



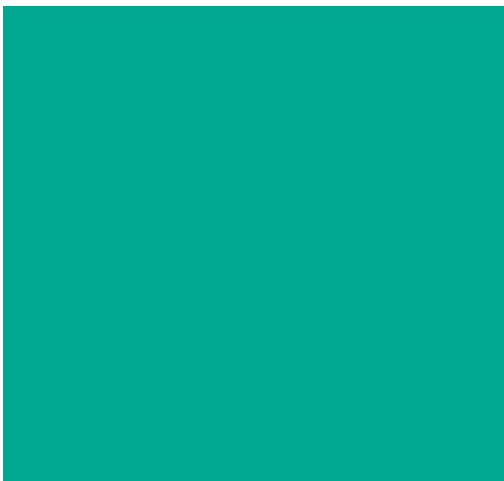
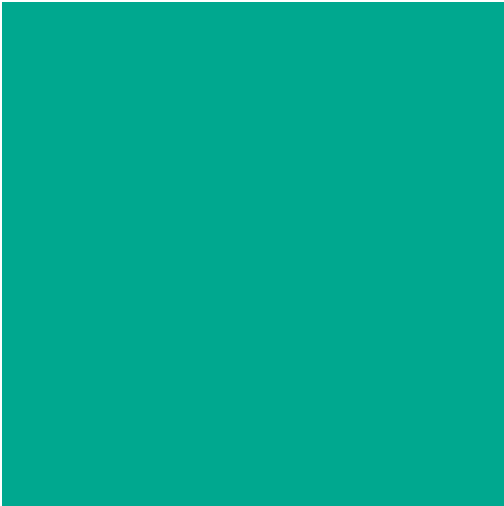
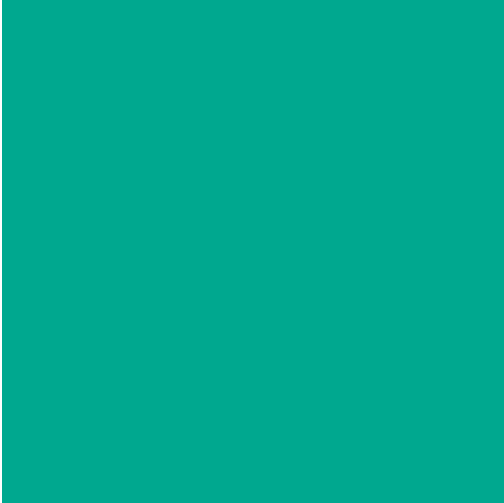
PLANNING AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

Site: Bromwich House, 1 Witanhurst Lane, Highgate, N6 6LT

For: The Bromwich Trust

Project Ref: 23026_PHS

Date: October 2023



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CONTENTS PAGE



Section	Title	Page
1.0	INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	2
2.0	DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND SURROUNDINGS	3
3.0	PLANNING HISTORY	8
4.0	RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY	10
5.0	PLANNING ASSESSMENT	12
6.0	CONCLUSION	16

DRAWINGS:

BRH 01 – 001 : Site Plan 1:500 @ A3

BRH 01 – 200 : Existing Elevations 1:100 @ A1

BRH 01 – 201 : Existing Elevations 1:100 @ A1

BRH 01 – 100 : Existing Plan 1:50 @ A1

BRH 01 – 102 : (Proposed) General Arrangement Plan 1:50 @ A1

BRH 01 – 220 : Proposed Elevations 1:100 @ A1

BRH 01 – 221 : Proposed Elevations 1:100 @ A1

1.0 **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

1.1 This Planning and Heritage Statement has been prepared to accompany a householder planning application submitted by GC II AD as a companion document to their Design Statement (DS). GC II AD has also prepared the application drawings as referenced in the preceding contents section.

1.2 We were engaged following a previous pre-application submission prepared by STS Structural Engineering Ltd. That proposed the replacement and enlargement of a roof-top “conservatory” involving the removal of two small rooflights and small walls to accommodate it.

