

DEVELOPMENT OF 125 BELLENDEN ROAD

POINTS OF CONSIDERATION IN RESPONSE TO PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

Background

125 Bellenden Road is a multi-use property comprising a ground floor restaurant and take-away shop with an above flat. The building is owned by the occupants and owner-operators of the business and their family. The owners have lived at and operated the business for over 15 years and are stalwarts of the local community.

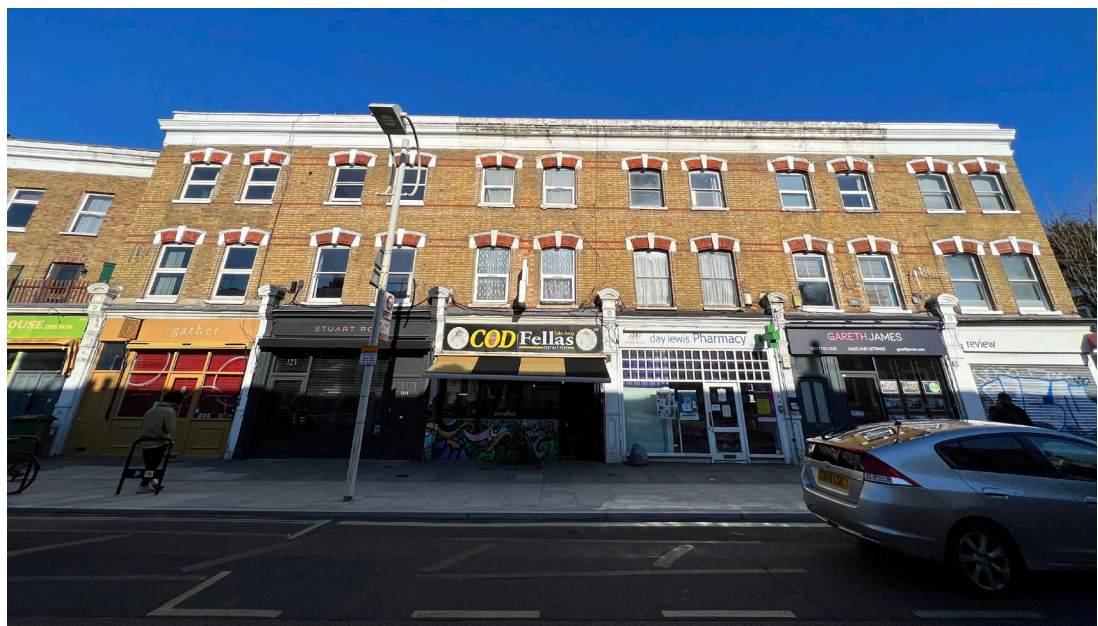
Planning is sought for an extension comprising of a mansard roof loft to increase the residential living space. The existing flat comprises just one bedroom and is home to the owning couple and their three children. The current space is not sufficient for ensuring a minimum quality of living standard and extension to the residential accommodation is necessary to enable the owners continued occupation and operation of their business, which is their livelihood.

This document is a response to the pre-application advice and further outlines the necessity of granting planning for this small extension.

1. Visibility of the Development

The proposed development has no visual impact on the heritage roof-line as it is not visible from the street. Photographs taken both at street level and at a point 4.5m above and 5m back from the street level from a residence opposite show that the proposed mansard would not be seen.

Elevations of the proposed development shows the top line of the mansard in line with the top of the chimney stack. Neither the chimney stack nor the taller chimney pots are visible from street level, therefore the entire proposed mansard would be obscured from view at street level.

