

<b>Committee:</b> Development Committee	<b>Date:</b> 17 <sup>th</sup> October 2018	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Place		<b>Title:</b> Applications for Listed Building Consent
<b>Case Officer:</b> Rikki Weir		<b>Ref No:</b> PA/18/00828 <b>Ward:</b> Bethnal Green

## 1.0 APPLICATION DETAILS

**Location:** Bethnal Green Library, Cambridge Heath Road, London, E2 0HL

**Existing Use:** Library (D1 use class)

**Proposal:** Removal of outer patent roof glazing above decorative glazed ceiling and replacement with thermally broken aluminium glazing bars and polycarbonate roof panels. Installation of passenger lift.

**Drawings and documents:** Please see Appendix 2

**Ownership/applicant:** London Borough of Tower Hamlets

**Historic Building:** Grade II listed

**Conservation Area:** Bethnal Green Gardens Conservation Area

## 2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 The Local Planning Authority has considered this application against the Council's approved planning policies contained in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Core Strategy (2010) and Managing Development Document (2013) as well as the London Plan MALP (2016) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2018) and all other material considerations.

2.2 This report considers planning and listed building applications for works associated with the refurbishment of the Grade II listed Bethnal Green Library.

2.3 The refurbishment works have been sensitively designed to respond to the special architectural character and valuable features of the historic fabric of the building and as such will they help maintain and preserve the significance of the designated heritage asset and positively contribute positively to the overall character and appearance of the Bethnal Green Gardens Conservation Area



- Installation of a new passenger lift.

### **Relevant Planning History**

- 4.4. PA/03/00432: Illumination of centre front of building with 4 up-lighters fixed to balcony and 2 down-lighters fixed either side of main door. Permitted – 16/09/2003.
- 4.5. PA/01/00363: Submission of details pursuant to permission ref PA/00/1782 relating to location and method of fixing of fencing. Permitted – 28/11/2002.
- 4.6. PA/00/01782: Erection of security fencing at rear of building, 1.8 metres high on top of boundary wall to Swinburne & Morris Houses and 4 metres high on building above first floor. Permitted – 19/02/2001.
- 4.7. PA/87/00515: Change of Use of council offices. Permitted – 11/01/1988.

### **Pre-application**

PF/17/00245: External renovation of the building. Advice issued – 02/02/2018.

## **5.0 POLICY FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1. For details of the status of relevant policies see the front sheet for “Planning Applications for Determination” agenda items. The following policies are relevant to the application:

### **5.2. Government Planning Policy**

National Planning Policy Framework (2018)  
National Planning Practice Guidance

### **5.3. London Plan MALP (2016)**

4.6 – Support for and enhancement of arts, culture, sport and entertainment  
6.3 – Retrofitting  
7.4 – Local character  
7.6 – Architecture  
7.8 – Heritage assets and archaeology

### **5.4. Core Strategy (2010)**

SP03 – Creating healthy and liveable neighbourhoods  
SP10 – Creating distinct and durable places  
SP11 – Working towards a zero carbon borough

### **5.5. Managing Development Document (2013)**

DM8 – Community infrastructure  
DM24 – Place-sensitive design  
DM27 – Heritage and the historic environment  
DM30 – Achieving a zero carbon borough and addressing climate change

### **5.6. Supplementary Planning Documents**

Bethnal Green Gardens Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Guidelines (2009)

**5.7. Tower Hamlets Community Plan objectives**

- A Great Place to Live
- A Prosperous Community
- A Safe and Supportive Community
- A Healthy Community

Emerging Policy

**Draft London Plan**

- 5.8 Statutory public consultation on the draft London Plan commenced on the 1st of December 2017 and closed on 2nd March 2018. The draft London Plan has been submitted to the Secretary of State for examination. The current 2016 consolidation London Plan is still the adopted Development Plan. However, the draft London Plan is a material consideration in planning decisions. It gains more weight as it moves through the process to adoption, however, the weight given to it is a matter for the decision maker.

**Draft Local Plan**

- 5.9 The Council are in the process of finalising the new Local Plan which, once adopted, will be the key strategic document to guide and manage development in the borough until 2031.
- 5.10 Statutory public consultation on the 'Regulation 19' version of the above emerging plan commenced on Monday 2nd October 2017 and closed on Monday 13th November 2017 and the draft new Local Plan has now this autumn completed its Examination In Public. Weighting of draft policies is guided by paragraph 48 of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance (Local Plans). These provide that from the day of publication, a new Local Plan may be given weight (unless material considerations indicate otherwise) according to the stage of preparation of the emerging local plan, the extent to which there are unresolved objections to the relevant policies, and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the draft plan to the policies in the NPPF.