1.3 Despite being justified on grounds of water ingress, the case officer rejected the replacement structure owing to the loss of the existing “triangular lantern” which was considered an important characteristic of the original design. The proposal was for a flat roofed structure which, whilst still featuring large areas of glazing and similar to the construction and appearance of the main house, did not retain the “pyramid”.

1.4 As will be seen the existing largely glazed structure is not in fact a pyramid albeit presenting as a triangle in some (2D) elevations. This notwithstanding the householder has retained specialist architects and is proposing sympathetic repairs and alterations to the fabric of the building including a proposed replacement roof-top structure much more similar to that existing.

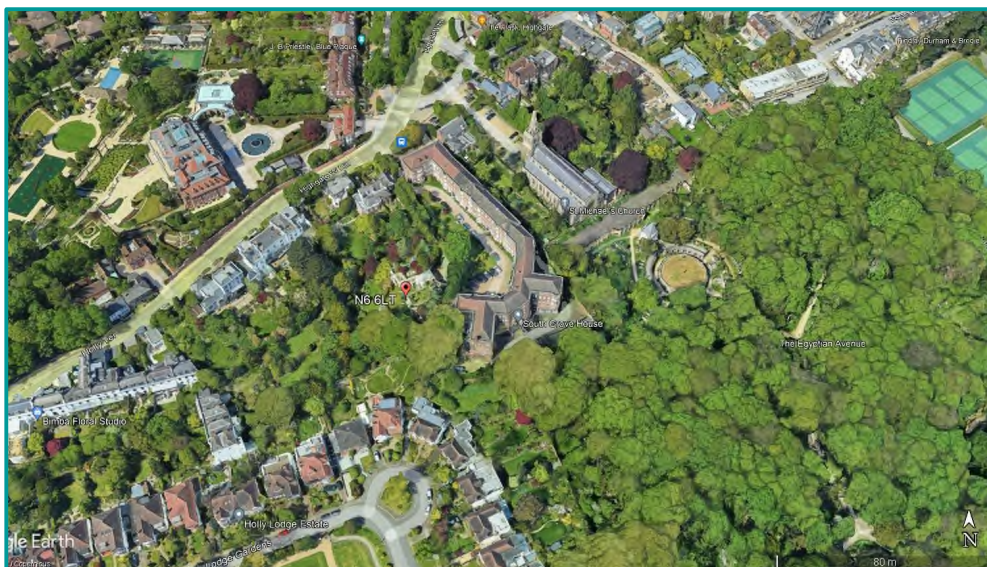
1.5 As can be seen from the DS, the proposals include:

- Replacement roof-top “conservatory” structure
- Replacement of two roof-top skylights
- Replacement of all windows on the ground and lower ground floor
- Replacement of front door and garage doors

- 1.6 The design rationale for the changes is explored in the companion DS but suffice to say the rooflights along with the roof-top structure leak, many of the window sealed units are blown, the original carriage front doors (both to the house and garages) are rotten or warped and the windows are made from somewhat crude curtain walling rather than bespoke. The existing roof-top structure also has all the detail finesse of a High Street sourced conservatory.
- 1.7 The package of works is designed to let this now nearly 30 year old structure to become properly watertight and be finished to a standard which befits the calibre of its original design concept. It goes beyond, and is different from, the pre-app proposal and has paid careful regard to the surroundings and all relevant policy and guidance. It also follows several visits to the site and surroundings by ourselves and the architect.

2.0 **DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

- 2.1 The DS describes and shows pictorially the property and its immediate surroundings and this material provides context for the suite of existing and proposed drawings. The purpose of this section is to provide a wider context and identify heritage assets which must be considered and assessed insofar as the proposals may affect them.
- 2.2 Scanned in below is a series of Google Earth aerial images. The first shows Bromwich House (N6 6LT marker) and surrounding development on all sides. With the exception of the Holly Lodge Estate (southern edge) the entire area is within Highgate Conservation Area which extends well to the north into Haringey Borough. The Camden part is U shaped (around the Holly Lodge Estate) and Bromwich House adjoins the boundary.



