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Heritage
Practice

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Townscape and Heritage Appraisal
No. 14a Hampstead Hill Gardens, London

August 2023





1 Introduction

1.1 The following appraisal has been prepared by The Heritage Practice in support of a proposal for the demolition of two garages on the site and the erection of a two storey plus basement dwelling house at no. 14a Hampstead Hill Gardens NW3 (the Site). This report should be read in conjunction with the drawings and Design and Access Statement prepared by Echlin Architects.

1.2 An application for the replacement of the garages with a new three storey building (2021/1564/P) is currently under consideration by the LB Camden and is awaiting a decision.

1.3 Pre application discussions took place with the Council regarding a revised scheme in October 2021 and following further design changes, their formal response is contained in a letter dated 24 March 2022 (refer to FWPD appendices).

The site

1.4 The site itself is roughly rectangular and comprises a concrete driveway and an area of garden behind the garages. The two garages are single storey detached garages, built using precast concrete façade panels, and with pitched corrugated asbestos roofs and timber garage doors. The garages date from the 1950s.

1.5 Hampstead Hill Gardens is situated to the south east of Hampstead village, looping between Rosslyn Hill and Pond Street. The site is positioned above the Network Rail tunnel which connects Hampstead Heath and Finchley Road & Frognal rail stations. The site forms part of the Hampstead Conservation Area.

Appraisal Structure

1.6 The appraisal considers the effects of the proposals on the character and appearance of the Hampstead Conservation Area, taking into account the significance of the site and its

surrounding context. They will then be assessed in relation to the relevant statutory, national and local heritage and design policy framework.

Author

1.7 This appraisal has been prepared by Charles Rose BA (Hons) who has extensive experience in dealing with proposals that affect the historic environment. He has over 15 years of local authority experience, including 12 years as a Principal Conservation & Design Officer at the London Borough of Camden. He also has experience in the private sector, preparing heritage statements and appraising the significance of historic buildings.



2 Site and surroundings

2.1 The following section provides an overview of the site, its character and its immediate context.

Site description

2.2 No.14a is a gap site located on the west side of Hampstead Hill Gardens. The site forms a wide gap in a street which is generally characterised by its strong sense of enclosure and relatively narrow spacing between buildings. At present the site contains two 1950s single storey detached garages, constructed in precast concrete panels and with corrugated asbestos roofs. The front of the site has a dropped kerb, with a concrete hardstanding which is open to the pavement and which allows access to the two post war garages.

2.3 The site boundaries to the north and south are defined by the properties at nos. 12 and 14 Hampstead Hill Gardens. To the rear (west), a concrete and brick retaining wall separates the site from the rear garden of no.10 Rosslyn Hill.

Heritage Designations

2.4 The site forms part of the Hampstead Conservation Area which was first designated in 1968 and later extended in 1977, 1978, 1980, 1985, 1988 and 1991. When first designated, the conservation area was known as the Hampstead Village Conservation Area but was renamed to reflect its wider reach. The conservation area now covers a very large and varied area which principally encompasses the best examples of 18th and 19th century development in the Hampstead area.

2.5 The Hampstead Conservation Area Statement (2002) summarises the character of the area as follows:

"Hampstead has an exceptional combination of characteristics that provide the distinct and special qualities of the Conservation Area. The variety of spaces, quality of the buildings, relationships between areas, all laid upon the dramatic setting of the steep slopes are described below...It also demonstrates its historic development with the 18th century village still evident, adjacent to the streets created in the Victorian era, as well as many 20th century contributions. The Conservation Area character is therefore derived from the wide range of areas within it, each of which makes an important and valuable contribution to the Conservation Area as a whole."

2.6 The conservation area statement does not specifically identify the existing garages as making a negative, neutral or positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. To inform this report an assessment on the contribution of the site to the character and appearance of the Hampstead Conservation Area has been undertaken (Appendix D) in accordance with Historic England's guidelines¹. The conclusion of this is that the existing buildings themselves make, at best, a neutral contribution to the Conservation Area but the site as a whole has a negative impact on the wider streetscape of Hampstead Hill Gardens due to the anomalous character of the existing structures and the lack of a boundary treatment with the street.

Sub Areas

2.7 Due to its size and varied character the Hampstead Conservation Area Statement divides the conservation area into a series of sub areas. The Site is included in **Sub Area 3 – Willoughby Road/Downshire Hill**. The Statement describes Hampstead Hill Gardens as "An area

¹<https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/guidance/hea1-conservation-areas-consultation-draft-pdf>



with larger detached and semi-detached houses."

