

**Branch Hill House, Hampstead
London NW3 7LS**

Coal House: Addendum to Heritage Appraisal

**History, Significance, Characterisation and Impact Assessment
(Unlisted Building within the Hampstead Conservation Area)**

For Full-Application



JULY 2023



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1 INTRODUCTION

The subject building- Branch Hill House is an Edwardian extension (c.1899-1901) to an original 18th C house designed by Henry Flitcroft situated on Branch Hill, Hampstead. It is located within the London Borough of Camden. The subject building is unlisted; however, the 1901 Edwardian building is considered a positive contributor to the Hampstead Conservation Area. It is also located in the vicinity of a number of listed buildings and within the Hampstead Conservation Area. The original Flitcroft building dated from c.1740s but was successively remodelled in the 19thC by S. S. Teulon. An extension (the subject building) was built by Ernest Flint in the early 20th C in Edwardian Baroque free-style. The Flitcroft building was demolished and replaced with a Brutalist extension in c.1966 leaving the Edwardian house connected to a modernist concrete block.

In August 2021, consent was granted for the demolition of the 1960s extension, and its replacement by a building in traditional architectural design by Stanhope Gate Architecture (planning application reference: 2019/6354/P). The current proposals present a next step in the story of this site; and aims to provide a small self-contained dwelling on the north side of the Edwardian block- reminiscent of outbuildings/ ancillary buildings, formerly in this area.

This report has been produced to support a full application with London Borough of Camden for the construction of a self-contained dwelling to the north of the Edwardian Block (Figure 1). The design characteristics of the proposed development are discussed below. For full details of the proposed design please refer to the architectural drawings and supplemental documents by Stanhope Gate Architecture.

Heritage Architecture Ltd (SLHA) prepared a heritage appraisal assessing the site's history and development and its significance in June 2018; followed by a detailed Heritage Statement to accompany the successful application for this site in 2019 (ref: 2019/6354/P). In December 2021 a section 73 application was proposed and granted for the variation of the conditions following the original consented scheme, including the revisions of the basement, internal layouts, levels, massing, and exterior (ref: 2021/5377/P). This document is an addendum to this previous heritage appraisal (dated 2019) and provides an assessment of the current proposed development by Stanhope Gate Architecture from the standpoint of heritage issues and considering the site's significance.

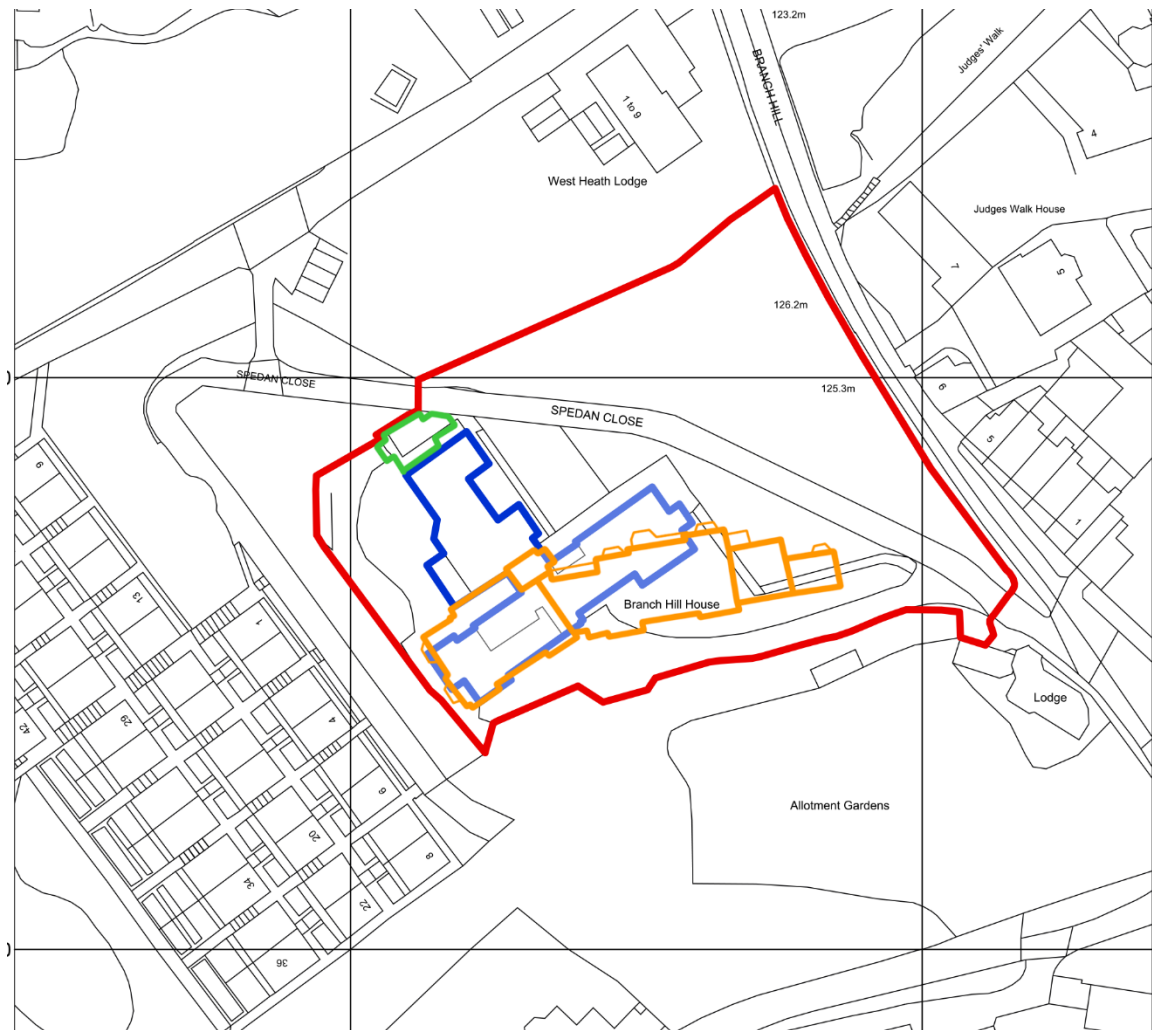


Figure 1 The existing site location map showing the site boundary (red), existing building (blue, the brutalist block to be demolished in light blue), the boundary of the 2019 consented scheme (orange), and the location of the proposed works (green).

2 EXISTING SITE/BUILDING

2.1 History and development of the site

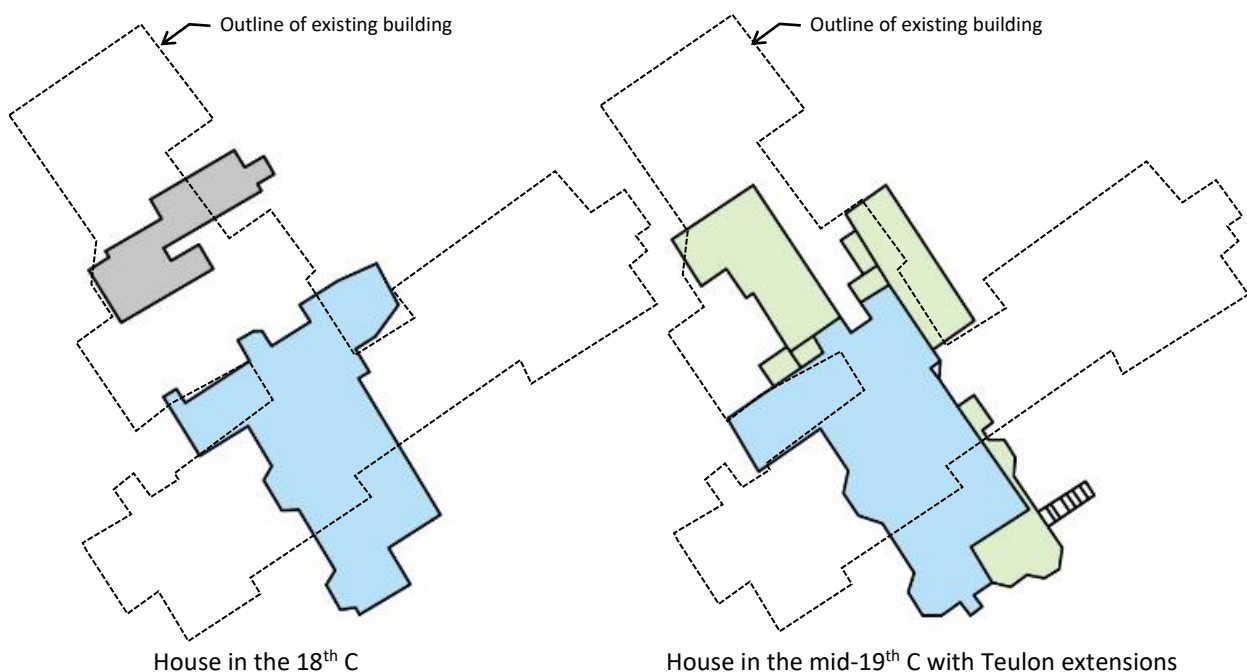
- The Branch Hill House site has undergone a complex historical evolution. It is possible that a previous house existed since the 17th C, however in the 18th C, the prominent English Palladian architect Henry Flitcroft was commissioned to build a house at the site.