Google Earth Aerial Image 2022

2.3 Holly Lodge Estate aside, many of the properties whose grounds adjoin the application site and those close by are on the statutory list. Referencing the Historic England website and studying the Highgate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals (CAA) confirms that the following properties are listed:

- Holly Terrace (southwest from Bromwich House), Grade II
- 84, 83-81, 80 and 79-78 Highgate West Hill, Grade II
- Witanhurst, Grade II* (across Highgate West Hill)
- Witanhurst North/South Lodge. Grade II
- Voel House, 18 South Grove, Grade II*
- St Michael's Church, Grade II*
- St Michael's Church Wall, Grade II

2.4 The closest property to Bromwich House is South Grove House a 3 to 5 storey mansion block to the northeast built in the 1930s in a Georgian revival style and replacing a single house which stood on the road side. It is allocated "positive" status in the CAA.

2.5 Bromwich House is accorded no status (the Conservation Area Plan identifies listed buildings and positive buildings and the text buildings or features which detract from the character of the area). It is, however, described thus:

"To the west (of South Grove House) is Bromwich House, No1a (generally known as No1) Witanhurst Lane, reached down a long drive paved with granite sets. The entrance is marked by ornate timber gates reminiscent of a portcullis. The house itself is totally concealed from the road, since it is low-lying. It was built in a distinctive post-modern style, with a glazed pyramid-shaped roof."

2.6 The description is slightly misleading on several counts. Witanhurst Lane is a private road gated just inside the crossover from Highgate West Hill. It is possible to see through the gates down the cobbled drive but the house cannot be seen as is confirmed by the Google Earth Streetview Image below. Indeed, public views of the building and its grounds are all but impossible and even from the nearest adjacent properties rarely more than glimpses are available.



Google Earth Streetview Image

- 2.7 Finally, the house does not have a “pyramid-shaped roof”. Most of the roof is flat and supports a garden. There is a single pyramidal rooflight, a further domed rooflight and a glazed conservatory or pavilion occupying a small part of the roof and which has a ridged and hipped glazed roof. This stands above the main entrance but only when viewed head-on does it present as triangular or pyramidal.
- 2.8 In order to provide context to the CAA entry and our comments, scanned in below are 3 Google Earth Images. The first is looking northeast to the mansion block and church. This shows clearly the extent of flat roof, the greenery upon it (or them as the lowest ground floor also has a green roof) and the surrounding vegetation much of which is evergreen.
- 2.9 These views have been chosen deliberately to show “the pyramid” which from many angles cannot be seen even from this height let alone nearby public and private vantage points. In this latter regard the pavilion is best glimpsed from the upper floor flats on the southwest front of South Grove House although even from them the trees in both their grounds and at Bromwich House conspire to prevent them.



Google Earth Image looking North Eastwards

2.10 The third and fourth images below are looking more or less south across the lodges from Witanhurst Park and southwest across the top of South Grove House. These probably best convey the separation distances to the nearest properties including those which are listed (comparison with the site plan and para 2.3 is helpful in this regard).



Google Earth Image Looking Southwards



Google Earth Image Looking South Westwards

2.11 The third image also shows clearly the Grade II listed properties at 78 and 79 Highgate West Hill in whose original garden Bromwich House was built.

3.0 **REVIEW OF RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

3.1 Research of the planning history for land to the rear of 78-79 Highgate West Hill (as it was known prior to the creation of Bromwich House) reveals six applications, three of which proceeded to appeal. Of the listed decisions neither LBC or PINS has any retained drawings so only the decisions can be seen. They are as follows:

3.2 PL/8501834/ Erection of single dwellinghouse, submitted 24/10/85. Refused 10/01/86;

1. Contrary to policies to resist loss of private open space.
2. Contrary to policies to preserve the character of designated fringes of the heath, in particular retention of back garden space and unbuilt land.
3. Visually detrimental to the character of this part of the Conservation Area and Fringes of the Heath.

3.3 Subsequently appealed (T/APP/X5210/A/86/042766/P2 confusingly described as against non-determination) it was allowed subject to 8 conditions. Other than standard or advisory conditions two were of a pre-commencement/construction type relating to the precise location of the dwelling (2) and the materials to be used and landscaping details (5). The advisories included condition 4 removing permitted development rights as contained in the then (1977) General Development Order as amended or any re-enactment or revocation. It included Classes I and II which embraced enlargements, improvements and alterations to a dwellinghouse and sundry minor operations.