2.8 In its commentary regarding Hampstead Hill Gardens the Statement notes that:

*"A few small modern houses and flats have been added in recent years, which, although in marked contrast to the older villas, do not detract from the character of the area."*²

2.9 These modern infills are identified by the Council as making a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area (Figure 1 and Appendix A).

Statutorily Listed Buildings

2.10 There are a number of statutorily listed buildings within the wider context of the site. These are listed below and identified in Figure 1:

Hampstead Hill Gardens (all Grade II);

- No.1, 1a and 1b including studio house
- No.2 and 2a and attached wall, railings and gate
- No.4 and attached wall, railings and gate
- No.3 and 3a
- No.5, 5a and 5b and attached wall, railings and gate
- No.7 and attached wall
- No. 9 and attached wall, railings and gate
- No.11 and attached walls, railings and gate

Pond Street

- No. 5-13 (Grade II)
- St Stephen's Church Hall (Grade II)

Rosslyn Hill

- Church of St. Stephen (Grade I)
- Torrington and attached wall, gate piers and gate (Grade II)

2.11 It is considered that the site is sufficiently physically distanced and separated

from any of these statutorily listed buildings so as to not impact upon their settings without further substantiation.

LNWR Tunnel

2.12 The site is located above the London and North Western Railway (LNWR) tunnel which forms part of the Hampstead Junction Railway. The line, which runs between Willesden and Camden, was opened on 2 January 1860 and tunnels for around 1km between Hampstead Heath and Finchley Road stations.

2.13 The gap in the streetscene is thus a result of the position of the LNWR tunnel. It is not identified as being of any significance within the Hampstead Conservation Area Statement (2002) or the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan (2018). It is not identified as providing an important break in the townscape or designated as an important view or marker to signify the tunnel location. Indeed, no other points above the tunnel route appear to be identified as being of any significance and most of land above the tunnel has been developed with historic and modern development, including at the entrance of the Finchley Road end of the tunnel.



Figure 1: Heritage assets Map

Listed buildings
Positive contributors
Neutral contributors

²Hampstead Conservation Area statement 2002 page 32.



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Figure 2: An aerial view of the Site and Hampstead Hill Gardens.



Figure 3: Map showing the line of the LNWR railway tunnel between Hampstead and Finchley Road. The map shows that the tunnel has been largely built over. The map is reproduced to a larger scale at Appendix C).



3 Historic development and character of the area

3.1 Hampstead Hill Gardens was laid out over open fields in the 1870s, connecting Rosslyn Hill and Pond Street (Figures 4-6).

3.2 The stucco-faced villas (nos. 14-20 and 25-33) at the Pond Street end of the road date from the 1870s and were followed by the grand, detached red brick houses at nos. 1-11 (odd) in the 1880s.

3.3 Nos. 10-12 were added during the Edwardian period, with nos. 4a-4b and no.8 constructed in the mid 20th century. No. 23a lies directly opposite the site above the LNWR tunnel. It is a modern family dwelling with a basement dating from 2018, when it replaced a 1970s extension to no. 23 (Appendix A).

Hampstead Hill Gardens character zones.

3.4 The site's context is varied and the stuccoed villas and detached red brick houses form two distinct phases of development along Hampstead Hill Gardens, bisected by the railway tunnel and interspersed with infill development. (Appendix A)

Hampstead Hill Gardens South

3.5 The first phase of development on the street are the pairs of stucco villas which were built in the 1870s and which are located at the southern end of the street between Pond Street and the railway tunnel (not visible but shown on the map at Figure 3). This section of the road is straight with narrow gaps between the semi-detached villas. These houses are of three generous storeys, with basements and shallow pitched roofs concealed behind a parapet (Appendix A). The front gardens contain deep lightwells behind white painted stucco dwarf walls and piers.

Hampstead Hill Gardens North

3.6 The northern part of the road, between the railway tunnel and the junction with Rosslyn Hill, comprises large scale Queen Anne Revival style detached dwellings positioned on the inner and outer curves of the road. These houses are fairly closely spaced and set back behind modest front garden areas providing a strong sense of enclosure to the road. The houses are constructed in red or buff/red brick, incorporating red rubbed brick to window reveals, cornices and detailing. These dwellings have expressive clay tiled roofs and prominent chimney stacks, some with gables. Low brick walls with hedges and railings characterise the boundary treatment of this part of the street.

3.7 The pair of Edwardian semi-detached properties (nos.10-12) adjoining the site to the north, have a similar language to the detached dwellings in the northern section of the road, albeit that no.12 has been rendered white and thus has a somewhat anomalous appearance. This pair of houses are more modestly scaled when compared with similar buildings on the street although they are still of two main storeys with a fully expressed attic storey. The façades and boundary wall of no.12 (adjoining the site) have been rendered and painted to match the materials and boundary treatment of the stucco houses to the south.