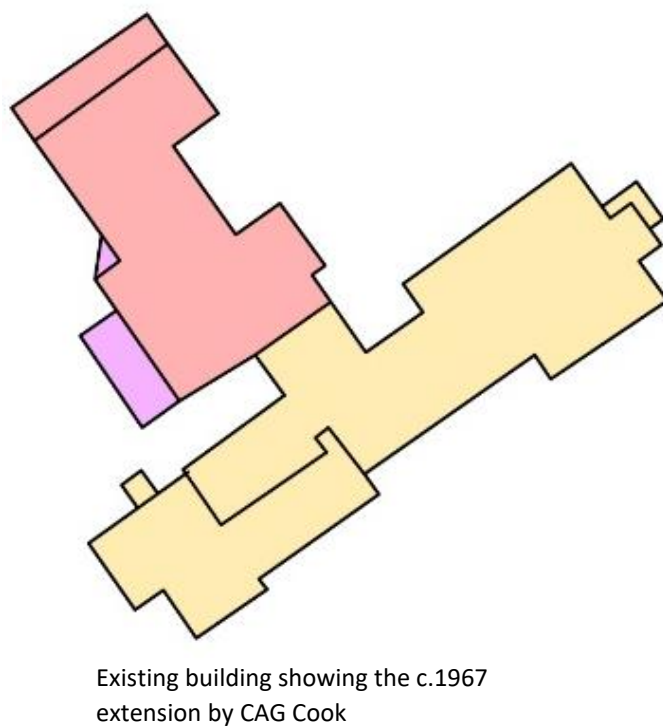
- A number of additions and alterations were undertaken to this house in the 19th C, including the construction of outbuildings. This included additions by well-known Victorian architect S S Teulon, who also built the existing Gatehouse building (Grade II listed separately).

- In c.1901, Ernest Flint built the existing Edwardian extension to the north of the Flitcroft/Teulon House.

- In c.1967, the Flitcroft/Teulon house was demolished, and the current modernist extension was built.

The outline morphology below is colour coded for clarity.





2.2 Siting and Location

- The original Flitcroft House sat on a raised plinth, overlooking pleasure grounds at lower level to the west (Figure 2). The subsequent additions, including the Edwardian building continued the same theme. The pleasure grounds of the original house were removed by the creation of Branch Hill Estate (Spedan Close) and therefore that historic view is no longer existing.



Figure 2 View of the Flitcroft/ Teulon house from the pleasure gardens.

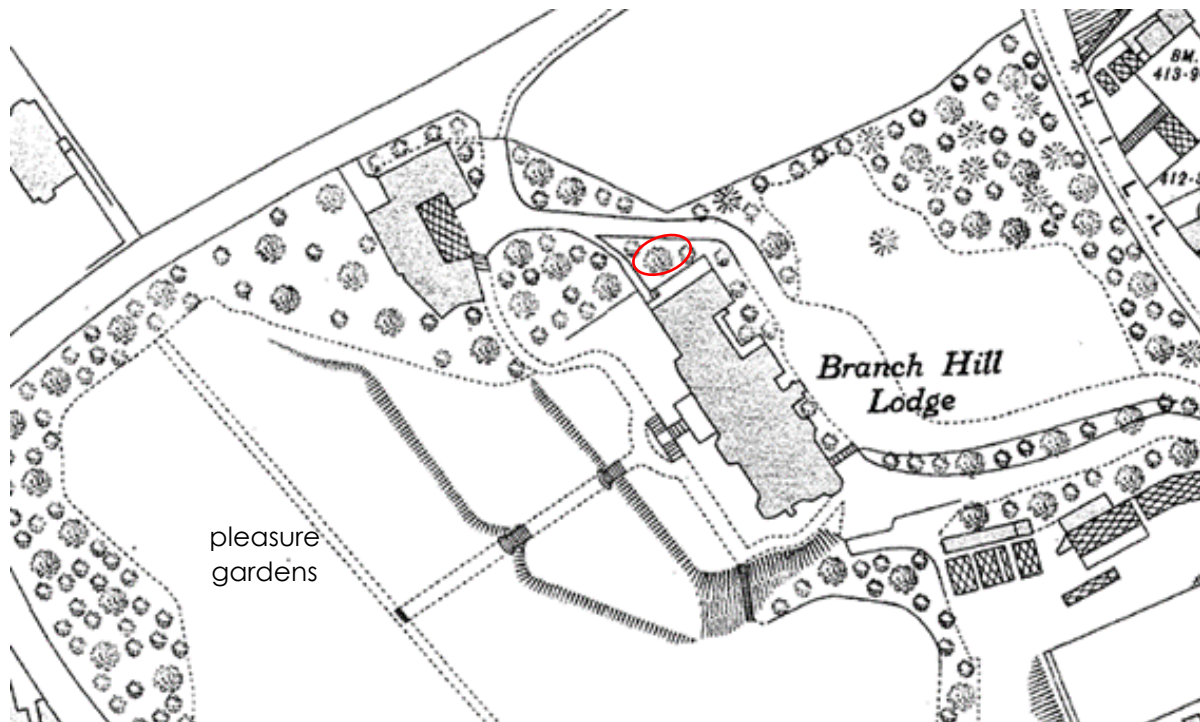


Figure 3 The 1937 OS Map showing the setting of the house and shape of Spedan Close. By this time the Edwardian block has already been constructed, and the shape of extant Spedan Close could also be seen, formed out of the former driveway to the house. The approximate location of the proposed extension is highlighted in red. Source: National Library of Scotland.

- As the 1937 OS Map illustrates (
- Figure 3), there were a number of out-buildings being built around the House, including a stable complex (to the north-west of the subject) and a group of glazed ancillary buildings in the form of glasshouses/ conservatories (to the south-east subject, along the woods path). Along with the House and the gardens, these building formed parts of the historic landscape of this area.
- In the 1960s the House was largely re-developed by the local authority. The present modernist extension was constructed at right angles to the line of the original house and its extension, creating a new orientation of built form. Following the completion of the extension, the stable block and the ancillary buildings to the south-east were demolished between 1967 and the present. To the immediate west of the subject site, a large complex of council homes- Spedan Close Estate (Grade II) was built between 1974 and 1976, resulting in a drastic change in the setting of the subject House. Overall, the built fabric of Branch Hill House was heavily modified and extended in c.1960s and in the following decades its setting was largely transformed.
- The present Edwardian building, as a remaining extension to the original house, has little overall architectural merit, but does have some features that are worthy of credit. It has a certain domestic scale expressed in the relationship of fenestration to masonry and the

original garden front is more rational and considered than the entrance front. The latter is rather disparate and ill-considered, and its eclectic taxis lack repose or cohesion.

- The 2021 consented development by Stanhope Gate Architecture provides a harmonious and well-conceived addition to this site. It is sited comfortably next to the Edwardian block and could improve the visual interest of its southern elevation. The improvement, however, could potentially juxtapose the lack of development in the northern area of the site. As a result, this application is proposed to balance the development of the Edwardian block and improve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area by providing the northern area a more characteristic design.

