

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE 16 MARCH 2017

<u>APPLICATION NO.</u>	<u>DATE VALID</u>
16/P4619	02/08/2016
Address/Site:	Polka Theatre, 240 The Broadway, Wimbledon, SW19 1SB
(Ward)	Trinity
Proposal:	Erection of two-storey rear extension and first floor projecting front extension, removal of ground floor projecting shopfronts and replacement with new shopfronts with canopy over front forecourt. Internal alterations including amalgamation of café and restaurant at front of site and creation of outdoor play area.
Drawing Nos:	00.25, 02.12(C), 14(C), 16(C), 17(D), 18(A), 19(A), 20, 21(E), 22(E), 23(F), 24(E), 25(B) & 31
Contact Officer:	David Gardener (0208 545 3115)

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT Planning Permission Subject to Conditions

CHECKLIST INFORMATION

- Heads of agreement:
- Is a screening opinion required: No
- Is an Environmental Statement required: No
- Has an Environmental Impact Assessment been submitted: No
- Press notice: Yes
- Site notice: Yes
- Design Review Panel consulted: No
- Number of neighbours consulted: 50
- External consultations: None

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application has been brought before the Planning Applications Committee due to the number of objections received following public consultation.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site comprises a two-storey main building with an overhanging twin pitch roof which houses the main theatre at first floor level above the main foyer and adventure theatre. This building was constructed as a church hall for the adjoining Holy Trinity Church in the 1920s. The two-storey main building is connected to the three storey terrace which fronts The Broadway which includes the Polka café and a restaurant at ground floor level with administrative offices and a four bedroom split level flat above which is owned by the theatre. A single storey prefabricated annex building is located at the rear of the site whilst an outside play area of approx. 110sqm is located between this building and the main building. The site backs onto Bridges Road Mews which is accessed from Bridges Road whilst an existing right of way which runs between the outside play area and the annex building to enable access to the rear of the neighbouring building No.254.
- 2.2 This part of The Broadway features an eclectic mix of building styles and uses. Holy Trinity Church is located immediately to the west whilst a row of three storey terrace buildings which generally feature commercial uses at ground floor level with residential above are located to the east although No.254 which is located next door to the restaurant comprises residential on all floors. The four-storey Antoinette Hotel and three-storey buildings comprising commercial uses at ground floor level are located on the other side of the road. The rear gardens of houses fronting South Park Road are located to the rear of the application site.
- 2.3 The application site has excellent public transport links (PTAL rating of 6a) with a number of bus routes operating along The Broadway. The site is also located close to South Wimbledon Tube Station.

3. CURRENT PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The proposal is to erect a two-storey rear extension, first floor projecting front extension, fascia signage, remove ground floor projecting shopfronts with replacement shopfronts and canopy over front forecourt. Internal alterations to include amalgamation of café and restaurant at front of site into a single unit to be used as a café and relocation of outdoor play area. The play area would be reduced in size from approx. 110sqm to 82sqm and moved 8m to the east. The proposal would also include refurbishing the existing four bedroom unit at first floor levels and reconfiguring it into a three bedroom unit. Given the flat is already self-contained with its own independent access this would not require planning permission.
- 3.2 The proposed extension would incorporate a new Adventure Theatre at ground floor level. The new Adventure Theatre would be larger than existing and would have a capacity of approx. 100 (current capacity is 70). The current Adventure Theatre would be turned into a new creative learning studio with a capacity of 25 which is the same as the current creative learning studio. This room would be enlarged by moving the wall on the foyer side and removing the corridor wall on the east side. A new rehearsal studio would be located at first floor level of the extension and would have a capacity of more than 20. The extension would partially enclose a new courtyard which would be used

as a play area. The play area would replace the current play area which is located further to the west. The right of way would also be repositioned so that it is located to the east of the proposed extension.

- 3.3 The Theatre's opening hours are generally 9.30am to 4.30 pm on Wednesday to Friday and 9.30am to 7.00pm (latest) on Saturday and Sunday, although the building is licensed until 11.30pm. There may be occasional larger events taking place in the rehearsal room but these will only happen in the evenings or on Monday and Tuesday, when there are no performances. The theatre would operate at the same staffing levels as at present.
- 3.4 The extension would feature a flat roof with PV panels located on top. The extension would have a maximum height of 9.5m to the top of the parapet which encloses the roof. Facing materials to the courtyard would comprise dark brick which will be covered by a decorative fret-cut perforated aluminium screen. The north and east elevations would comprise brick with the east facing elevation treated with a feint pattern similar to the courtyard screening design and will be achieved by using a single colour of brick and two colours of pointing.
- 3.5 The first floor front extension or 'Green Room' which would be located above the lobby would project over the front courtyard up to the pavement edge. This would feature a single window surround clad in coloured aluminium sheet with cut out solar shading to the window in fret cut aluminium. The proposed canopy to the front would be feature a steel frame whilst the new fascia signage would be aluminium.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