3.4 Mindful of the observations made in Section 2 above, some of the Inspector's comments about the plans under consideration are pertinent. They include:

"23. In relation to the design of the building and integration with landscaping and trees it seems to me that, for all its size, it could be set low enough into the ground without harming trees and roots if adequate precautions were taken. It could also be set low enough in my opinion to have little impact on the character of the surroundings even if its top can be seen from the Heath."

"28. From my own inspection of the properties situated around the site and at the proposed detailed location of the building, I accept that parts of it would be visible from some angles. In particular, many residents of South Grove House would look down on it through trees both on their land and on the appeal site. The most obvious structure would be the central pinnacle of the pavilion above the entrance to the house. But the remainder of the proposal would be almost wholly covered with natural greenery."

3.5 Conditions 2 and 5 were the subject of four further applications to discharge namely PL/8501891/, PL/8601505/R2, PL/89/03528 and PL/9003395. All were refused and the last two appealed. The first was dismissed but the last allowed at appeal in February 1991 (T/APP/X5210/A/90/168940/P2).

3.6 The main issue identified by the Inspector was "the acceptability of the landscaping scheme on this site in the conservation area in relation to neighbours' amenities bearing in mind development plan policy and the relevant guidelines" (Para 4).

3.7 Although the penultimate application was refused and dismissed, the Inspector in criticising the information before him concerning external materials nonetheless observed as follows:

"14. As to the matter of materials for the external faces of the building, including the roof, this is in my judgement a case where, despite the location within a conservation area, detailed control is less appropriate because the site can only be seen from public viewpoints at some distance. Moreover, given the strikingly different form of the proposed house I see no reason why this should not be emphasised by the use of Portland stone as a contrast to the surrounding brick."

4.0 **REVIEW OF RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY**

- 4.1. The Development Plan comprises the London Plan March 2021, the Camden Local Plan 2017 and the Highgate Neighbourhood Plan 2017. As the London Plan is a strategic document it is not considered relevant in this instance.

Camden Local Plan

- 4.2 The Local Plan Policies Map denotes the grounds of Bromwich House along with South Grove Gardens to the north and Holly Gardens to the south, as Open Spaces (private), 150, 267, and 213 respectively. This longstanding designation for Bromwich House pre-dates its construction as is confirmed by the original 1985 refusal (see 3.2 above).
- 4.3 Relevant sections of the Local Plan are 6, Protecting Amenity and 7, Design and Heritage and the following policies therein:
- **Policy A1 Managing the impact of development.** This policy confirms that permission will be granted unless it causes unacceptable harm to amenity. Clauses a., b., e., and f. and paragraphs 6.3 and 6.4 are relevant to the proposals.

- **Policy A2 Open Space** seeks to protect in its widest sense (from loss in part or whole to setting) the various categories of designated and undesignated open space within the borough.
- **Policy D1 Design** seeks to secure high quality design in all development. Relevant clauses are a., b., c., d. and e. and paragraphs 7.2, 7.4 and 7.6 The latter references the Conservation Area Appraisals/ Strategy referred to in Section 2 of this statement. D1 is also cross referenced to D2.
- **Policy D2 Heritage** reflects the Statutes and the Council's need to have regard to preserving or enhancing heritage assets when considering development proposals. Clause e. refers to Conservation Areas as do paragraphs 7.46, 7.47 and 7.54.

Clause k. has regard to the effect of development upon the setting of a listed building and therefore its significance.

Highgate Neighbourhood Plan – A Plan for Highgate

4.4 The most relevant policies, and which complement the Local Plan which was prepared in parallel, are:

- **Fig 2 Key Diagrams:** Identifies various designations but these exclude Bromwich House which is in an area of "white" land.
- **Core Objective 5: Develoement and Heritage.** The objective is to preserve and enhance Highgate's unique character. The sub-objectives include:

"S05.1 To guide the design and form of both new development and alterations to existing buildings and boundaries to preserve and

enhance Highgate's conservation areas and ensure Highgate's rich archaeological history is recorded and, where necessary preserved."