2.3 Significance of the Edwardian building

- Firstly, it should be noted that the existing main building, which consists of the 1901 Edwardian structure and the c.1967 modernist extension (approved for demolition), is neither a listed building nor locally listed building. Both blocks exhibit limited architectural character and fail to form a cohesive architectural composition. They contrast each other in terms of form, design, materials, and details. Notably, the 1960s building has been granted consent for demolition, making way for a new development by Stanhope Gate Architecture. This replacement design is specifically crafted to harmonize with the immediate surroundings and the broader context of the site, offering a more appropriate architectural response.
- The Edwardian building is of relatively poor architectural quality – a bulky and poorly articulated building which when designed did not relate to the original 18th-19th Century buildings (demolished in c.1960s). In the vicinity, several buildings were listed as early as the 1950s, even prior to the demolition of the 18th Century building. However, Branch Hill Lodge (as it was referred to at that time) was only included in the tertiary category of the 'Supplementary list of buildings of architectural or historical interest.' This categorisation serves as evidence of the building's limited architectural significance, even when considering the presence of the earlier structure. Consequently, the Edwardian building is deemed to possess a relatively low level of architectural interest.
- The architectural interest of a property includes its setting, associated landscapes, outbuildings and other features. The setting of the site, however, has been significantly altered over the centuries, with special reference to three phases:
 1. Construction of the Edwardian building in c.1901
 2. Demolition of the historic 18thC house and construction of the modern block- c.1964
 3. Construction of Branch Hill Estate in c.1973

- The side elevations, namely the north and south elevations, of the Edwardian block historically held a secondary status compared to the garden and entrance fronts. These elevations were intentionally screened by vegetation and served a partially utilitarian purpose. Consequently, their design and detailing exhibit a lower level of resolution and complexity in comparison to the prominent principal (west) elevation. The south elevation, currently connected to the modernist extension, lacks architectural details and does not align with the boundary of the Edwardian block. This configuration results in a partially exposed south elevation with an uncharacteristic appearance.



Figure 4 A photo showing the Edwardian block's north elevation. Source: SLHA

- On the other hand, the north elevation and its adjacent area have undergone a few alterations since the completion of the Edwardian block. However, this area primarily serves as a secondary passage to the garden and lacks any notable architectural features of interest (Figure 4). In terms of visual appeal and proportional harmony, the north elevation noticeably

falls short compared to the other elevations of the building. The transition between the north elevation and the adjoining elevations, particularly the corner where it meets the east elevation facing Spedan Close, is unresolved and lacks coherence in design. Unlike the dynamic design and intricate detailing observed in the other elevations and the approved scheme, the Edwardian building's north elevation appears plain and devoid of noteworthy architectural characteristics. While the presence of string courses on this façade provides a sense of horizontal continuity, the fenestration lacks proper proportion and detailing, resulting in an imbalanced composition. Additionally, at the lower-ground floor level, a second layer of rendered finish abruptly terminates without a logical endpoint, introducing inconsistency in the design and disrupting the visual flow of the elevation. Lastly, the extensive expanse of solid brickwork on the northwest corner adds to a sense of overwhelming solidity and contributes to a heavy massing effect. Extending up to the roofline resembling a chimney stack, this feature creates an awkward termination point that detracts from the overall harmony and visual appeal of the building's roof form.

- In conclusion, the existing main building comprising the Edwardian structure and the 1960s modernist extension does not possess significant architectural character or form a cohesive composition. The 1960s extension has been approved for demolition, allowing for a new development that will better integrate with the surroundings. The Edwardian building itself exhibits relatively poor architectural quality, with limited architectural interest and a lower level of resolution and complexity in its side elevations. The setting of the site has undergone significant alterations over time, including the construction of the Edwardian building, the demolition of the historic 18th-century house, and the development of the Branch Hill Estate (Spedan Close). The north and south elevations of the Edwardian block lack architectural details and proportionate harmony, with unresolved transitions and uncharacteristic appearances.

2.4 Characterisation Appraisal

- The proposed development is located within Sub Area 6, known as the Branch Hill Area, which is part of the Hampstead Conservation Area. Situated on the western slopes of Hampstead, this sub area features predominantly sloping terrain towards the west and south. The area is primarily covered in woodland, with an abundance of trees and vegetation that extends southward, seamlessly blending with the heath.
- The layout of the area is well-integrated with the existing contoured topography, with the street network following historic paths leading up to the heath. Over time, streets and

pathways connecting individual houses have been formalised, resulting in a distinctive and organic streetscape. The principal street in the sub area is Branch Hill, which leads to West Heath Road. One notable characteristic of the streetscape is the absence of direct interaction between buildings and streets. Most detached houses are situated within enclosed compounds, featuring high walls and expansive gardens, which limits their visibility from the street.

- This sub-area is characterised by several low-rise detached houses as well as the Grade-II listed modernist Branch Hill Estate (Figure 5). Smaller outbuildings such as the former gatehouse to Branch Hill House were converted into independent residences in the past and represent a small minority of building types in the area.
- Sub-area 6 has been described as 'Principally woodland (...) in which the buildings play a subordinate role'. This attests to a large concentration of open spaces- a large majority of which are private with little or no public access. Therefore, though the area has an overall verdant character, the open spaces lie within individual plot boundaries.



Figure 5 The Grade II listed 1970s Branch Hill Estate Council Housing (Spedan Close) by Benson and Forsyth. Source: SLHA

- Spedan Close, as a branch of Branch Hill, is a private road that lacks public access. However, it holds significant value as an integral part of the open space located to the south of Branch Hill House. Historically, this open space served as the site of the House's kitchen gardens, representing its historical significance. Moreover, it acts as a boundary between the House

and the locally listed Branch Hill Woodland, which has been acknowledged by the council as a natural feature of the area.

3 PROPOSED SCHEME

- The proposed development aims to create a self-contained extension on the northern side of the Edwardian block, along with modifications to the block's north elevation. The design, footprint, scale, and aesthetics of the proposed development have been carefully considered to ensure they align with the surrounding landscape, the unlisted Edwardian block, and the overall characteristics of the Hampstead Conservation Area. By taking into account the unique features and context of the site, the proposed development intends to provide an architectural form that is appropriate and harmonious.
- The proposed scheme has been developed taking into consideration the feedback received during the pre-application consultation with Camden Council on 8th December 2022 (ref: 2022/4298/PRE). The comments and suggestions provided by the conservation officer have been carefully considered and revisions/amendments incorporated into the design. Specific attention has been given to addressing the concerns raised by the conservation officer regarding the massing and external design. The aim is to ensure that the proposed development harmonises with the unlisted Edwardian building and maintains the character and appearance of the Hampstead Conservation Area.
- As Figure 6 illustrates, the proposed extension is connected to the side (north) elevation of the Edwardian building and is bounded by Spedan Close to its north. The application site is currently occupied by a lightwell, which is partly surrounded by a dwarf stone wall, forming a passage to the north of the site to allow access from Spedan Close. According to the historic OS maps, this area has not been changed since the early 20th century and does not contain any architectural interest (as this is a secondary, service area with a utilitarian ethos). The proposed extension's rear (west) elevation will be aligned with the edge of the Edwardian block's chimney stack.
- The proposed development is a three-storey plus a basement, providing an independent residential unit that includes total of three bedrooms on the upper floors, a living room on the ground floor, and a kitchen/dinning with a study in the basement. (See Table 1)