Hampstead Hill Gardens – modern infill

3.8 Hampstead Hill Gardens also has a number of modern infill developments. These properties are generally built in brown/red brick facing materials consistent with the northern character zone of which they form a part.

3.9 The Hampstead Conservation Area Statement notes that:

"A few small modern houses and flats have been added in recent years, which, although in marked contrast to the older villas, do not detract from the character of the area."



Hampstead Conservation Area - contemporary architecture

3.10 Hampstead has an established tradition of architectural innovation and quality. As a result, the Hampstead Conservation Area is a place of architectural distinctiveness and interest. This includes buildings that are very good examples of 18th and 19th century London suburban development.

3.11 The trend for architectural quality and interest was also a feature of the 20th century when *'prestigious houses continued to be built on the western slopes around Frognal and Fitzjohns Avenue in a variety of inventive arts-and crafts styles, gradually becoming more conventionally neo-Georgian as the 20th century progressed. A number of striking modern houses were built in the 1930s around Frognal and in Willow Road that defied convention, and the Hampstead tradition of avant-garde architecture established in the 1870s, continued through the 20th century.'*³

3.12 After the Second World War innovative architecture was promoted by the London Borough of Camden, famous for exemplary social housing programmes in the post-war decades. During the 1960s Camden's housing programme transformed the periphery of Hampstead at Dunboyne Road, Alexandra Road and Branch Hill. In the later 20th century and early 21st century new houses have continued to be built through private commissions. This drive for buildings of architectural quality and interest can be widely seen in infill developments or in the redevelopment of existing houses (Appendix B).

3.13 Hampstead is characterised by a blend of juxtaposed buildings of different periods and styles. This is an established and valued component in the character and appearance of the Hampstead Conservation Area.

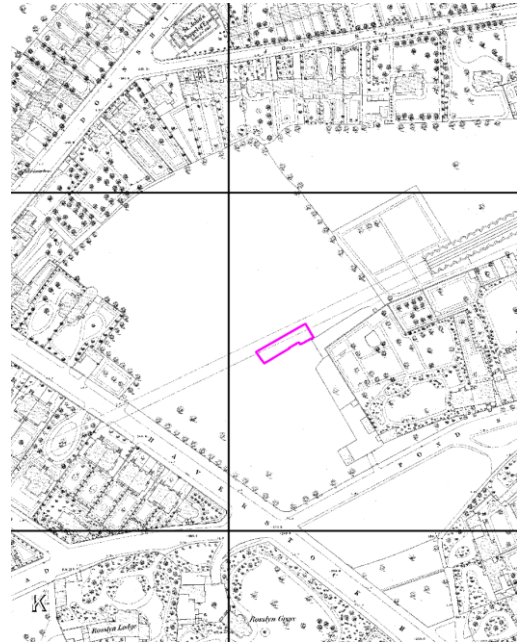


Figure 4: The 1871 OS Map.

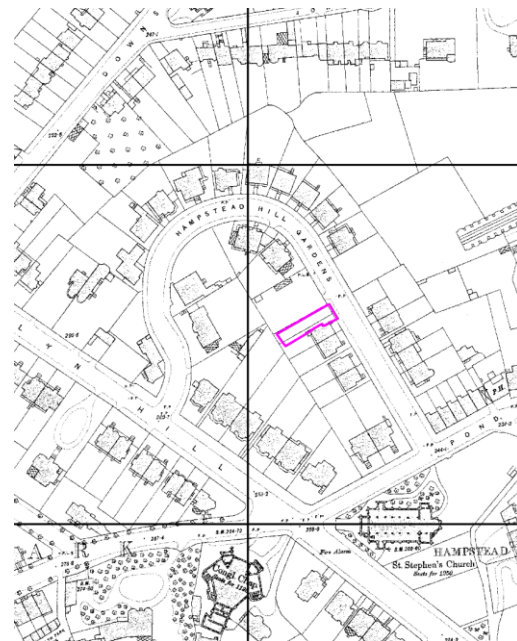


Figure 5: The 1895 OS Map.