- **The Development and Heritage section** includes the following policies:

DH2

"Development proposals, including alterations or extensions to existing buildings, should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Highgate's conservation areas, and respect the setting of its listed buildings and other heritage assets. Development should preserve or enhance the open, semi-rural or village character where this is a feature of the area."

DH5

"Roof extensions, dormers and rooflights should respect the existing roof form in terms of design, scale, materials and detail and be restricted to the rear except where they are part of the established local character and a new extension or dormer would not have an adverse impact on the amenity of the area or the significance of heritage assets; re-roofing materials should avoid use of inappropriate substitute materials that can erode the character and appearance of buildings and areas.

Chimneystacks should be retained where they positively contribute to the character of the conservation area. Satellite dishes and other telecommunications equipment should be located discreetly, and not be sited at the front of buildings on the roofline in the conservation areas."

National Policy

The NPPF

4.5 The National Planning Policy Framework was first published in 2012 and last revised, albeit with very minimal changes, in September 2023. Although to be read as a whole and underpinned by the need to secure development which is sustainable in a social, economic and environmental sense the most relevant sections concern design and heritage.

- **12. Achieving well-designed places**
 - Paras: 130, 134
- **16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment**
 - Paras: 194, 195, 199, 202

5.0 **PLANNING ASSESSMENT**

Introduction

5.1 The package of proposals is for the maintenance of a building now 30 years old. Like many similar houses the doors and windows need replacing and like many flat roofed buildings the roof has leaked not helped by the plethora of structures upon it.

5.2 By virtue of Condition 4 of the original approval the right to enlarge, improve or alter the house was removed by the Inspector requiring “the Council’s approval for any such works that would otherwise be permitted development” owing to “the sensitive character of the site”.

5.3 The pre-app proposal which featured just a replacement and enlarged rooftop pavilion was viewed unfavourably not so much owing to the sensitivity of the site, but rather that the loss of the triangular lantern and its

proposed replacement would harm the character of the house, make it more conspicuous and a combination of the two would harm private views within the Conservation Area.

- 5.4 Whilst some of that assessment is questionable it was ascertained in the various appeals that whilst the house as a whole would be and patently is, largely invisible, the pavilion would, and can, be seen from neighbours' private views and possibly distant public views. From that point the current proposal will now be assessed element by element.

The Proposals

- 5.5 Before looking at the details the resistance to the building of the house originally stemmed in no small part to the site being designated as private open space. That designation is carried forward into the existing Local Plan and applies to the grounds of Bromwich House, South Grove House and Holly Gardens to the south. It is clear that the changes proposed would have absolutely no impact upon the extent of the open space and its appreciation as such.
- 5.6 The policy considerations, therefore, are two-fold namely basic development control criteria regarding public and neighbour amenity such as effects on privacy, outlook, sunlight and daylight, being overbearing and the overlapping consideration of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of the nearest listed buildings. The proposals have no consequence in terms of privacy, outlook, sunlight, daylight or being overbearing so we are left with considerations of appearance and the effect of the proposals upon the house, any neighbours or the locale as a whole.

1. The replacement pavilion

- 5.7 Unlike the pre-app scheme the current proposal is, as can be seen from a comparison of the existing and proposed drawings, very similar to what exists. It remains a glazed structure on a masonry base with a ridged and hipped roof presenting as a triangle on the front and rear elevations. The only change is a slight enlargement of the two small side wings or extensions which are to be slightly deeper and wider and fully glazed. The glazing bars are also now proposed to be bronzed rather than UPVC to match all the other new windows.
- 5.8 As the shape, size and volume of the replacement pavilion is little different from that existing then as the only part of the house which can be seen the status quo would be preserved. Consequently, it would have no material impact upon; the appearance of Bromwich House, the setting of the nearest listed buildings, this part of the Conservation Area or indeed the Conservation Areas as a whole. With regard to Bromwich House, it is neither listed nor identified as positive or as detracting. In Conservation Area terms, therefore, it is "neutral".