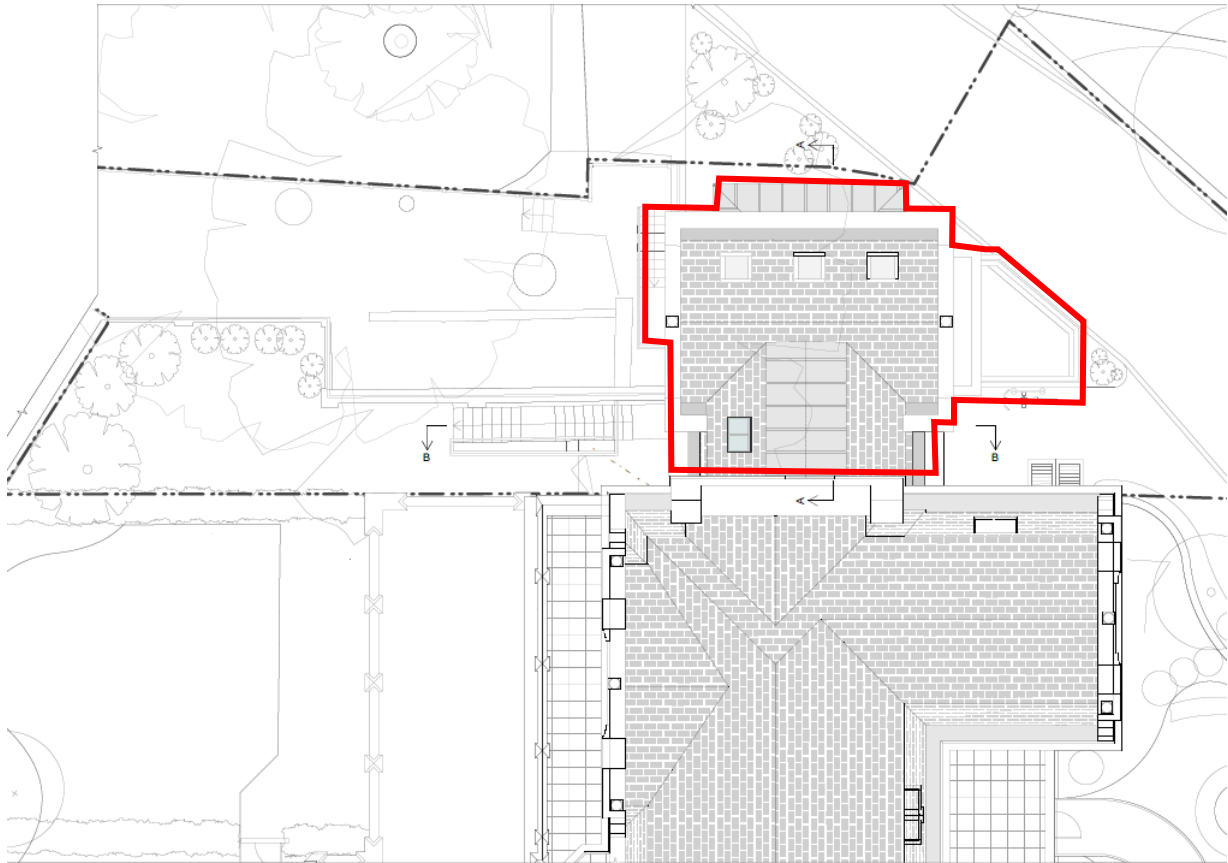
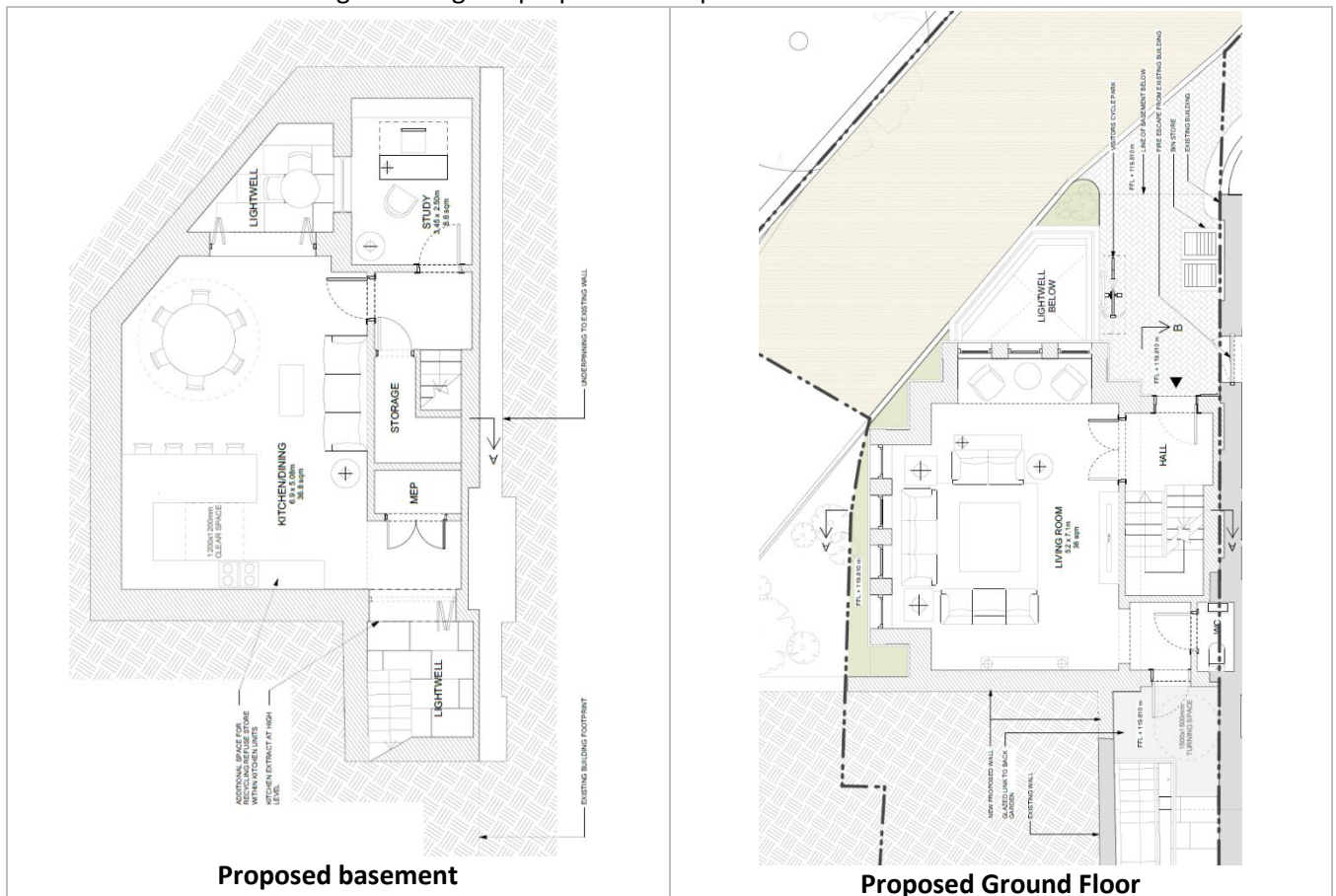
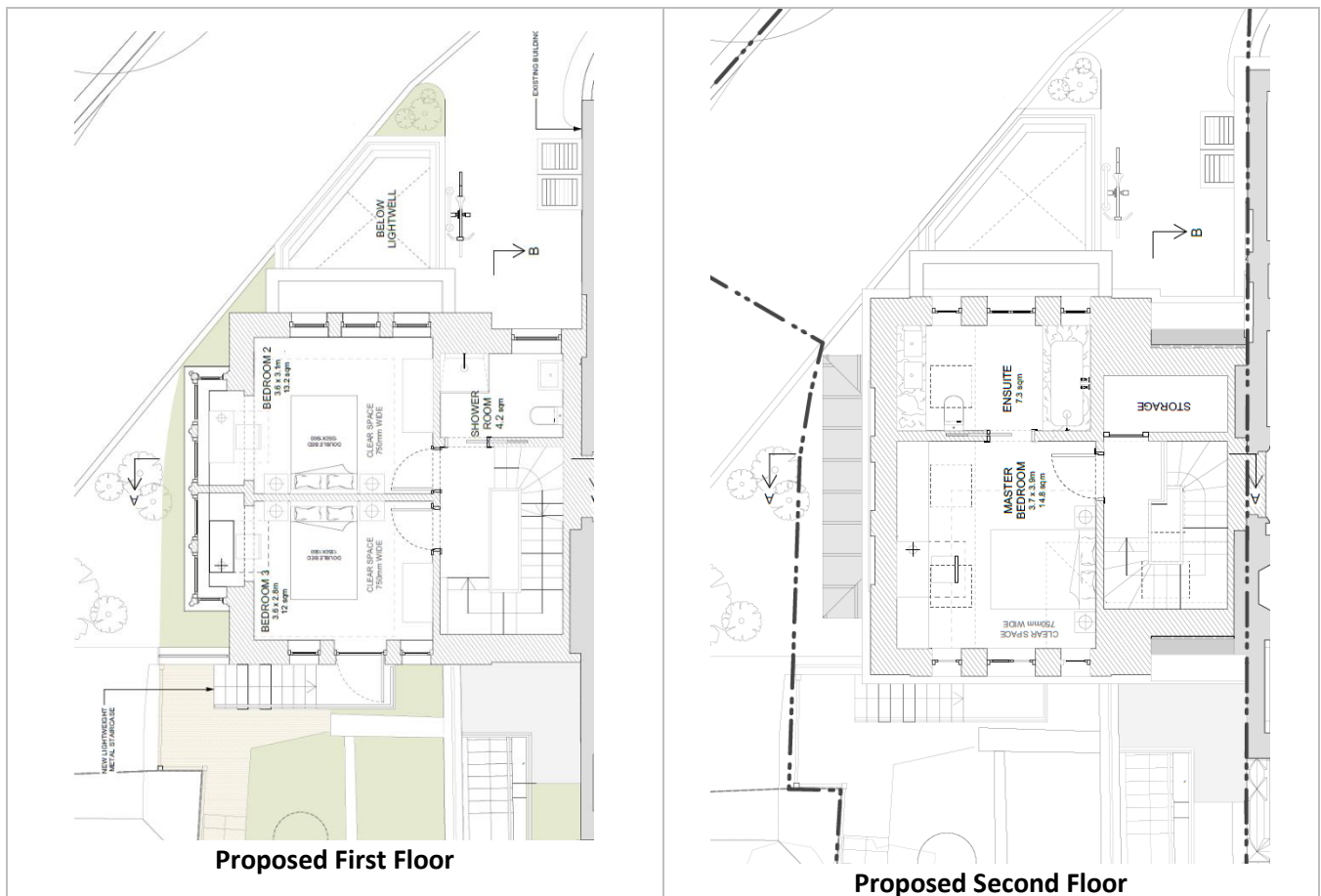


Figure 6 A plan showing the location of the proposed extension (highlighted in red).