**6.0 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The views of the Directorate of Place are expressed in the MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS section below. A summary of consultation responses received is provided below.
- 6.2 The following were consulted regarding the application:

**External Consultees**

- 6.3 N/A

**Internal Consultees**

LBTH Conservation & Design

#### 6.4 *Replacement pitched glazed roof over main Reading Room*

6.5 The outer glazed roof over the rear ground floor reading room was in very poor condition and much repaired and only visible in limited views of the rear of the building. This glazed outer roof covered the highly decorative, architecturally significant ceiling of the main Reading Room in which there are large roof lights. In heritage terms, the outer glazed roof is of low significance.

6.6 The works to the outer roof shall ensure the survival of the fine ceiling of the reading room as it will avoid further damage from water ingress. The completed works have improved the external appearance of this part of the building.

#### *New Lift*

6.7 The design and location of the new lift has been subject to much discussion with the Borough Conservation Team. The lift has been positioned so that it does not damage the architectural integrity of the impressive entrance hall or the former ground floor southern reading room. The detailed design of the lift has been carefully considered and the works executed in a sensitive manner.

#### *Summary*

6.8 Bethnal Green Library is an architecturally and historically significant building. The proposed works have helped to ensure the survival of important historic fabric and have also opened up the upper floor to a wider range of potential uses thus helping to optimise the future public use of the building.

### **7.0 LOCAL REPRESENTATION**

#### Statutory Consultees

7.1 73 planning notification letters were sent to nearby properties as detailed on the attached site plan. A site notice was also displayed outside the application site following a re-consultation on 11/08/2018. The application was also advertised in the local press on 03/05/2018.

No letters of representation were received in respect of the listed building consent application following the undertaking of the above described public consultation.

### **8.0 MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

8.1 The main application has been assessed against all relevant policies under the following report headings:

1. Impact on special architectural and historic character of the listed building
2. Impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area

#### Impact on Special Architectural and Historic Character of the Listed Building

##### *Replacement pitched glazed roof over library glazed ceiling*

8.2 The glazed roof is not visible from the north, south or west elevations. The external roof covers over the glazed ceiling of the ground floor reading room. The external glazed roof is pitched from front to rear and the previous roof was covered on both slopes with a single glazed patent glazing system. The previous glazing was

predominantly Georgian wired glass. Due to fixing defects and leakage, the glazing bars and broken panes were taped in a 'flash-band' material (see figure 2) to prevent water ingress from roof leaks and fixing failures.



**Figure 2: Previous flashband repaired roof**

- 8.3 The underside of the single glazed roof was prone to condensation forming under certain conditions. Moisture from condensation could cause problems to the timber elements of the roof structure or may damage the decorative plaster ceilings to the main library hall below.



**Figure 3: Refurbished roof**

- 8.4 The previous patent glazed roof has subsequently been replaced (see figure 3) with the XlokUltra system by Brett Martin Daylight Systems. The system comprises of thermally broken aluminium glazing bars and 25mm thick polycarbonate glazing panels. The glazing bars are installed in mill finish aluminium to achieve a lead like finish to the outer face of the installation reminiscent of the galvanised/lead materials formerly used on the existing patent glazed roofing. XlokUltra meets part L of the

Building Regulations whereby the improved thermal efficiency is considered to minimise the potential risks of condensation further. The new system is also classed as 'non-fragile' whereas the previous glazing was not 'non-fragile'. The replacement glazing system used for Bethnal Green Library has also been used successfully upon the Grade II\* listed Southampton Civic Centre.

#### *Installation of passenger lift*

- 8.5 The passenger lift has been installed to increase access between the ground and first floor. Previously there was no lift between the ground and first floor. The lift is necessary to meet the full requirements of the Equality Act (2010), thus making the building fully compliant in terms of accessibility to this noteworthy public building. The lift was installed with a full plans application to meet the Building Regulations Part M requirements in terms of accessibility to buildings other than dwellings. The lift car is driven between floors using an electro hydraulic system, with internal/external user lift control panels.
- 8.6 The location of the lift was chosen by its proximity to the main entrance and by its ability to serve both the north and south wings of the first floor from the central stair well. The location of the lift is considered to be sufficiently discreet to not interfere with the period entrance lobby. The lift is enclosed in own its purpose made enclosure complete with matching joinery, in keeping with the existing finishes of the library.