The following planning history is relevant:

- 4.1 MER814/76 - Use of church hall for children's theatre. Permission not required - 03/12/1976
- 4.2 MER298/78 - 1) New lift tower, 2) Two-storey building linking the hall and no 244 3) Erection of brick wall between 244 - 246 The Broadway 4) Single - storey extension at rear of 244 The Broadway, 5) Use of ground floor of 244 as coffee bar and kitchen 6) Formation of delivery/servicing area at rear of 244 The Broadway. Granted - 26/09/1978
- 4.3 98/P0379 - Alterations to front and rear elevations of link block, installation of condenser unit and vents to roof and internal alterations. Granted - 17/07/1998
- 4.4 Pre-application advice was sought in July 2016 (LBM Ref: 16/P2884/NEW) for erection of two-storey rear extension and first floor projecting front extension, removal of ground floor projecting shopfronts and replacement with new shopfronts with canopy over front forecourt. Internal alterations including amalgamation of café and restaurant at front of site and creation of outdoor play area.

5. POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.1 The following policies from the Adopted Sites and Policies Plan and Policies Maps (July 2014):
DM C1 (Community facilities), DM D1 (Urban design and public realm), DM D2 (Design considerations in all developments), DM D3 (Alterations and extensions to existing buildings), DM D7 (shop front design and signage), DM E1 (Employment areas in Merton), DM R1 (Location and scale of development in Merton's town centres and neighbourhood parades), DM R5 (Food and drink / leisure and entertainment uses), DM R6 (Culture, arts and tourism development), DM T1 (Support for sustainable transport and active travel), DM T2 (Transport impacts of development), DM T3 (Car parking and servicing standards)
- 5.2 Adopted Core Strategy (July 2011):
CS.6 (Wimbledon Town Centre), CS.7 (Centres), CS.12 (Economic Development), CS.13 (Open Space, nature conservation, leisure and culture) CS.14 (Design), CS.20 (Parking, Servicing and Delivery)
- 5.3 The relevant policies in the London Plan (March 2015) are:
4.6 (Support for and enhancement of arts, culture, sport and entertainment)
5.2 (Minimising carbon dioxide emissions), 5.3 (Sustainable Design and Construction), 5.9 (Overheating and cooling), 6.3 (Assessing effects of development on transport capacity), 6.13 (Parking), 7.2 (An inclusive environment), 7.4 (Local character), 7.6 (Architecture)
- 5.4 Housing Standards – Minor Alterations to the London Plan (March 2016)
- 5.5 Mayor's Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (March 2016)
- 5.6 DCLG Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standard March 2015

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The application was originally publicised by means of a site notice and individual letters to occupiers of neighbouring properties. In response, 6 letters of objection and 2 letters of support were received including letters of support from Love Wimbledon and Wimbledon E Hillside Residents' Association. The letters of objection were on the following grounds:
- Traffic flow including increase pedestrian and traffic movements along Bridges Road Mews. Increased pressure on parking spaces in surrounding roads
 - Noise from people potentially using Bridges Road Mews to access the new Adventure Theatre as well as from increased activity from the new Adventure Theatre and new rehearsal space. Disruption during construction work
 - Excessive height of extension and the precedent that this would establish for further development along Bridges Road Mews. Could lead to a

- terracing effect. Extension given its excessive scale and bulk is not in keeping with the existing site conditions and would be visually overbearing
- Loss of restaurant. The proposed café would not be open after 5pm which would have a detrimental impact of adult evening entertainment
 - Previous construction on other sites along Bridges Road Mews has generally been poor quality and does not enhance the area
 - Drawings are not very clear
 - Loss of daylight/sunlight

6.2 Environmental Health Officer

- 6.2.1 No objections subject to conditions restricting capacity and hours of use of the proposed outside play area.

6.3 Future Merton - Transport Planning

- 6.3.1 No objections subject to appropriate conditions.

6.4 Future Merton - Climate Change

- 6.4.1 No objections subject to appropriate conditions.