Table 1 The drawings showing the proposed floor plans





3.1 Footprint and characterisation

- The proposed extension to the building will indeed result in a slight increase in its footprint. However, this expansion will be limited by the existing roadway of Spedan Close and the boundary wall of the Edwardian building, ensuring that the increase is constrained.
- It should be noted that the construction of the proposed extension will not have a significant impact on the overall character and appearance of the conservation area. Historically, the surrounding area had a landscape that included various outbuildings such as a stable complex and ancillary structures. Unfortunately, these buildings were demolished in the mid-20th century to make way for the construction of the 1960s extension. Since the 1970s, the setting of the House has undergone notable changes, particularly with the development of the Branch Hill Estate. Additionally, the former grounds to the south of the site were converted into allotments, resulting in the loss of the House's original character, including its expansive pleasure gardens.
- Furthermore, it is important to note that the construction of the proposed extension will not have a significant impact on the overall character and appearance of the conservation area. In terms of the historic landscape, the surrounding area previously featured several

outbuildings, including a stable complex and ancillary buildings. Unfortunately, these structures were demolished in the mid-20th century at the same time as the construction of the 1960s extension. Since the 1970s, the setting of the House has undergone further, significant changes, especially with the planning and development of the Branch Hill Estate. During this time, the former grounds to the south of the site were separated and converted into allotments, leading to the loss of the House's original character, including its expansive pleasure gardens. Currently, the only remaining open spaces in the vicinity are situated to the west and east of the House.

- Importantly, the proposed development will not alter the existing openness of the site, despite the slight increase in the overall footprint. The proposed development is sited within an area of the site that is currently semi-built and will be attached to the north elevation of the unlisted Edwardian block. The design ensures that the extension remains within the established boundaries and does not compromise the landscape and openness of the area. The remaining open spaces, which are significant to the character of the conservation area, will be preserved.
- In terms of massing, the proposed extension has been carefully designed to appear as a subservient addition to the Edwardian block, ensuring it harmonises with the existing building. While it will be partially visible from Spedan Close, a private roadway primarily used by residents of the Branch Hill House development and the Branch Hill Estate, the impact will be limited. Furthermore, the extension will be largely screened by the existing vegetation, which will prevent the site from being visible in a medium or long-distance views from within the conservation area. For more detailed information on the massing and visibility of the proposal, please refer to Section 4, 'Visual Impact Assessment,' in this report.

3.2 Design

- The design of the proposed unit follows the architectural ethos and elements of the main building. It would be of brick in Flemish Bond with stoned band courses running extensively from the Edwardian block on the same height level. Windows would be of casement type with stone jambs and lintels. Triangular entablatures, which draw from the Edwardian building's pediments on the dormers, would be installed on top of the front and rear parapets.
- Externally, cast iron railings are proposed on the ground floor to the front (east) elevation to form a lightwell. The location of the railings would be the established location of the existing dwarf stone walls. On the other side, a staircase is proposed to the rear (west) elevation to provide extra access to the first floor from Spedan Close.

- Overall, the design of the proposed extension responds sympathetically to the Edwardian building. As previously mentioned, the proposals overall design and detailing- including brick type and bonding, fenestration details, and architectural ornamentation would reflect the Edwardian building.



Figure 7 Proposed front (east) elevation with the proposal works highlighted in red. Source: Stanhope Gate Architecture.



Figure 8 Proposed side (north) elevation. Source: Stanhope Gate Architecture.



Figure 9 Proposed rear (west) elevation with the proposal works highlighted in red. Source: Stanhope Gate Architecture.

3.3 Alterations to the Edwardian main building

- As part of the proposed works, a number of associated alterations are proposed to the north elevation of the Edwardian block (see Figure 10). As the s.73 application in 2021 (ref: 2021/5377/P) included an internal fire escape staircase, 3 of the windows on this elevation have already received permission to be blocked. Therefore, the works related to this application include (also see Figure 10):
 - A. Blocking of a window on the first floor.
 - B. Partial blocking of a window on the second floor.
 - C. Removal of an architectural device/ decorative detail from the chimney stack.
 - D. Removal of the existing dwarf stone wall and reconfiguration of the area
- As previously mentioned, being lack of architectural and visual interest, the existing Edwardian block is a poor representative of its style and appears to have been designed and detailed poorly. Further to this, the side (north) elevation of the Edwardian building has a less characteristic design than the front (east) and rear (west) elevations. It does not follow on the taxis and proportions of other elevations, and its design and detailing are less resolved. The windows are different in sizes and styles, resulting in a complicated and inconsistent appearance fronting Spedan Close despite being largely screened by the mature trees in the

area. The device/ decorative architectural element to be removed doesn't provide any enhancement to the visual character of the elevation.

- Following the consented demolition and redevelopment of the c.1960 extension to the south of the Edwardian block, the proposed works to the north elevation is aiming to improve and balance the visual interest of the site as a whole. The proposed extension will fit with this amended north elevation and can potentially provide the site with a more consistent and characteristic design; therefore, there is no adverse impact on the unlisted Edwardian block.

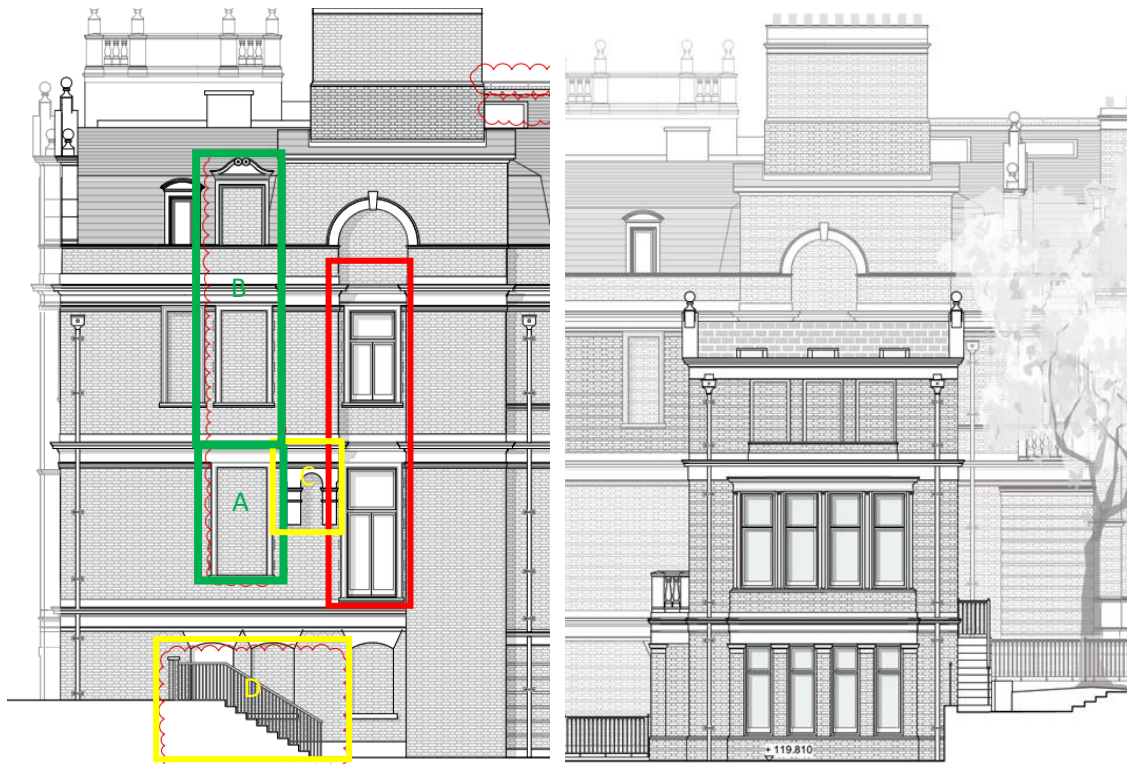


Figure 10 A elevation drawing showing the alterations to the Edwardian block (left) and a drawing showing the proposed elevation (right). As part of the s.73 granted application, three windows on this elevation have received permission to be blocked (highlighted in green). The other elements that have been consented to be removed and altered are highlighted in yellow. The windows proposed to be blocked is highlighted in red.