³ Hampstead Conservation Area Statement 2002



Figure 6: The 1915 OS Map

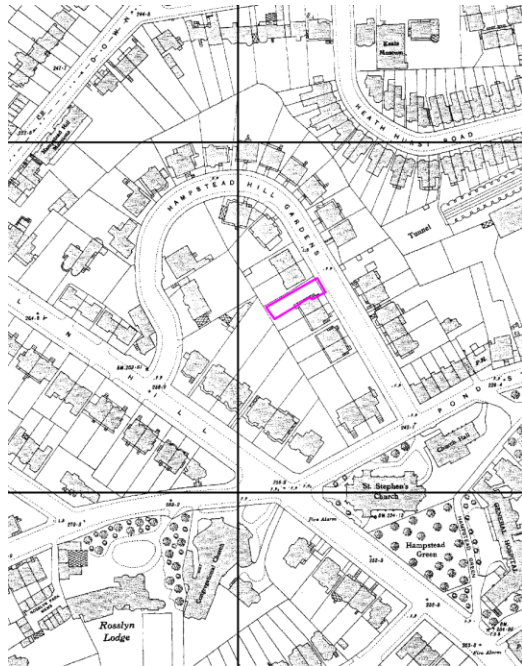


Figure 7: The 1936 OS Map.

4 Relevant heritage policy context

4.1 The following paragraphs briefly set out the range of national and local policy and guidance relevant to the consideration of change in the historic built environment. The relevant statutory provision for the historic environment is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The Statutory Framework

4.2 Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that:

"...special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area."

The National Planning Policy Framework 2021

4.3 The revised National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies and how these are expected to be applied. There is a general presumption in favour of sustainable development within national planning policy guidance. Paragraphs 189, 190, 192 and 193 are relevant to this application.

Paragraph 194

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.

Paragraph 195

Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal



(including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Paragraph 197

In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

Paragraph 199

When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Paragraph 202

Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017

4.4 Camden's Local Plan was adopted in June 2017. The relevant parts of the policies are cited below:

Policy D1 – Design

The Council will seek to secure high quality design in development. The Council will require that development:

- a. respects local context and character;*
- b. preserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets in accordance with "Policy D2 Heritage";*
- e. comprises details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character;*
- f. integrates well with the surrounding streets and open spaces, improving movement through the site and wider area with direct, accessible and easily recognisable routes and contributes positively to the street frontage;*
- j. responds to natural features and preserves gardens and other open space;*
- m. preserves strategic and local views;*

The Council will resist development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

Policy D2 – Heritage

The Council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens and locally listed heritage assets.

Conservation areas

Conservation areas are designated heritage assets and this section should be read in conjunction with the section above headed 'designated heritage assets'. In order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the Council will take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management strategies when assessing applications within conservation areas. The Council will:



e. require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area;

h. preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character and appearance of a conservation area or which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage.

Policy A5 – Basements

The policy sets out various criteria for basement development in the borough and notes that "The Council will only permit basement development where it is demonstrated to its satisfaction that the proposal would not cause harm to (inter alia):

- (a) The architectural character of the building; and,*
- (e) The significance of heritage assets.*

Hampstead Conservation Area Statement (2002)

4.5 The Hampstead Conservation Area Statement includes a series of area specific policies relating to new development.

H10 Front and rear gardens are an integral characteristic of the Conservation Area, many of which retain boundary walls/ railings and planting. Proposals should respect the original style of boundary and these should be retained and reinstated where they have been lost. The loss of front boundary walls where it has occurred detracts from the appearance of the front garden by reducing the area for soft landscaping in this urban residential area. Furthermore, the loss of front boundary walls facilitates the parking of vehicles in part of the property, which would adversely affect the setting of the building and the general street scene. The Council will resist any further loss of front boundary walls and conversion of front gardens into hardstanding parking areas.

H2I The UDP provides the context and guidance for proposals for new development with regard to appropriate land uses. New development should be seen as an opportunity

to enhance the Conservation Area and should respect the built form and historic context of the area, local views as well as existing features such as building lines, roof lines, elevational design, and where appropriate, architectural characteristics, detailing, profile, and materials of adjoining buildings.

H22 Hampstead has a variety of building types, ages and styles. There are striking examples of modern architecture and design, however modern development has not always taken account of the area's history and its context. Modern architectural design will not be resisted per se, but it should be considerate to its context.

The Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan (2018)

4.6 The Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in October 2018 and the following policies are relevant:

Policy DH1: Design

1. Development proposals should demonstrate how they respond and contribute positively to the distinctiveness and history of the character areas identified in Map 2 and Appendix 2 through their design and landscaping.

2. Development proposals should demonstrate how they respect and enhance the character and local context of the relevant character area(s) by:

- a. Ensuring that design is sympathetic to established building lines and arrangements of front gardens, walls, railings or hedges.*
- c. Responding positively and sympathetically to the existing rhythm, proportion, height, scale, massing, materials and storey heights of surrounding buildings.*
- e. Demonstrating how the proposal protects and enhances the views as shown on Map 4.*

4. Development proposals that fail to respect and enhance the character of the area and the way it functions will not be supported.



Policy DH2: Conservation areas and listed buildings

1. Planning applications within a Conservation Area must have regard to the guidelines in the relevant Conservation Area Appraisal(s) and Management Strategies.