7. **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

7.1 **Principle of Development**

- 7.1.1 The Polka Theatre aims to provide world class theatre for children and is considered to be a significant cultural asset to Wimbledon Town Centre and the wider borough that also creates economic and social benefits by attracting residents and tourists. It is one of the few venues in the UK which is dedicated to producing and presenting work for young audiences and has been open since 1979 and attracts over 90,000 children a year.
- 7.1.2 There is strong policy support for the development of existing cultural uses. Policy DM R6 of the Sites and Policies Plan and Policies Maps (July 2014) states that the council will maintain, improve and encourage cultural, arts and tourism in Merton by encouraging improvements or expansion to existing cultural, arts and tourism in Merton, where this complements Merton's strategic objectives for the areas in which they are located. Policy 4.6 of the London Plan (March 2015) states that borough's should promote and develop existing and new cultural and visitor attractions especially in outer London where they can contribute to regeneration and town centre renewal.
- 7.1.3 The current performance spaces and facilities however present many technical, practical and artistic restrictions on productions and the audience's experience of them. The proposal would see the development of a new and expanded Adventure Theatre, replacing the Annexe and linking to the main building, a creative learning studio, a first floor rehearsal room above the Adventure Theatre and improvements to the main theatre. It is considered that this would both comply with the above planning policies and raise the

standard of art being produced for, with and by children and young people. The development is also essential in terms of making the Polka Theatre sustainable and resilient. The creation of the spaces proposed would help the theatre develop its income streams in the current tough financial climate.

7.2 Visual amenity

- 7.2.1 Policy DM R6 of the Sites and Policies Plan and Policies Maps (July 2014) states that council will require that proposals for culture, arts and tourism development are well designed and are compatible with the character and appearance of the area. Policy DM D2 states that development will be expected to relate positively and appropriately to the siting, rhythm, scale, density, proportions, height, materials and massing of surrounding buildings whilst using appropriate architectural forms, language, detailing and materials which complement and enhance the character of the wider setting.
- 7.2.2 It is considered that there is scope to significantly improve the public realm environment outside the front of the theatre. The main theatre building is set back from the pavement with a shallow private forecourt in front. This is currently a dead space lacking an active frontage due to posters covering all of the windows which means you cannot see any activity inside the ground floor of the theatre. Activity both inside and outside the front of the theatre are therefore completely separated and this has a detrimental impact on the vitality of this part of The Broadway. It is considered that the insertion of a new entrance, the removal of the projecting shop front and the opening up of the façade, with views into the box office, shop and expanded café would significantly improve the way the building presents itself to the street. This would also provide an active street frontage therefore improving natural surveillance and the amenity to the public domain by encouraging pedestrian activity. It is considered that the erection of a new canopy, projecting first floor 'green room' and new signage would also further enhance the appearance of the front of the building.
- 7.2.3 The proposed development includes the erection of a two-storey rear extension, which would house a new adventure theatre and rehearsal room. This extension would enclose a new courtyard play area. It is considered that the design of this extension is acceptable with its external walls to the courtyard comprising dark brick which will be covered by a decorative fret-cut perforated aluminium screen. It is intended to commission an artist to help develop the graphics and the final design of this element and as such the final details of this element would be conditioned. Brickwork to the north elevation and the area of wall between the Adventure Theatre and the existing building would be in a lighter colour to give more variation to this elevation. The east elevation would comprise brick treated with a faint pattern similar to the courtyard screening design and will be achieved by using a single colour of brick and two colours of pointing. This elevation can be viewed from further along Bridge Road Mews and it is considered that this treatment would add further visual interest to the building. It is also considered that the extension would also not be excessive in terms of its size with its roof height (to top of

parapet) being only 1.3m higher than the eaves and 1.6m lower than the ridge height of the main theatre building.