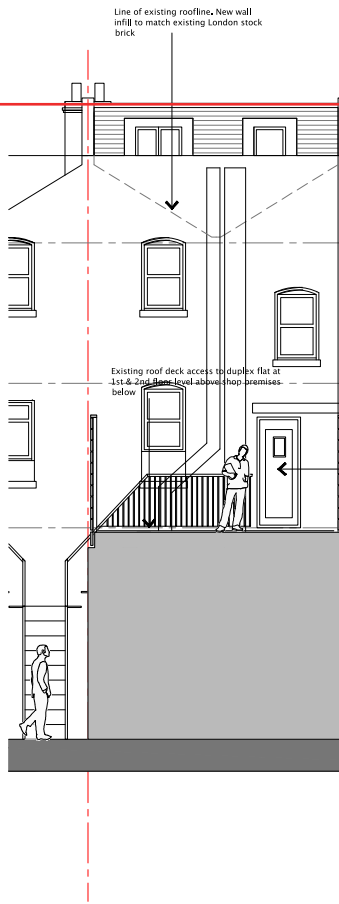


Photograph taken at street level shows that no chimney stack or pot is visible

125 Bellenden Road

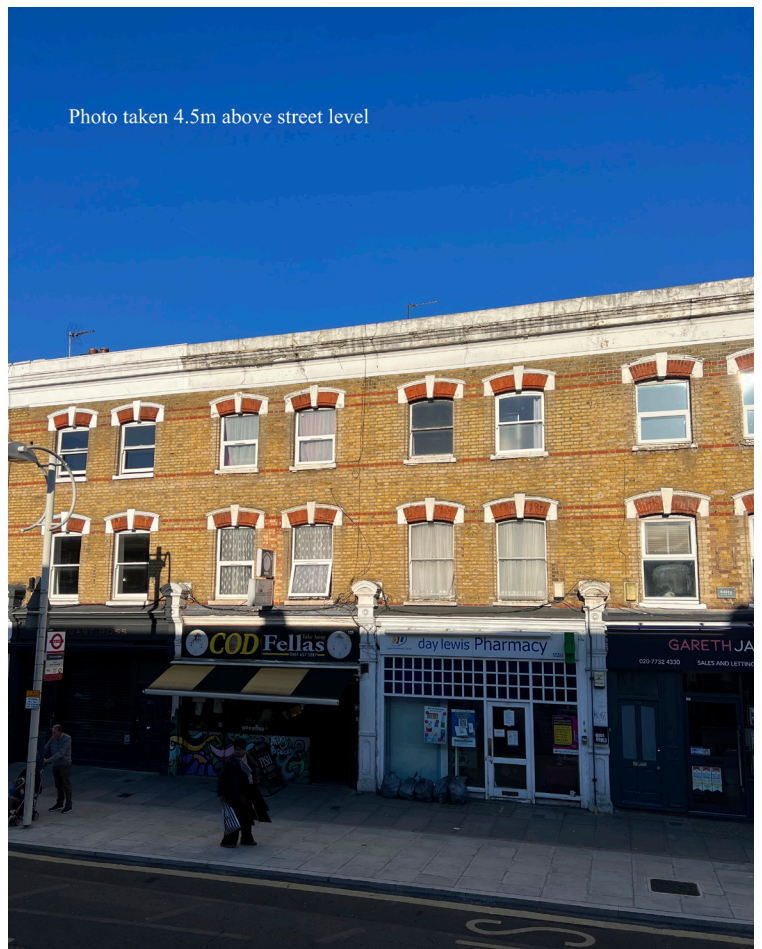


STREET ELEVATION – PROPOSED



REAR ELEVATION – PROPOSED

Proposed development elevation: the red line shows that the top line of the mansard roof sits below the chimney stack which cannot be seen from the street



Photograph taken approx 4.5m above and 5m back from street level shows only the very tip of one pot and no stack visible

2. Precedent

Southwark planners have approved roof extensions within the heritage area even when it disrupts the continuity and heritage aspects of the property's roof-line.



At 113 Bellenden Road planning was given to an extension to the property, and a further variation granted to use metal railings on the parapet. The metal railing, visible in the right picture, clearly disrupting the roof-line in favour of creating additional private residential accommodation space.



125 Bellenenden Road

At 53 Lyndhurst Way planning was granted for a full mansard roof in the conversion of a local pub to flats.