3. New development should take advantage of opportunities to enhance the Conservation Areas by protecting and, where appropriate, restoring original architectural features, including walls, windows, doors, etc., that would make a positive contribution to the Conservation Areas.

4. Development proposals must seek to protect and/or enhance buildings (or other elements) which make a positive contribution to the Conservation area, as identified in the relevant Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Strategies (see Appendix 3).

Camden Planning Guidance - Design (January 2021)

4.7 This document has various generic policy and guidance on new development within the Borough.

Paragraph 2.9

In order to achieve high quality design in the borough we require applicants to consider buildings in terms of:

- context
- height
- accessibility
- orientation
- scale and massing
- siting
- functionality and layout
- detailing
- materials

Paragraph 2.10

- Development should respond positively and sensitively to the existing context

- Development should integrate well with the existing character of a place, building and its surroundings

Paragraph 2.11

Good design should respond appropriately to the existing context by:

- ensuring the scale of the proposal overall integrates well with the surrounding area
- carefully responding to the scale, massing and height of adjoining buildings, the general pattern of heights in the surrounding area
- positively integrating with and enhancing the character, history, archaeology and nature of existing buildings on the site and other buildings immediately adjacent and in the surrounding area, and any strategic or local views, vistas and landmarks. This is particularly important in conservation areas.

Paragraph 2.12

The design of a building and/or groups of buildings should carefully consider accessibility and permeability between the development site and its surroundings:

- new development should be designed to integrate well with the existing surrounding layout to create well connected places and spaces that complement one another
- development form and layout must also be appropriately designed to respond sensitively to the surrounding area with regard to density, scale and massing

Paragraph 2.14

Materials should form an integral part of the design process and should:

- Be contextual – the texture, colour, pattern and patina of materials can influence the impact and experience of buildings for users and the wider townscape. The quality of a well-designed building can easily be reduced by the use of poor quality or an unsympathetic palette of materials. Decisions on the materials used in a development scheme should be informed by those used in the local area.
- Respond to existing heritage assets and features by relating to the character and appearance of the area, particularly in



conservation areas or within the setting of listed buildings.

The London Plan 2021

4.8 The London Plan 2021 is the Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London. It sets out a framework for how London will develop over the next 20-25 years and the Mayor's vision for Good Growth. Policy HC1 Heritage conservation and growth part C is relevant.

C Development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation within their surroundings. The cumulative impacts of incremental change from development on heritage assets and their settings should also be actively managed. Development proposals should avoid harm and identify enhancement opportunities by integrating heritage considerations early on in the design process.

5 Assessment of the proposals

5.1 This section will assess the impact of the proposals upon the site, the streetscape and the character and appearance of the surrounding Hampstead Conservation Area.

5.2 The proposed development is for the demolition of the two existing garages on the site and the erection of a two storey (plus basement) dwelling house at the site.

Principle of development

5.3 The applicant has undertaken several rounds of pre-application discussions with the Council and the principle of development on the site was confirmed as acceptable in correspondence dated 7 May 2020 and again on 24 March 2022. The latter letter stating that that:

As existing the site contains 2 garages. It provides a generous gap in the streetscene; however this isn't identified within the Conservation Area or Neighbourhood Plan to be of significance. It is considered that development on the site could be considered acceptable, subject to the development being of a high standard that would not compromise the character and appearance of the surrounding streetscene.

The proposals

5.4 The house is arranged over two main storeys, with further accommodation within the roofscape. The eaves and ridge heights accord with no.12 to the north and sit well below the parapet and ridge line of no.14 to the south. The ground floor level accommodation is raised, with steps up to the front door, in order to respond to the established character along the street.

5.5 The proposed front building line aligns with nos. 12 and 14 and the new house respects the form of no.12 with a recessed element containing the main entrance door.



This also provides visual interest and articulation to the front façade.

Local Context

5.6 The site straddles the character zones identified at section 3 above and thus offers the potential for a transitional building. The previous scheme submitted as application 2021/1564/P reflected the scale and architectural character of the Italianate houses to the south, as guided by the Council in the 2020 pre application discussions. However, the revised scheme has been designed to respond to the scale, character and materiality of the Edwardian semi-detached pair at nos.10-12 and the more general appearance and materiality of the Queen Anne revival houses to the north. The proportions and key datum-points to nos.10-12 – eaves and ridge height - have been followed, ensuring that the overall massing of the proposed house is sympathetic. In doing so, the proposed high quality new house will also complement and preserve the setting of the taller Italianate houses at no.14 onwards, to the south of the site.