#### *Retrospective permission*

- 8.7 The building has undergone a number of unguided regimes of improvement in past years. In regards to the current refurbishment works, council building surveyors undertook formal pre-application discussions with council planning and conservation officers. Planning officers advised that the works would require listed building consent and must not be started before this consent has been obtained.
- 8.8 Notwithstanding the above formal pre-application advice from the local planning authority, the refurbishment works were undertaken as parts of a fast track programme, driven by the necessity for speedy repairs to safeguard the heritage assets and funding deadlines. It was felt vitally important for the necessary works to be undertaken as soon as possible to ensure that important heritage details and finishes would not be damaged through water ingress. Roof leaks and poor quality drainage detailing were responsible for the on-going damage occurring and accordingly urgent replacement was deemed the necessary course of action where parts of the library structure and fabric were beyond effective on-going repair.

#### *Summary*

- 8.9 In accordance with Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Local Planning Authority should have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. It is considered that the proposed works requiring listed building consent, namely the replacement glazed pitched roof and the installation of a passenger lift would preserve the building and its setting and the features of the library of special architectural and historic interest.

#### Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area

- 8.10 In accordance with Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, the Local Planning Authority shall pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. The installation of the lift is an internal work and does not impact on the building externally. In regards to the replacement of the roof, potential views from public areas are very limited, mainly from the upper floors of the block of flats to the rear, through high level security mesh fencing. It is considered that the proposed works requiring listed building consent, namely the replacement glazed pitched roof and the installation of a passenger lift would preserve and indeed enhance the character and appearance of the Bethnal Green Gardens Conservation Area.