2. The replacement rooflights

- 5.9 As recognised by one of the appeal Inspectors, pavilion aside, the remainder of the building is to all intents invisible to the public hence the acceptance of the Portland stone facings as opposed to the almost universal use of brick elsewhere in the locale. Having regard to the two leaking rooflights, one is domed and one is pyramidal and both are obscured by vegetation on the roof.
- 5.10 Although each does sit proud of the roof neither, unlike the pavilion, feature in any descriptions and appraisals of the building like the pavilion. Each is more discreet, less high and generally surrounded and obscured by the roof

top vegetation. Their replacement with two flat rooflights with the same bronze finish to match the pavilion and other new windows would again make no material change to the overall appearance and character of Bromwich House so similar considerations apply as to the pavilion.

3. The replacement windows

- 5.11 The windows are almost 30 years old. As described, they are standard curtain walling material and, given the complexity and cost of the original planning and build process, possibly were used to reduce expenditure. Viewed at close quarters, as with the pavilion and rooflights, they are somewhat crude and clunky. As with any house there is the option of replacing the blown sealed units with new ones, but the homeowner's preference is to replace all the windows with some bespoke and more delicate units with a bronze finish.
- 5.12 As most of the windows in question are on the secluded garden front, and again mindful of the Inspector's opinion in considering the unbuilt proposals, there is no public view of them. They contrast with the surrounding window materials but as such are a perfect complement to Bromwich House which has always contrasted with its surroundings. As with the roof-top alterations, but even more so, they would have absolutely no impact whatsoever on the surroundings and are an entirely fitting improvement to the house.

4. The replacement main entrance and garage doors

- 5.13 Although relative, this is the most public face of Bromwich House with the curved brick wall pierced by similarly coloured doors to the house and garaging and the contrasting Portland stone centrepiece with the pavilion on top. All that is proposed are similar replacement doors to the house and garaging. The colour palette, shapes, sizes and proportions of the façade would all remain the same other than the pavilion glazing bars matching the other new fenestration and of course the existing and or proposed walling

and doors. As the “face” of Bromwich House, these changes would have no impact whatsoever on the appearance of the house and therefore the locale and the buildings within it.

- 5.14 To conclude, and mindful of the tests set by the NPPF, it is most firmly contended that the improvements will enhance the character, appearance and longevity of Bromwich House and consequently occasion no harm to the locale, the Conservation Area or the nearest listed buildings. As such they would be compliant with relevant Local and Neighbourhood Plan policies.

6.0 **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 Unlike the earlier pre-app, which only included details of a new rooftop pavilion, this carefully considered application proposes a suite of improvements and minor alterations to almost all the doors and windows in an attempt to make the building weathertight. Although barely 30 years old, leaks via the flat roof and the structures thereon are the principal problem which needs attention urgently if the fabric of the property is not to deteriorate.
- 6.2 The current proposals do include a replacement pavilion but the loss of the original glazed “pyramid” which was viewed unfavourably, is no longer being considered. Rather the proposal is a subtle re-working of the glazed roof top pavilion but with better detail design and proposing better materials. Similar considerations apply to the two replacement roof lights, which along with the new pavilion should prevent water ingress, as well as the other replacement doors and windows.
- 6.3 Notwithstanding the fact that the house and its materials are barely seen from the immediate surroundings, and that even the pavilion is only seen locally in private views from South Grove House and possibly long-distance public views, it is contended that the proposals compliment perfectly the

existing and original design aesthetic of Bromwich House. Despite the fact that it is not identified as having any “status” the proposed measures in helping to preserve it can but only enhance the character and appearance of the locale and the Conservation Area.

- 6.4 They also make it a more pleasant house in which to live which will be free of leaks and benefit from the latest glazing technology and the thermal efficiency which that brings.
- 6.5 Having regard to the nearest listed buildings the proposals would have no effect whatsoever upon their setting and no harm would be occasioned.
- 6.6 Accordingly, the package of householder improvements proposed are commended for approval.