Local Planning Authority.

Design and character

London Plan policy D3 states development proposals should enhance local context by delivering buildings and spaces that positively respond to local distinctiveness through their layout, orientation, scale, appearance and shape, with due regard to existing and emerging street hierarchy, building types, forms and proportions. Development should also achieve safe, secure and inclusive environments.

Policy SP11 of the Strategic Plan and Policy DM1 of the Development Management DPD both aim to enhance the built environment through high quality design that respects local context and positive aspects of the area. Policy DM1 sets out that development should relate positively to its locality in terms of building height, form, scale, massing, building lines and architectural details and styles.

The Wood Green Library currently benefits from irregular shaped balconies with planters behind a raised upstand. They are currently not understood to be used and are in need of maintenance to make them safe for use as balconies, most notably with the addition of safety railings/balustrades. The proposal seeks to make a light-touch approach to make the terraces safe to use in association with the Eat Wood Green initiative. This would entail the following external works to the level 1, 2 and 3 balconies:

- New wire mesh balustrade
- New timber decking to terrace
- Outdoor furniture
- Decorative lighting

A greenhouse and outdoor tool store is also proposed on the level 1 terrace. The most sensitive aspect of the development in design terms are the safety railings/balustrade. Wire mesh with balustrades are proposed to enclose the planting area with bright fruit and vegetable themed finials.

The repeated horizontals of upstand planters are the strongest positive feature of the library, especially on its frontage facing the High Road. The proposal would only affect the first, second and third floors, but not the fourth and fifth floors. Whilst from a design perspective it would make sense to have a consistent treatment applied to all floors, it is understood that no upstand/planter exists at fourth floor or roof level. It is understood that there is a limited budget with which the project is working, and therefore in the absence of planters on the last 2 upper floors or a large budget, a light-touch design only affecting the 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors is considered the most appropriate approach. The balustrading and mesh would be visually lightweight in appearance which will allow the planting grow in front and over it, to allow the planting to form the main feature of the design.

The greenhouse and metal shed features would be positioned set-back from the raised planters and balustrades and would not be visually dominant features, given their relatively modest scale, height and footprint in the context of the scale of the building, when viewed from the High Road.

Access

Policy D5 of the London Plan outlines that development proposals should achieve the highest possible standards of accessible and inclusive design. DM policy DM2 outlines proposals should

ensure that they can be used safely, easily and with dignity by all. The provision of ramped accesses, timber decking and balustrades would constitute reasonable measures to allow this existing part of the building to be used safely, easily and with dignity by all. Taking the above into consideration, the proposal would be acceptable with regards to design and character considerations.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

London Plan Policy D14 requires development proposals to reduce, manage and mitigate noise impacts.

DPD Policy DM1 'Delivering High Quality Design' states that development proposals must ensure a high standard of privacy and amenity for a development's users and neighbours. Specifically, proposals are required to provide appropriate sunlight, daylight and aspects to adjacent buildings and land, and to provide an appropriate amount of privacy to neighbouring properties to avoid overlooking and loss of privacy and detriment to amenity of neighbouring residents.

The proposal would not materially harm the amenities of any nearby residential occupants. The nearest residential properties are upper floor flats located to the east on the High Road. However, the upper floors of nos. 1-4 High Road have been converted to be used as part of the current Capital restaurant, meaning the closest upper floor windows to the development do not serve residential properties albeit there is an enforcement case for this use. The proposed development and increased use of the terraces would not result in an unacceptable loss of privacy, outlook, light or noise disturbance by neighbouring residential occupants given they could be utilised without these alterations. The proposal is therefore acceptable with regards to neighbouring amenity considerations.

6. CONCLUSION

The proposal would introduce a community initiative within an existing community building, optimising the use of a currently under-utilised terrace area of the library, whilst respecting the character and appearance of the building. Approval can be recommended accordingly.

7. RECOMMENDATION

The application is recommended for approval subject to the following conditions.

Conditions:

- 1 The development to which this permission relates must be begun no later than three years from the date of this decision notice, failing which the permission shall be of no effect.

Reason: This condition is imposed by virtue of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and to prevent the accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions.

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved plans and drawings listed in this decision notice, other than where those details are altered pursuant to the conditions of this planning permission.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

Informatives:

INFORMATIVE: Hours of Construction Work

The applicant is advised that under the Control of Pollution Act 1974, construction work which will be audible at the site boundary will be restricted to the following hours:-

8.00am - 6.00pm Monday to Friday

8.00am - 1.00pm Saturday

and not at all on Sundays and Bank Holidays.