7.3 Residential Amenity

- 7.3.1 Policy DM D2 of the Adopted Sites and Policies Plan and Policies Maps (July 2014) states that proposals for development will be required to ensure provision of appropriate levels of sunlight and daylight, quality of living conditions, amenity space and privacy, to both proposed and adjoining buildings and gardens. Development should also protect new and existing development from visual intrusion. Policy DM R6 also requires that proposals for culture, arts and tourism developments do not harm the amenity of local residents by way of noise, disturbance and loss of light or privacy.
- 7.3.2 The eastern boundary of the application site is staggered which means part of the site sits directly in front of the rear elevation of the neighbouring building, No.254 The Broadway, which comprises three self-contained flats at ground, first and second floor levels. The rear gardens of properties located on South Park Road (Nos. 101 – 105) are located to the north of the two-storey rear extension. A number of these gardens feature single storey garage buildings which open out onto Bridges Road Mews.
- 7.3.3 A sunlight and daylight assessment has been submitted with the application which shows that the proposal would comply with BRE guidance regarding daylight/sunlight impact to surrounding residential windows as well as not resulting in an unacceptable level of overshadowing of rear gardens of properties on South Park Road. With regards to No.254, it should be noted that the ground floor flat currently directly faces the single storey prefabricated annex building which is located only approx. 3m from the rear elevation of this property. The proposed extension would be located much further from the rear elevation of No.254 (approx. 8.2m), whilst its flank wall would be located further to the west therefore improving outlook from the rear of the ground floor flat. With regards to the first floor flat it should be noted that there is a bedroom located in the rear elevation which is 8.2m from the extension. It is considered that although there would be some impact to this bedroom that it would not warrant a refusal of the application in this instance given the extension would be located to the north with its flank wall sited away from the eastern boundary of the site which would maintain some longer views from this window albeit at an angle. It should also be noted that the wall which would directly face the rear elevation of No.254 would not be a blank brick wall but instead would feature a decorative fret-cut perforated aluminium screen giving visual interest. As discussed in the previous section it is intended to commission an artist to help develop the graphics for this elevation with final details dealt by condition. A condition will also be attached requiring the south facing first floor windows to the rehearsal studio are obscure glazed and fixed shut below 1.7m internal floor height to protect the privacy of these flats.
- 7.3.4 Nos. 97 – 103 South Park Road feature rear gardens that back onto Bridges Road Mews immediately to the north of the application site. It is considered

that on balance the proposed two-storey building is acceptable in terms of its impact on outlook when viewed by occupiers of these properties. The extension has been designed so that at the rear the bulk of the extension is set back 1.6m behind a projecting element which accommodates the lighting gallery, catering and bin store. The rear projecting element would be located between 4.5m and 6m from the rear boundary of properties along South Park Road and between 24m and 31.7m from the rear elevations of these properties which is considered acceptable. It should be noted that although the extension is not a residential development, it would comply with guidance set out in the new residential development SPG regarding daylight, sunlight and outlook (the extension has a similar maximum height to the eaves height of the three storey terrace fronting The Broadway) which requires a minimum separation distance of 21m for a three-storey residential building located to the rear of gardens of existing dwellings. It should also be noted that a number of these properties also feature garages at the end of their gardens, whilst No.101 features a large tree at the end of the garden further reducing its impact. Careful thought has also gone into the facing materials of the rear elevation of the extension with a combination of brown brick and blue/grey brick to add some visual interest however the exact colour of the brickwork will be conditioned.

7.3.5 The proposal includes relocating the outside play area approx. 8m to the east. The play area would also be reduced in size from approx. 110sqm to 82sqm. The applicant has submitted an acoustic report in support of their application and it is considered that although the play area would be located closer to the residential flats at No.254 which means there would be an increase in noise levels, on balance the impact would be acceptable. The Council's Environmental Health Department have assessed the application and raise no objections, however, this is subject to conditions limiting the capacity of children able to use the play area at any one time to 20 and hours of use to 9.30am – 4.30pm Monday to Saturday and 10am – 4pm on Sunday and Bank Holidays. It should also be noted that the building envelope will be designed to provide adequate sound insulation for activities which will take place within the new extension through for example the use of high-performance double glazing.

7.3.6 It is considered that given the above considerations that the proposal would not be visually intrusive or overbearing when viewed from surrounding residential properties, or result in an unacceptable level of daylight/sunlight, privacy loss or noise levels. The proposal would therefore accord with policies DM D2, DM D3 and DM R6 of the Adopted Sites and Policies Plan and Policies Maps (July 2014) and is acceptable in terms of residential amenity.

7.4 Parking and Traffic

7.4.1 The theatre including the café and restaurant uses currently has a capacity of approx. 455. The proposal would result in the capacity increasing by approx. 50 to 505. However, this would only be the case if all of the areas were operating at absolute capacity. There are additional larger events which are held in the rehearsal room which means its capacity can be increased to

approx. 60 however these events would only happen in the evenings or on Monday and Tuesday, when there are no other performances.

- 7.4.2 The theatre is in a highly sustainable location with the site having excellent access to public transport (PTAL 6a). It is considered that an increase in capacity of approx. 50 is not excessive and can be absorbed within the site without compromising car parking and highway function in the immediate area. Nevertheless, a condition will be attached requiring the submission of a travel plan which provides journey planning advice to future users of the site with the aim of creating a modal shift toward sustainable modes of travel. It should also be noted that there is an existing van parking space and bin storage at the rear of the site and this will be retained within the new development.