5.7 Indeed, this approach reflects the general views of the Hampstead CAAC who noted in their letter dated 7 September 2021 in relation to application 2021/1564/P that *“The appropriate design aim is to relate more to the houses to the north.”*

Proportions and detailed design

5.8 The proposed house will have a pared back, contemporary style, which complements the red brick houses to the north, but which will allow the building to remain legible as a modern addition to the streetscape and a secondary feature in relation to the original historic buildings.

5.9 The front façade responds to the proportions of the houses at nos.10-12, with the same overall composition of two main storeys and a roofscape. The steeply hipped roof is also in keeping with the surrounding context to

the north, whereby the roofscapes are a prominent element to each building.

5.10 The overall massing of the proposed building was considered acceptable by the Council in their pre-application response of 24 March 2002, noting that *“The building has the appearance of a two storey building and would be most appropriate in this location as that matches the eaves of No.12 and it should not be taller than this neighbour. The revised scheme largely complies with this at the front. The recessed entrance is welcomed and provides some relief while helping link it to the character of the street.”*

5.11 To the rear the building line matches that of no.12 and is set slightly forward of no.14. However, the façade is chamfered to minimise any impact upon the neighbour to the south. The rear façade has a similar character to the front elevation, but with large French doors at ground floor level to access the garden. A glazed sunroom will project to the rear, in a similar position to the existing conservatory at no.12. In order to draw light into the basement there will be small lightwell adjacent to the sunroom, but this will not be readily visible, and the proposed basement will remain minimally expressed.

5.12 The roofscape will be a subordinate element within the overall architectural composition, with a steep hipped roof form. This will ensure that it reads as a distinct and separate element from the lower parts of the front and rear facades. Rooflights will be discreetly incorporated to the narrow flat section of the main roof, to the northern roof slope and to the roof of the dormer on the southern slope. This dormer will be well setback from the front of the building to ensure that it is a recessive feature.

Materiality

5.13 The house will be faced in slim, red handmade Peterson bricks, with matching traditional flush pointing. Pigmented concrete



banding and detailing will complement the colour and tone of the brickwork. The roof will be clad in the same pigmented concrete, in the form of precast panels, with anodised aluminium windows in a red/brown tone to complement the brickwork and concrete. The position of the concrete banding above the ground floor fenestration and to the eaves will align with the corbelled brickwork string course and eaves cornice to nos.10 and 12, but interpreted in a simpler, pared back manner.

5.14 Because of the sympathetic palette of materials the proposed new house will sit comfortably with the houses to the north. Brickwork is a high-quality material and will provide texture and tactility to the design. This will be complemented by the smoother pigmented concrete accents which create textural variation to the facades and adds visual interest.

5.15 The Council considered the possible approaches to the materiality and detailed design of the new house in their pre application response dated 24 March 2022 and noted that *"...it should not necessarily match either neighbouring properties which are stucco-faced semi-detached villas and arts and crafts styles respectively, but should be intended at the start of the design to influence it rather than an end thought. However, a red palette would likely be the most appropriate for the site. It should take influence from the street scene but it is not entirely necessary to copy it....Need for more interest on the front, this could be through banding or other decorative features or a mild/slight set back."* The letter also noted, in response to more worked up versions of the pre-application scheme that *"...the material palette would likely be appropriate in this context."*

5.16 In keeping with its generally contemporary aesthetic, the fenestration will not ape the heavy subdivision of the windows to the Queen Anne houses. However, the openings will be broken down through the positioning of concrete mullions and window transoms at 1st

floor level. To the ground floor façade there will be a projecting bay, with varying planes to its component elements, adding visual interest and articulation in a contemporary manner.

Front garden and boundary

5.17 Between the house and the public realm there will be a front garden with a narrow lightwell to serve the basement storey. This lightwell is set close to the front façade of the house and concealed behind a low dwarf front boundary wall. The creation of a front garden, alongside a traditional front boundary wall and railings will create an appropriate level of enclosure to the street, reinforce the pattern of front boundaries along the street and enhance the appearance of this part of the site, particularly when compared with the existing open, hard landscaped forecourt.

Appeal at no.4b Hampstead Hill Gardens

5.18 Planning permission (2019/5835/P) was recently granted on appeal (APP/X5210/W/21/3272103) at no.4b Hampstead Hill Gardens for the replacement of an existing mid 20th century house, attached to no.4a, with a new house. The existing building was also considered by the Inspector to detract from the character and appearance of the Hampstead Conservation Area. There are thus direct parallels between the two sites.