3.4 Visual Impact Assessment

- To comprehensively assess the visual impact of the proposed extension on the Hampstead Conservation Area, a careful selection of views has been considered. These views encompass various angles and perspectives, taking into account the presence of the Grade-II listed Branch Hill Estate and the overall character and appearance of the conservation area. Through this thorough evaluation, the extent of visibility and the compatibility of the proposed extension with its surroundings will be analysed and documented.
- The following views are generated by the 3D model provided by Stanhope Gate Architecture. Please note that the 3D model is primarily indicative and illustrative. Its main purpose is to inform the design process and provide a better understanding of the massing and its relationship with the Edwardian House and the 2021 approved scheme. Consequently, vegetation and other existing sub-features have not been fully represented in the 3D model, and it should be noted that these features will significantly conceal the proposed extension in reality.

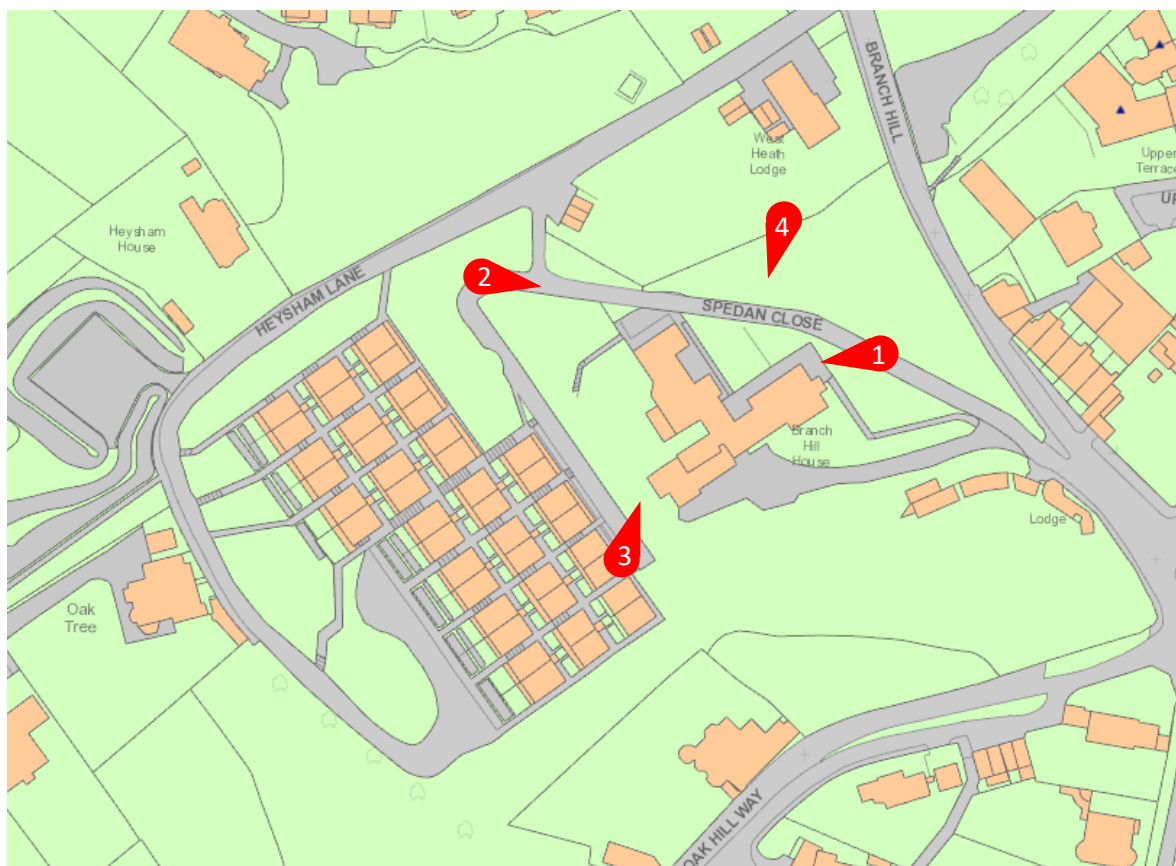
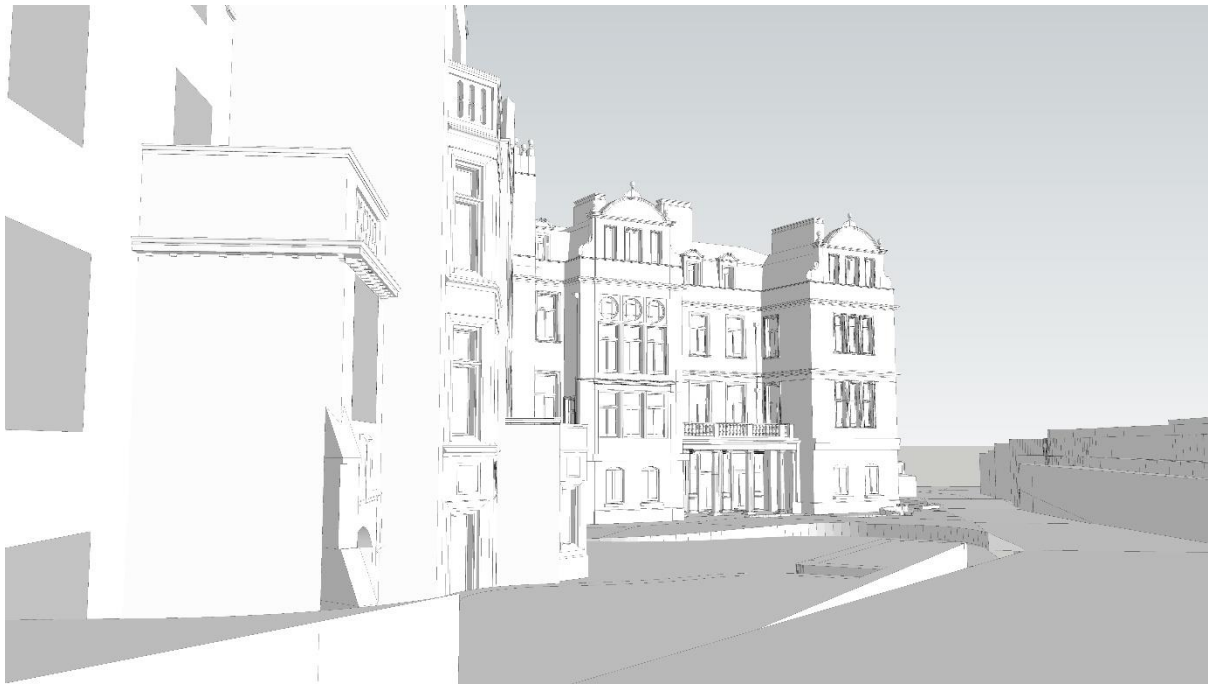


Figure 11 A map showing the approximate location of the selected views for the visual impact assessment. Source: SLHA.

View 1 – Existing (approved)

This viewpoint is situated at the southeastern end of the 2021 approved scheme, offering a northwest perspective from the roadway of Spedan Close. It is important to note that this view is primarily enjoyed by the residents of Branch Hill House and the Branch Hill Estate since it is located on a private roadway. In this view, the dominant features are the approved scheme and the Edwardian extension itself. On the left side of the view, the 2021 approved scheme can be seen, which will replace the existing 1960 modernist extension. Additionally, the open ground in front of the main house, which contributes to the sense of openness in this area, is visible from this viewpoint. On the right side of the view, Spedan Close is visible, with mature vegetation serving as the boundary of the roadway.