7.5 Sustainability and Energy

- 7.5.1 The BREEAM design stage assessment provided by the applicant indicates that the development should achieve an overall score of 84%, which surpasses the minimum requirements to achieve BREEAM 'Very Good' and is on course to meet 'Excellent'. This exceeds the requirements in Merton's Core Planning Strategy Policy CS15 and Policy 5.2 of the London Plan 2015.
- 7.5.2 The BRUKL output documentation submitted for the proposed development indicates that it should achieve a 36% improvement in CO2 emissions on Part L 2013. This exceeds the 35% improvement over Part L required for major developments under Policy 5.2 of the London Plan (2015) and is also policy compliant. Furthermore the energy and sustainability statement submitted for the development indicates that the proposal will also achieve a 15% saving in CO2 emissions through fabric performance with the remainder secured through the proposed use of a solar PV. It is therefore considered satisfactory that in the absence of an existing heat network that this approach is compliant with the Mayor's energy hierarchy approach outlined in Policy 5.2 of the London Plan (2015) and Policy CS15 of Merton's Core Planning Strategy (2011).

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 The application does not constitute Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 development. Accordingly, there are no requirements in terms of EIA submission.

9. LOCAL FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 The proposal would result in a net gain in gross floor space and as such will be liable to pay a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 It is considered that the proposed extension is acceptable in terms of visual appearance whilst the alterations to the front would significantly improve the way the building presents itself to the street and therefore the vitality of this

part of The Broadway by providing an active frontage. It is also considered that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on neighbour amenity, traffic/parking whilst providing expanded and improved facilities which raise the standard of art being produced for, with and by children and young people. Overall, it is considered that the proposal would comply with all relevant planning policies and as such planning permission should be granted.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following conditions

1. A.1 (Commencement of Development)
2. A.7 (Approved plans)
3. B.1 (External Materials to be Approved)
4. No external windows and doors shall be installed until detailed drawings at 1:20 scale of all external windows and doors including materials, set back within the opening, finishes and method of opening have been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. Only the approved details shall be used in the development hereby permitted.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance of the development and to comply with the following Development Plan policies for Merton: policy 7.6 of the London Plan 2015, policy CS14 of Merton's Core Planning Strategy 2011 and policies DM D2 and D3 of Merton's Sites and Policies Plan 2014.

5. B.5 (Details of Walls/Fences)
6. C.3 (Obscured Glazing (Fixed Windows))
7. C.7 (Refuse & Recycling (Implementation))
8. D.10 (External lighting)
9. D.11 (Construction Times)
10. H.8 (Travel Plan)
11. H.9 (Construction Vehicles)
12. No more than 20 children at any one time shall use the outside play area shown on drawing No. 02.21(E). The use of this area as a play area shall not take place outside 09:30 hours to 16:30 Monday to Saturdays and 10:00 to 16:00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of surrounding area and to ensure compliance with the following Development Plan policies for Merton: policy

7.15 of the London Plan 2015, policy CS.7 of Merton's Core Planning Strategy 2011, and policy DM EP2 of Merton's Sites and Policies Plan 2014.

13. Noise levels, (expressed as the equivalent continuous sound level) LAeq (10 minutes), from the new plant/machinery associated with the development shall not exceed LA90-5dB at the boundary with the closest residential property.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of surrounding area and to ensure compliance with the following Development Plan policies for Merton: policy 7.15 of the London Plan 2015, policy CS.7 of Merton's Core Planning Strategy 2011, and policy DM EP2 of Merton's Sites and Policies Plan 2014.

14. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, no part of the development hereby approved shall be used or occupied until a Post-Construction Review Certificate issued by the Building Research Establishment or other equivalent assessors confirming that the non-residential development has achieved a BREEAM rating of not less than the standards equivalent to 'Very Good' has been submitted to and acknowledged in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submission shall also include confirmation that the development will meet the London Plan C02 reduction targets.'

Reason: To ensure that the development achieves a high standard of sustainability and makes efficient use of resources and to comply the following Development Plan policies for Merton: policy 5.2 of the London Plan 2011 and policy CS15 of Merton's Core Planning Strategy 2011.

15. Access to the rear of the extension shall be for loading and unloading of delivery vehicles and emergencies only.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of surrounding area and to ensure compliance with the following Development Plan policies for Merton: policy 7.15 of the London Plan 2015, policy CS.7 of Merton's Core Planning Strategy 2011, and policy DM EP2 of Merton's Sites and Policies Plan 2014.

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