5.19 The Inspector found at paragraph 16 that *"Regarding its scale, the proposed replacement is constrained by the restricted plot size and largely reflects the footprint of the existing building. The second-floor accommodation would be contained within the roof space, with dormer windows to front and rear. Such articulation moderates the overall height and massing required to provide a further floor of accommodation."* Furthermore, at section 17 the Inspector noted that the proposed building *"...is compatible with, and brings about an improvement to, the character and appearance of the streetscene. Whilst of a*



greater scale than the poorer quality existing dwelling, this would neither be to such a degree as to compete harmfully with the adjacent and nearby larger buildings.” This assessment and its conclusions also apply to the site at no.14a where a new, sympathetically designed house of a similar scale to that at no.4b Hampstead Hill Gardens, will also replace low quality elements within the streetscene which currently detract from its character and appearance.

5.20 Whilst the Council have explicitly accepted the principle of developing on the site during pre-application discussions in 2020 and 2022/23, neighbour objections to application 2021/1546/P have raised concerns regarding the impact of the proposed house upon the existing gap in the townscape between nos.12 and 14 Hampstead Hill Gardens. It has been suggested that the gap between the buildings marks the break between the earlier Italianate 1870s villas to the south and the later, red brick Queen Anne houses to the north. It is agreed that the site marks a transition in the character of the townscape, but it is suggested that this transition can be articulated through a new, contemporary building as easily as through a simple gap in the townscape. Whilst it is accepted that the gap will be narrowed, glimpses through to greenery in gardens to the rear will still be possible between the new house and nos.12 and 14 to the north and south, in a manner akin to many other narrower townscape gaps elsewhere along Hampstead Hill Gardens.

5.21 At no.4b the Inspector was explicit that he did “....not attribute negative merit to the existing and anomalous building that occupies this site, through this preserving a degree of openness and a narrow viewpoint to the rear of No 4. This should not preclude the relatively modest increase in scale and height of a replacement building that would make a positive contribution architecturally and avoid harm to the historic environment. Historic England’s conservation principles include the expectation for proposals to reveal or reinforce heritage significance. The improved architectural quality of the replacement dwelling, marrying well with

that of the surrounding nineteenth century buildings, helps achieve such heritage reinforcement, whilst largely preserving that presently revealed.”

Assessment of the proposals in relation to the statutory, national and local heritage policy framework

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

5.22 The proposed scheme would replace the existing poor-quality, post-war garages on the site, with a new, sympathetically designed and attractive family house. Thus, the character and appearance of the Hampstead Conservation Area would be enhanced in accordance with the s.72 statutory duty.

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

5.23 The NPPF requires the significance of heritage assets to be described and for this significance to be taken into account when considering the impact of a proposal in order to avoid or minimise conflict with the heritage asset (paras 194 and 195). New development should make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets (para 197). Great weight should be given to the conservation of the heritage asset when considering the impact of a proposed development and the more important the asset the greater the weight should be (para 199).

5.24 This Heritage Appraisal has assessed the significance of the site and its current structures and identified their contribution to the surrounding conservation area. The significance of the historic environment along Hampstead Hill Gardens has also been identified and appraised, and the impact of the proposals assessed in line with that significance. The proposals have taken account of pre application advice provided by the Council and of consultation responses to pending application 2021/1564/P. The revised design responds positively to the surrounding



context and relates well to the houses at nos.10-12 Hampstead Hill Gardens as well as the wider context and local distinctiveness will be reinforced through the use of contextual materials, form and design. Consequently, the proposals are considered to comply with the requirements of the NPPF.

The London Plan 2021

5.25 The proposals are also considered to comply with the adopted London Plan (2021). The thrust of Policy HC1 - Heritage conservation and growth is that development should conserve the significance of heritage assets and their surroundings. Enhancement opportunities should be identified early on. The proposals are considered to comply, replacing a pair of low-grade garages which detract from the streetscene with a new high quality, contextual house which enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Local Policy

The London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017

5.26 The proposals are considered to comply with **Policy D1 – Design** and **D2 – Heritage** of the London Borough of Camden's Local Plan 2017.

5.27 The proposals are of high quality and have been sensitively designed to respect local context and character, responding directly to the scale, proportions, and materiality of nos.10-12 and more generally to the Queen Anne character of the houses to the north along Hampstead Hill Gardens. The building provides an appropriate transition between the two phases of development which characterise Hampstead Hill Gardens. Its scale and massing provide an appropriate sense of subordination in relation to no.14, which will maintain its visual primacy and grand proportions within the streetscene. The proposed scheme's materials and detailing have been chosen to complement the group of houses to the north, using a

contemporary palette of handmade brick, pigmented concrete, and anodized aluminium windows to reflect the colour and tone of the Edwardian and Queen Anne buildings.

5.28 The proposals will replace two low grade mid 20th century garages and replace them with an attractive new home of an appropriate scale, position, design and materiality, thus enhancing the character and appearance of the Hampstead Conservation Area.