View 1 – Proposed

This viewpoint provides a clear understanding of the proposed development's position and massing when viewing from the 2021 approved scheme. As seen from this view, the proposed design is set back from the building line of the early 20th C Edwardian block, and this ensures that the proposal will be partially concealed. The proposed development aligns with the floor height of the Edwardian building, as indicated by the stone band courses, creating a harmonious visual connection. Importantly, the proposed development will preserve the sense of openness bounded by the Edwardian block as well as the 2021 consented scheme. Therefore, the potential impact of the proposals on this view will be **no impact**.

View 2 – Existing (approved)

This view, taken from the northern part of Spedan Close near its junction with Heysham Lane, offers a street-level perspective of the intended location for the proposed extension. It provides insight into the current layout of the building and the area where the extension is planned. The northwest elevation of the Edwardian block is visible from this viewpoint. As previously mentioned, this elevation lacks significant architectural features and displays some imbalance, with certain windows being blocked. The surrounding vegetation may also significantly obscure this area, resulting in a limited sense of openness, especially in comparison to the gardens on the front and back of the Edwardian Building. The view also reveals the presence of the 2021 consented scheme, which will serve as a backdrop behind the Edwardian building. It's worth noting that the proposed location is presently occupied by stone walls, which not only conceal the ground floor level of this side elevation but also provide access to utilitarian areas of the Edwardian building.

View 2 – Proposed

This view depicts the north and west elevations of the proposed extension facing the north-western part of Spedan Close. As shown, the proposal will be visible as a subordinate structure that extends from the main Edwardian building. In comparison to the existing (approved) views, the proposal will obscure the complex secondary northern elevation of the Edwardian building and could potentially create a more harmonious relationship with the backdrop of the 2021 approved scheme. The proposal's massing will be in line with the existing roadway of Spedan Close and other boundary treatments. Despite the increase in massing, the overall footprint of the proposals has been carefully considered, taking into account the layout and the setting of the intended location. As seen in other views, the proposed development maintains the same floor height as the Edwardian building, preserving the verticality of the site. Therefore, the potential impact of the proposals on this view will be **no impact**.

View 3 – Existing

This view is located at the end of Spedan Close, positioned between the Edwardian building and the Grade-II listed Branch Hill Estate. In this view, Branch Hill House and the 2021 consented scheme take centre stage. Currently, a portion of the area beneath the historic pleasure gardens has been excavated to create additional parking space exclusively for the residents of the Estate. As a result, this view is not publicly accessible and will primarily be enjoyed by the Estate's residents and the occupants of the House. From this vantage point, the western elevation of the Edwardian building can be appreciated, although it may be partially concealed due to the terrain. The side elevation of the 2021 approved scheme, including its gables and other architectural elements, would also be partially visible and appreciated from this viewpoint.

View 3 – Proposed

This view highlights the west elevation of the proposed extension, located to the left of the Edwardian Building. As depicted, the proposed extension will be perceived as an annex to both the Edwardian Building and the 2021 approved scheme. The west front of the proposed extension, which is set back from the building line, features a triangular gable, matching the design of the 2021 approved scheme, ensuring visual continuity between the two phases of development. Additionally, although not fully depicted in this 3D model, the area in front of the proposed extension is currently concealed by dense vegetation and mature trees, which will be preserved. As a result, the proposed extension will be largely obscured from this viewpoint, making it barely visible. Therefore, the potential impact of the proposals on this view will be **no impact**.

View 4 – Existing

This watercolour painting presents a hypothetical bird's-eye view, offering a perspective towards the Edwardian building and the 2021 approved scheme that replaces the 1960s modernist extension. It should be noted that this view was previously utilised in 2019 to showcase the proposed development. Although the trees and vegetations in this view are indicative, it is presented to demonstrate the green character of this area. The roadway of Spedan Close is partially visible in the foreground of the view.

View 4 – Proposed

This bird's eye-view offers a clear picture of the proposed extension, which will maintain the same floor height as the Edwardian building to preserve its verticality. The extension will be situated within the existing boundary walls along Spedan Close, ensuring its footprint remains subservient to the Edwardian Building and will not have a negative impact on the openness of the Conservation Area. Additionally, the proposed design will be similar with the 2021 approved development, ensuring the proposal is viewed as the same phase of development.

4 RESPONSE TO THE PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION

- This section offers a detailed and comprehensive response to the comments raised by the conservation team during the pre-application consultations with Camden London Borough Council on 08/12/2022 (ref: 2022/4298/PRE). It is essential to highlight that this Heritage Note specifically focuses on addressing the comments related to design and conservation aspects, as outlined in section 7 'Design and Conservation' of the pre-application response. For further details and responses concerning other perspectives, please refer to the reports and drawings submitted by Stanhope Gate Architecture.
- It is important to emphasise that the Grade-II listed Branch Hill Estate will scarcely perceive the extension due to the terrain and the dense foliage that characterise the area.

Comments from the pre-application consultation	Responses to the comments
<p>The existing Edwardian house is a tall and elaborate three-storey mansion raised on a basement tucked into the hillside of its wooded site within Sub-Area 6 (Branch Hill) of the Hampstead Conservation Area. As such, it is considered to make a positive contribution to the conservation area. It should be noted that, in defining the character of Sub-Area 6, the Hampstead Conservation Area Statement states that it is principally woodland, with buildings playing a subordinate role. The architecture of the house, constructed from red brick with stone embellishments, is elaborate with a vertical emphasis. It is characterised by high window openings with stone detailing, together with tall chimneys which articulate the facades. Despite being built as an extension to an earlier Georgian house and now flanked by a 1960s extension (to be demolished), at its north-western section it reads as a building in its own right with standalone qualities, particularly as seen in northern views from the driveway and to a certain extent from the Grade II listed Branch Hill Estate in the south-west. As such the existing north-west elevation is an important composition in its own right, characteristic of architecture of the Edwardian period.</p>	<p>In careful consideration of the character of the Conservation Area, we believe that the design of the proposed extension has been meticulously crafted to establish its subordinate nature in relation to both the Edwardian building and the surrounding natural landscape. As demonstrated by the visual impact assessment, the proposed development will seamlessly blend into the woodland setting and be significantly obscured by the presence of mature vegetation. Therefore, we believe that the proposed extension respects the context and minimises any potential visual impact to the Conservation Area.</p> <p>Our significance assessment reveals shortcomings in the design coherence of the side elevations, particularly the north and south elevations, when compared to the main eastern/western fronts. Our analysis indicates that the fenestration lacks proportional harmony and detailing, resulting in an imbalanced composition that could be incongruent with the overall character of the Conservation Area. Moreover, the extensive solid brickwork on the northwest corner and the blocked brick arch on the chimney stack contribute to an overwhelming massing that detract from the landscape character.</p>
<p>Despite the demolition of the earlier Georgian house and its replacement with the 1960s wing, together with the building of the Branch Hill Housing Estate in the</p>	<p>In response to the aforementioned findings, combined with the feedback received from the pre-application, we have revised the proposed</p>

<p>lower section of the grounds, the house still reads as an integral part of a wooded and secluded landscape with rustic overtones, which is included on Camden's Local List as of value in the Natural Features or Landscape category. The approved replacement extension to provide new residential accommodation, in conjunction with the conversion of the main house to residential use, retains the sense of an imposing mansion set in its own mature landscape. As a whole, the approved scheme subject of planning permission 2019/6354/P has a strong vertical emphasis, with the proposed extension stepping down to its lowest section closest to the front gate, so as to reduce its impact on the Grade II listed lodge and in views from the street.</p>	<p>scheme to incorporate stone string courses that align with the existing stonework on the Edwardian building. This approach ensures that the proposed extension maintains verticality and serves as a seamless extension of the Edwardian structure as suggested by the officer. By doing so, the revised design ensures that the proposal is in harmony with the existing Edwardian building as well as the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.</p>
<p>The proposed two-storey addition on the opposite north-western side of the mansion is intended to read as a low-rise annexe on the site of the approved plant room which has been designed to be set into the earth bank between the existing flank wall and the driveway which skirts the house on its north-east frontage. Its height and bulk will be prominent as seen from the driveway, both from the south-east and from the north-west. It will also be directly visible in views from the south-west, read as part of the mansion's south-west garden elevation from the Branch Hill Housing Estate. The extension will be especially prominent in winter when the leaves are off the trees. As a whole, the extension will be more concealed from the north, due to the presence of a cluster of mature trees which are a key feature of the site's wooded landscape.</p>	<p>It is important to clarify that Spedan Close is a private driveway primarily used by the residents of the House and Estate, and not accessible to the public. Therefore, the visual impact of the proposed extension would be limited to the immediate residents rather than having a broader public visibility. Additionally, our visual impact assessment has demonstrated that the proposed extension will not be prominently visible from Spedan Close, nor from the Grade-II listed Branch Hill Estate. This is due to the position of the proposals and the curved shape of the roadway, as well as the presence of mature trees and the terrain, which altogether effectively conceal the extension. The careful positioning of the extension within the earth bank and the constrained massing ensure that its height and bulk are minimised, reducing its prominence even in winter. These measures ensure that the proposed extension respects the wooded landscape and maintains the visual harmony of the surroundings.</p>
<p>The existing north-west elevation, as stated above, reads as a key elevation of the existing Edwardian mansion, being designed in an elaborate style with moulded stone cornices marking each storey, a number of large windows with stone dressings, and tall chimneys also dressed in stone. The façade treatment contributes to the sense that the house should be read</p>	<p>The north elevation of Branch Hill House does incorporate certain architectural features that align with the style of the building. However, the Heritage Statement from the previous consented application (ref: 2019/6354/P) and our significance assessment, which have concluded that the Edwardian main building lacks both</p>