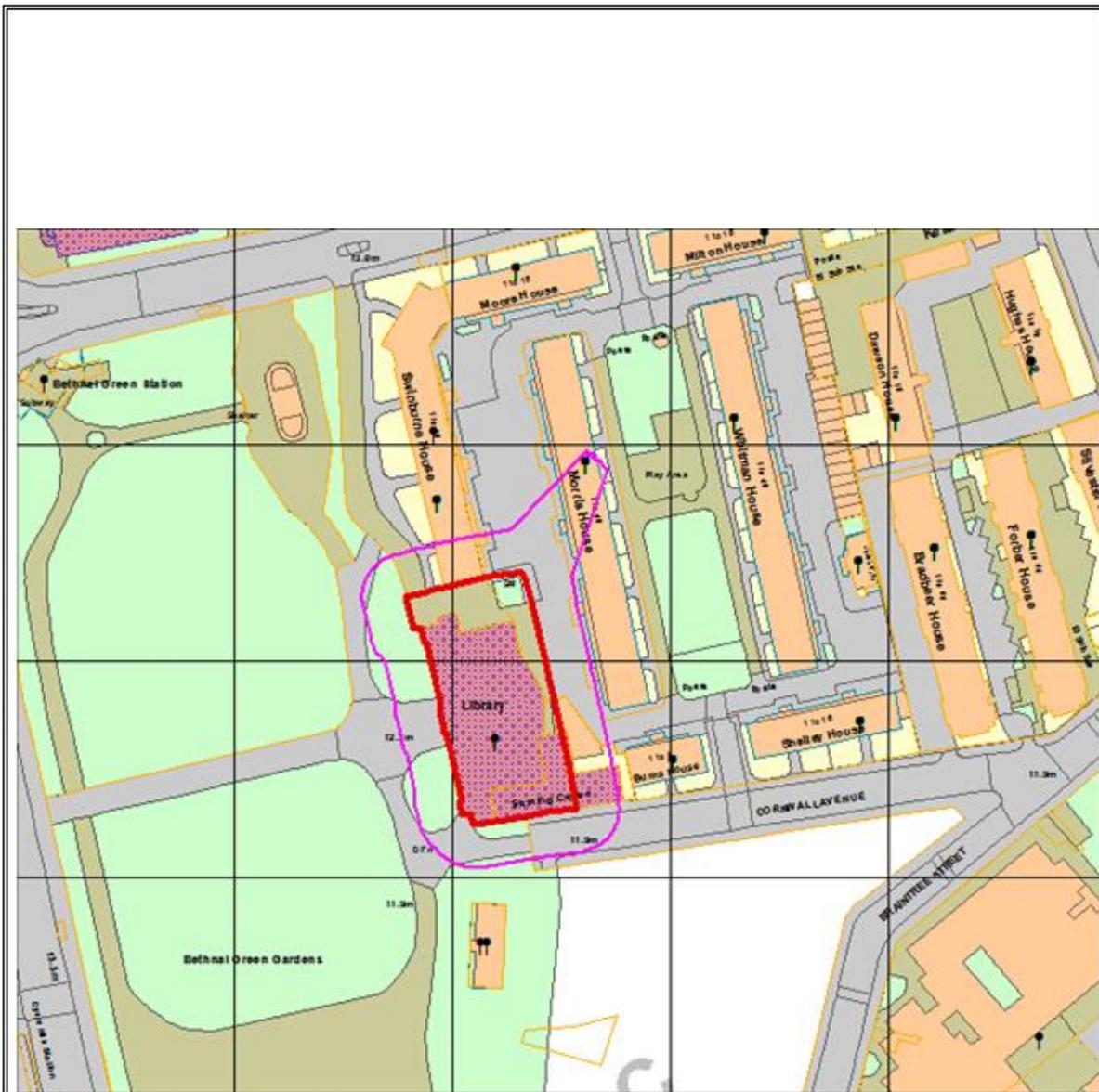


**Figure 4: Bethnal Green Library front elevation**

## **9.0 CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 The refurbishment works have proceeded without prior to listed building consent being obtained. However the approach to the detail of the works has been appraised and agreed with planning and conservation officers. Overall it is considered that the completed refurbishment works do preserve the historic fabric and significance of the Grade II listed building and that they preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Bethnal Green Gardens Conservation Area in accordance with Policies SP10 and DM27.
- 9.2 All other relevant policies and considerations have been taken into account. Listed building consent should be APPROVED for the reasons set out in the MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS section of this report
- 9.3 The works are considered to preserve the special historical and architectural character and appearance of the Grade II\* Listed Building. As such, the works accord with the aims of Sections 16 of the NPPF, policy 7.8 of the London Plan, policy SP10 of the CS, policy DM27 of the MDD, which seek to ensure works to listed structures preserve features of special historic and architectural interest.
- 9.4 All other relevant policies and considerations have been taken into account. Listed Building Consent should be GRANTED for the reasons set out in the EXECUTIVE SUMMARY and MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS sections as set out in the RECOMMENDATION at the beginning of this report.

# Appendix 1: SITE MAP



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="border: 2px solid red; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Planning Application Site Boundary</li> <li><span style="border: 2px solid orange; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Other Planning Applications</li> <li><span style="border: 2px solid pink; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Consultation Area</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">↑</span> Land Parcel Address Point</li> <li><span style="border: 2px solid blue; background-color: lightblue; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Locally Listed Buildings</li> <li><span style="border: 2px solid purple; background-color: lightpurple; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Statutory Listed Buildings</li> </ul>	<h3>Planning Applications Site Map</h3> <h4>PA/18/00828</h4> <p>This site map displays the Planning Application Site Boundary and the extent of the area within which neighbouring occupiers / owners were consulted as part of the Planning Application Process</p>	 <p><b>TOWER HAMLETS</b> London Borough of Tower Hamlets</p>
	Scale : 50m grid squares	Date : 25 October 2018

## **Appendix 2: DRAWINGS AND DOCUMENTS**

### **EXISTING DRAWINGS**

Site Location Plan, 102.028, 102.130 Rev A, 102.133 Rev A, Plan No.2, Plan No.3.

### **PROPOSED DRAWINGS**

145.001, 145.002, 145.003, 102.017, 102.025 Rev C, 102.134, 176944-001 Rev A, XLOK-U-165-1 Rev 2, XLOK-U-165-2 Rev 2, XLOK-U-165-3 Rev 2, XLOK-U-165-4 Rev 2, XLOK-U-165-5 Rev 2, XLOK-U-165-6 Rev 2.

### **DOCUMENTS**

- Design Proposals, Access and Heritage Statement (September 2018) prepared by London Borough of Tower Hamlets

**APPENDIX 3: Pre-existing photos**



**Pre-existing east-facing outer roof**



**Pre-existing west-facing outer roof**



**Pre-existing relationship between outer glazed roof and library ceiling glazing below**

**APPENDIX 4: Existing photos**



**Lift at ground floor**



**Lift at first floor**



East facing outer roof from rear



**East-facing outer roof**



**West-facing outer roof**