5.29 The scheme will also comply with **Policy A5 – Basements** of the Local Plan. The proposed basement will be minimally expressed, with a small lightwell to the front, tucked close to the house and screened by the front garden boundary wall. The lightwell to the rear will be discreetly positioned and will not be visible from the public realm. Overall, there will be no harm to the architectural character or significance of the streetscene along Hampstead Hill Gardens, particularly given the presence of the original front lightwells to the 1870s houses to the south and to the new house directly opposite the site at no.23a.

The Hampstead Conservation Area Statement (2002)

5.30 The proposals comply with the relevant policies within the Statement. The replacement of the existing garages with the proposed house and its associated landscaping, will make a demonstrable positive contribution to the character and appearance of this part of the Hampstead Conservation Area. This will comply with policy H21, which requires careful consideration of the built form and historic context of the area, including building lines, roof lines, elevational design, architectural characteristics and materials. The contemporary but contextual architectural approach which has been chosen is in line with policy H22.

5.31 The intention is to match the existing adjoining boundary as part of the development,



introducing an appropriate new front boundary wall and railings, and a new sense of enclosure to this part of the streetscene. This is fully compliant with policy H10 which is clear about the importance of front boundaries within the conservation area and encourages suitable reinstatement.

The Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan (2018)

5.32 The proposals comply with Policy DH1: Design of the Neighbourhood Plan, responding positively to the distinctiveness of the area through high quality design which takes account of proportion, height, scale, massing and materials. The building lines of the flanking buildings have been respected and the proposed front garden and new boundary wall will follow the pattern established along the street.

5.33 Map 4 of the Neighbourhood Plan identifies key views. The application site does not fall within any of these identified views.

5.34 The proposals also comply with Policy DH2: Conservation areas and listed buildings. As noted above at paragraphs 5.30 and 5.31, the proposals comply with the area specific guidance within the Hampstead Conservation Area Statement (2002). The existing site is acknowledged to be a detractor within the streetscene. The proposals have clearly taken the opportunity to enhance the conservation area through the integration of a suitable and sympathetic new house, which marks the transition between the 1870s Italianate housing to the south and the red brick Queen Anne development to the north. The scheme will still maintain glimpse views through to greenery in the gaps between the new house and nos.12 and 14.

Camden Planning Guidance - Design (January 2021)

5.35 The proposals are considered to comply with this policy guidance. The proposed house will respond positively and sensitively to the surrounding context and integrate well with the established character of Hampstead Hill Gardens, which has a strong sense of enclosure and narrow gaps between buildings (para 2.10). In formulating the revised proposals for the site, careful consideration has been given to siting, height, scale, massing, detailing and materials (paras 2.9, 2.11 and 2.12). The proposed palette of materials draws inspiration from the Edwardian houses at nos.10-12 Hampstead Hill Gardens and from the Queen Anne houses beyond that to the north, with red brick and complementary toned pigmented concrete (para 2.14).



6 Conclusion

6.1 The key matter for consideration in relation to these proposals are their effect upon the site, the streetscape along Hampstead Hill Gardens and the character and appearance of the Hampstead Conservation Area.

6.2 The application site is a gap in the townscape created by the position of the LNWR railway tunnel hidden beneath the site. Neither the site, gap or tunnel are identified as significant or of any demonstrable value to the character and appearance of the conservation area. There are no identified views or vistas which would be affected by the development. No other plot or land (as far as we are aware) positioned above the tunnel running from Hampstead Heath to Finchley Road is protected or restricted from development for this reason.

6.3 The proposed scheme replaces a pair of poor-quality, post-war garages, which are, at best, neutral contributors to the character and appearance of the Hampstead Conservation Area. They are an anomaly within the streetscene which is otherwise characterised by high quality residential properties, mostly of the 19th and early 20th centuries, but with later infill.

6.4 The proposed house would replace this atypical feature, with a new, high quality and sympathetically design house, reinforcing the residential character and appearance of Hampstead Hill Gardens and relating positively to surrounding development. Whilst the existing gap would be partially infilled, narrower gaps would be retained to each side of the building, which are generally more characteristic of the road, with glimpse views through to the greenery beyond.

6.5 Overall the proposed new dwelling respects its surrounding context in terms of scale, massing, siting, design and materials, and consequently would enhance the character and appearance of this part of the Hampstead Conservation Area.

6.6 The proposals are considered to comply with the s.72 duty of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 and the London Plan 2021. At local level it complies with the policies of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017, the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan 2018, the Hampstead Conservation Area Statement 2002 and the general guidance contained within Camden Planning Guidance – Design 2021.