<p>in the round within its generous grounds. The proposed extension will screen the upper-ground and first floors of the facade, including the architectural features mentioned above (which, although intended to be retained <i>in situ</i>, will be blocked and concealed from view behind the fabric of the proposed extension). Although the existing house is not a listed building, the positive contribution it makes to the conservation area is derived from its imposing scale and elaborate architectural features, together with the way it comfortably sits in its grounds (despite being hidden from the public highway). The proposal to conceal its architectural features and detract from its existing scale and proportions will be contrary to guidance in CPG1 and the Hampstead Conservation Area Statement, as well as Policy D2, due to the loss of historic features.</p>	<p>architectural and visual interest, rendering it a poor representation of its style and type. The north elevation, in particular, was intentionally designed and constructed as a secondary feature, carrying less significance compared to the other fronts of the building. The windows on this elevation vary in size and style, with inconsistent stone dressing, resulting in a complex and disorderly appearance. As a result, we believe the proposed extension presents an opportunity to address these design shortcomings and introduce a more cohesive and consistent architectural composition. While the proposed extension would screen and partially conceal the existing architectural features, it should be emphasised that this approach has the potential to enhance the overall aesthetic of the building's north elevation. By incorporating a harmonious and carefully considered design, the proposed extension can contribute positively to the visual quality and character of Branch Hill House and its surroundings, in line with the conservation principles outlined in CPG1, the Hampstead Conservation Area Statement, and Policy D2.</p>
<p>An additional concern is the underwhelming height and scale of the extension which has been designed as such so as not to detract from the main house. However, by being of such dimensions and proportions, it fails to appreciate the verticality of the existing building and will read as an out-of-scale addition in the context of the approved new extension which also has a strong sense of verticality and is generally of a similar height to the existing house. The size of the approved extension at the southern end of the main house has been carefully considered in terms of its relationship with the house and will act as a replacement for the existing outdated 1960s wing. As such, the approved development principally is situated on the south side of the site, with only a low-level plant room approved on the northern side which will not impact on the proportions and features of the north-west elevation. The northern section of the mansion has generally been left untouched, allowing its historic form to remain as existing with no negative impacts on its</p>	<p>The design of the proposed extension has been revised to follow the stone band course running between the Edwardian building's floors, ensuring that its verticality is emphasised. Simultaneously, the design carefully maintains the proposed extension's subordinate nature, serving as a reserved annex to the existing Edwardian building. Furthermore, the design takes into consideration the approved scheme to the south of the Edwardian building, ensuring a cohesive and integrated development.</p> <p>In relation to the notion of "openness," our thorough characterisation of the area has revealed that the sense of openness has been significantly compromised over time. Currently, the true sense of openness can be best experienced from the western and eastern gardens of the Edwardian building, and the proposed extension will have no adverse impact on these significant features. As depicted, the</p>

<p>immediate setting or upon the main driveway from which there is a sense of openness. In contrast, the footprint of the proposed extension would encroach upon the driveway by skirting its western edge, thereby resulting in an overbearing bulk and form at this point, giving a sense of over-development on the site which is recognised of importance as an entry on the Local List.</p>	<p>proposal adheres to the existing site boundary, respecting and preserving the historic form.</p> <p>Lastly, it is important to clarify that Branch Hill House itself is not locally listed, although it is located within the setting of the locally listed Branch Hill Woodland, which obtained its local listing primarily for its natural value. The proposed extension will not remove any mature trees in the area, thereby minimising any impact on the natural value of the woodland.</p> <p>By responsibly retaining the existing trees and adhering to the established boundaries, we are confident that the proposed extension upholds the natural value of the locally listed woodland.</p>
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5 CONCLUSION

- Branch Hill House is an Edwardian extension built between 1899 and 1901, situated on Branch Hill in Hampstead within the London Borough of Camden. Although the building itself is unlisted, the 1901 Edwardian structure is recognised as a positive contributor to the Hampstead Conservation Area. The original building on the site, designed by Flitcroft in the 18th century, was subsequently modified by Teulon in the 19th century. In the early 20th century, Ernest Flint constructed an extension in an Edwardian Baroque free-style, which replaced the Flitcroft building. However, in the 1960s, the Flitcroft building was demolished and replaced with a Brutalist extension, leaving the Edwardian house connected to a modernist concrete block.
- In 2020, consent was granted for the demolition of the 1960s modernist block and its replacement with a sensitively designed building by Stanhope Gate Architecture. Heritage Architecture Ltd (SLHA) prepared a detailed Heritage Statement to support the successful application for this proposal in 2019 (ref: 2019/6354/P). This document serves as an addendum to the previous heritage appraisal from 2019 and provides an assessment of the current proposed development by Stanhope Gate Architecture, taking into account heritage issues and the site's significance.
- **Significance assessment:** The existing main building, consisting of the Edwardian structure and the 1960s modernist extension, lacks significant architectural character and cohesion. The 1960s extension has been approved for demolition, paving the way for a new development that will better integrate with the surroundings. The Edwardian building itself has limited architectural interest, displaying poor quality and a lower level of resolution and complexity in its side elevations. Over time, the site's setting has undergone significant alterations, including the construction of the Edwardian building, the demolition of the historic 18th-century house, and the development of the Branch Hill Estate. The north and south elevations of the Edwardian block lack architectural details and proportionate harmony, with unresolved transitions and uncharacteristic appearances.
- **Characterisation:** The proposed development is situated within Sub Area 6, known as the Branch Hill Area, which forms part of the Hampstead Conservation Area. This sub area is characterised by sloping terrain, woodland, and abundant vegetation, seamlessly blending with the nearby heath. The layout of the area follows the contours of the land, with streets and pathways following historic paths. The streetscape features detached houses within enclosed compounds, limiting their visibility from the street. Sub Area 6 is primarily woodland, with buildings playing a subordinate role. The Grade-II listed modernist Branch Hill Estate is a

notable feature in the area, along with a small number of converted outbuildings. The area consists of private open spaces, with limited public access. Spedan Close, a private road, holds historical significance as it served as the site of the House's kitchen gardens and acts as a boundary between Branch Hill House and the locally listed Branch Hill Woodland.

- **Proposal:** The current proposals aim to create a small self-contained dwelling on the north side of the Edwardian block, reminiscent of the historic landscape consists with outbuildings and ancillary structures in the area. The proposed development is positioned at the turning point of the curved roadway of Spedan Close. This specific area does not contribute directly to the open space that serves Branch Hill House. Currently, it is partially occupied by boundary walls that provide access to the House's northern gardens and utility area. Additionally, the presence of mature trees greatly conceals the area, resulting in minimal visibility and limited recognition as a distinctive or prominent feature of the surroundings.
- **Visual impact assessment:** The visual impact assessment has concluded that the proposed extension has been carefully designed to be subordinate to the Edwardian building and blend seamlessly into the woodland setting, minimising any potential visual impact on the Conservation Area. It is also highlighted that the proposed extension will have limited visibility from Spedan Close and the Grade-II listed lodge and Branch Hill Estate due to the positioning of the proposal, curved shape of the roadway, presence of mature trees, and terrain. Furthermore, the proposed extension provides an opportunity to address design shortcomings of the existing north elevation, contributing to a more cohesive architectural composition. Notably, all the mature grown trees will be retained to uphold the natural value of the locally listed woodland. Therefore, the proposed development will have **no impact** on the character and the appearance of the conservation area.