A historic photograph shows that not only was a full mansard approved, which clearly has no heritage value, but that the original parapet of the building was removed by the developers

125 Bellenden Road



At 109 Bellenden Road a flat roof extension is clearly visible, again, disrupting the continuity of the roof-line in the heritage area

At 134 Bellenden Road a dormer roof extension has been constructed despite this property being in the same heritage area



Despite the proposed development at 125 Bellenden Road having no visual impact on the continuity of the roof-line planners have given pre-application advice that the development would be refused on design and heritage grounds on the assumption it would disrupt the continuity of the roof-line.

Why has the planning office granted planning to other properties on the same street of the heritage area where the development has a negative visual impact on the heritage elements and roof-line, but advised that it will decline an application at 125 Bellenden Road when the proposed development is not visible?

3. Support for local residents and community business

The proposed development at 125 Bellenden Road is to enable the owners of the building, who both live at the address and operate a popular local business on the ground floor to continue to do so.

The existing flat consists of one bedroom with a total sleeping room floor area of 16sqm which serves as the sleeping area for two adults and three children aged six, three and two. National Government guidelines recommend a total minimum of 24.14 sqm for this occupancy. An additional bedroom is necessary to adequately house the occupants and allow them to live while maintaining a decent standard of living and operate their business in the community.

The owners have lived at the property and operated the ground floor business for over 15 years and are an integral part of the local community, with their three children attending local schools and nursery.

Southwark Council itself notes that *“small and independent businesses are more vulnerable than larger companies and multiples and are unlikely to have the corporate resources available to seek specialist advice on relocation and mitigate the risks to the business”*. (Southwark Plan 2022 pp. 163.) Without the opportunity to extend the living space of the above flat the owners will be forced to give up their livelihood, home and uproot the lives of their children.

The proposed development will create the necessary additional sleeping area to allow the family to remain in their home and operate their business while enjoying a decent standard of living.

4. Southwark Council Commitments

Southwark Council has stated in its numerous plans and reports its intent to support local residents in both the domestic and commercial spheres. Permitting the development of 125 Bellenden Road and supports the owners family and their local business.

The *Southwark Plan 2022 Vision for Peckham Area* states *“Development in Peckham should [...] provide as many homes as possible...”*.

The plan also states that the council’s Strategic Housing Market Assessment evidences a *“high level of need for family homes”*

The development of 125 Bellenden Road will maximise the existing footprint to provide suitable housing for a family of five, removing and additional demand on alternate housing stock. By recognising the need for family homes Southwark is clearly aware on the strain that residents are facing in sourcing suitable accommodation. Planning policy should be in support the council’s general strategy, which would enable the owners of 125 to create an additional bedroom to house their family.

The *Southwark Economic Renewal Plan v1.6* of April 2022 details the council's commitment to "help Southwark's high streets to be thriving and vibrant, seeking to achieve full occupancy and encourage residents to shop local" and to "encourage residents to shop local to deliver a 15 minute borough".

To achieve this the council needs to provide support to local business owners in dynamic ways and facilitate the requirements for sustaining viable community businesses. By preventing development of 125 denying the owners of 125 the opportunity to develop their property to provide necessary living accommodation will force them out of their home and business.

Conclusion

125 Bellenden Road is both a popular local restaurant and home to it's owner-operators. With only one bedroom of 16sqm the family of five is under increasing strain to live comfortably in the space. Without the opportunity to create additional sleeping area for the three young children the family will be forced to consider relocation, losing both their home and livelihood.

In Pre-application advice Southwark Council has indicated that the proposed development of additional living accommodation would be refused on design and heritage grounds.

This report has shown that;

1. The proposed development would not be visible from street level and that it would have no negative visual impact on the continuity of the heritage roof-line of terrace in which it is situated, and thus should not be refused on heritage grounds
2. Planning has been granted for roof development to other residential properties in the heritage area even when the development has a negative visual impact
3. Without the ability to extend the living space the family will be forced to relocate to find suitable accommodation, displacing their livelihood, their children's schooling and removing a valuable community amenity
4. Southwark Council has made multiple public commitments to support local business and develop thriving communities and that granting planning for 125 supports those wider commitments and strategic goals.

We urge Southwark Council planners to consider the special circumstance of this mixed-use property and to support the local small business owners by granting planning permission.