



Highgate CAAC cannot adequately comment on this very complex application because of the large number of important documents missing from the files on line. It fully supports the position of FPRA on these matters. Its initial reaction to the application, which is highly detrimental to the CAAC since it causes significant damage to heritage assets, is below.



Highgate CAAC  
Initial objections to planning application for 55 Fitzroy park

1. We agree with and support the primary conclusion of the Camden Design Panel that, 'the Panel does not think that a convincing case has been made for the construction of five houses'; continuing 'on the basis of the information provided the panel is not convinced that the site can accommodate five houses'. The scheme does not take sufficient account of the nature of the site and its great importance both for the Highgate Conservation Area and the immediately adjoining Hampstead Heath , a heritage asset of unparalleled significance not just for the immediate neighbourhood but for the whole of London.
2. We feel that the plot ratios put forward are grossly misleading since the area of the pond is included. This is an area which could not in any circumstance be built on and thus should be excluded.
3. Furthermore the significance of the pond for the CA is not understood.it is a significant unlisted heritage asset, an integral part of the historic landscape as a natural farm pond shown clearly on all the earliest maps of the area. In this application it is considered only as a reflecting device to increase the apparent size and impressiveness of the house on plot 5 . Its proposed enclosure in a 'bund' is also destructive of its character. This is in addition to its undoubted importance as a source for the Highgate chain of ponds; in particular in this instance the highly significant Bird Sanctuary pond. Even during the current very dry and hot period the overflow into the Bird Sanctuary pond has continued to run vigorously, a clear indication of the importance of the spring which feeds it.
4. Much play is made of the nature of the application as designed to suit the requirements of two families. Planning law is NOT concerned with the applicants' circumstances but with the buildings proposed; they

must be of sufficiently good design to have merit and enhance the CA irrespective of the needs of any proposed or future occupants.

5. Regarding plots 1-3 the proposed line of three similar houses is alien to the design and street-scape of this part of Fitzroy Park creating an essentially suburban row. The entrances to be created along the lane are shown on the CGIs included with the application to be barely noticeable; this will not be the situation in actual fact. The exits for any car or large van will also be very awkward and dangerous to pedestrians. And for the occupants of the houses on the other side of the road. We note that delivery vehicles will park in the Lane whilst the deliveries are made, causing inconvenience to and potential friction with neighbours.
6. The amount of hard standing not only the result of the extra buildings but of the hard paths and terraces proposed will hardly be conducive to 'ecological enhancement'. The HN Plan requires ecological improvement therefore comparison with 'Do nothing' is not the relevant comparator. There is also no mention made of the fact that the garden itself in its current state is defined by the local plan not only as Private Open Space but as SINC METRO , (of importance to nature conservation in a metropolitan context (Planning Statement para. 3.10)
7. It is also the case that despite the extent of this hard standing, the terraces especially to plots 1-3 are too small to be of practical use and there is a high probability that there will be calls for them to be extended ; a condition must withdraw all permitted development rights and require this to include any expansion of hard standing on the whole site.
8. The policies of the Highgate Neighbourhood Plan are ignored. These include DH2 which requires the 'open semi-rural' nature of the area to be maintained. Also DH10 which specifically rules against development in back gardens. The development proposed constitutes the creation of a Close on the site of a single property; something which will be reflected in the addresses assigned to any new houses by the Post office.
9. Plot 1 has been designed to maintain the access to the back gate in Millfield lane. This raises all sorts of issues re the use of the lane which are not addressed at all in the application.
10. The overwhelming impression created by the copious documentation provided by the applicants is that there is no real understanding of the nature of the site, the effect on the internationally important MOL to which it is immediately adjacent, its fragility and its importance as a part of one of the prime features of the Highgate Conservation Area. This is stated in all relevant documents since the CA's creation to be the semi-rural character of the village and the lanes leading to the Heath, the prime national example of 'rus in urbe'. As the neighbourhood plan states, this is most at risk from 'creeping development' (HNpp.8) like that proposed.
11. The application must therefore be rejected as causing significant harm to the Conservation Area and irreparable damage to the fragile ecology of the Heath.

 Highgate CAAC.

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