

## Design and Access Statement

46 Hollycroft Avenue, London, NW3 7QN

Document prepared by Manea Kella, RIBA Chartered Practice

## **Design and Access Statement**

Project: 046 Hollycroft Avenue

Reference: 046 11.01 Design and Access Statement

Date: 18.09.24

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### 1.0 Application summary

1.1 This statement has been prepared by Manea Kella in support of the planning application submitted for 46 Hollycroft Avenue, London NW3 7QN. This document is to be read in conjunction with the submitted planning drawings.

1.2 The proposed alterations involve:

- Excavation works to the front of the property and remodelling of the planting beds.
- Introduction of a ramp and remodelling of the external stair.
- Replacement of the front boundary wall and retaining side boundary walls.
- Erection of a new enclosed bin store.

### 2.0 Conservation Area Guidance

2.1 46 Hollycroft Avenue is a detached period property located within the jurisdiction of London Borough of Camden and is held under a freehold ownership. The site lies within the Redington and Frognal Conservation Area and the property is not listed.



Fig. 1 Redington and Frognal Conservation Area map with the application boundary highlighted in red.

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- 2.2 The Redington and Frogna Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan, released in 2022, includes 46 Hollycroft Avenue within a group of buildings on the street that make a positive contribution to the area: 1-23 (odd), 27-41 (odd), 51-53 (odd), 2-18 (even), 24-46 (even).
- 2.3 The appraisal generally supports alterations that preserve or enhance the buildings, landscapes, public realm, or other characteristics that contribute to the special architectural or historic interest of the area. The appraisal encourages and supports the reversal of past harmful alterations to buildings and reinstatement of original features.
- 2.4 The appraisal generally does not support proposals that result in significant loss of rear gardens, along with garden trees which, where visible through building gaps, contribute to the green and leafy character of the area. The removal of street trees is also generally not supported.
- 2.5 The appraisal generally does not support any further loss of front boundary walls. The appraisal states that any new boundary treatments should complement the existing streetscape character, and concrete or timber panel fencing should be avoided.
- 2.6 The appraisal generally does not support extensive hardscaping. Where employed, the hard surfaces should be limited and feature permeable high-quality materials, such as clay or stone pavers, or setts – including York stone and granite. Asphalt or concrete casts, slabs or paving should be avoided.
- 2.7 The appraisal also highlights that bins which are being stored in prominent locations, including on road frontages, cause considerable harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 2.8 The appraisal encourages new development to consider its impact on the area's sustainability characteristics such as air quality and biodiversity.

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### 3.0 Site context and planning history

- 3.1 The house is a detached Edwardian property arranged over four storeys including a loft and a basement.
- 3.2 The building was completed in 1907 by English Architect Sir Guy Dawber, representing the late Arts and Crafts movement. The property measures approximately 432 m<sup>2</sup>.



Fig. 2 Google Maps Street View of the property.

- 3.3 The site is located within a predominantly residential area of Hampstead. Most of the properties in the area are a result of a fruitful collaboration between the architect Charles H.B. Quennell and Irish builder-developer George Washington Hart in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a result, the properties share common architectural features that draw influence from the Arts and Crafts style. Simultaneously, they integrate Neo-Georgian features such as symmetrical form and fenestration, and multi-pane white painted windows with vertical sliding sashes.
- 3.4 46 Hollycroft Avenue is one of the few houses in the area that was not designed by Quennell. The architecture reflects the move away from the typical old English vernacular style Sir Guy Dawber was known for, towards the freer Arts and Crafts movement with nods to classical details.
- 3.5 The townscape character that is typical for the area reflects the local topography. Some properties, including 46 Hollycroft Avenue, are elevated above the street level in response to the slope, with a landscaped bank to the front.



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- 3.6 46 Hollycroft Avenue provides a break within the street elevation with its landscaped front garden, as the neighbouring properties at 28 Ferncroft Avenue and 44 Hollycroft Avenue feature quite defensive boundary treatments. At No 28 and No 30 Ferncroft Avenue the boundary, as high as 3200mm, features a long run of tall timber fencing on top of a staggered brick wall. At No 44 Hollycroft Avenue, the front boundary, as high as 2300mm, features a wide garage door and tall hedges projecting above a low brick wall.



Fig. 3 Boundary treatment at 28 Ferncroft Avenue.

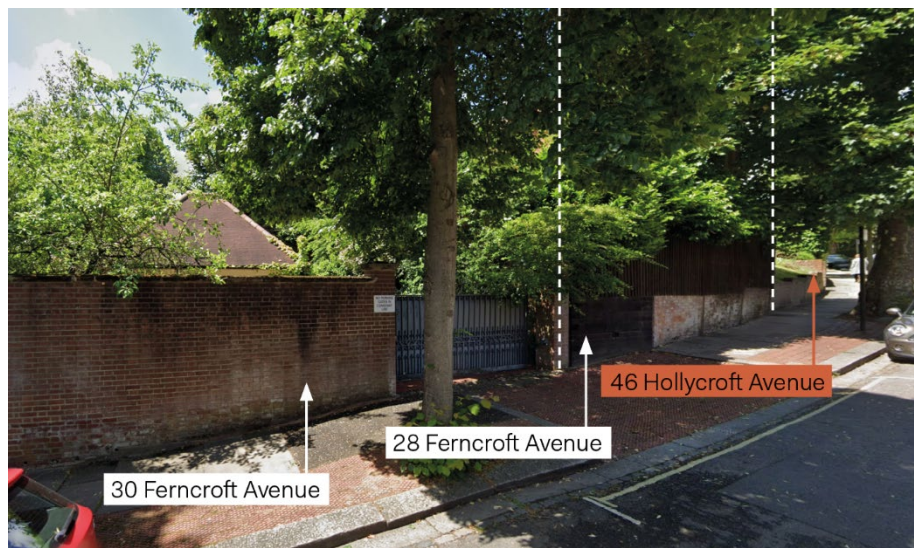


Fig. 4 Boundary treatments at 28 and 30 Ferncroft Avenue.

Manea Kella Ltd  
39-41 Lonsdale Road  
London NW6 6RA

info@maneakella.com  
+44 (0)20 8935 5003

Registered in England & Wales  
No. 10658512

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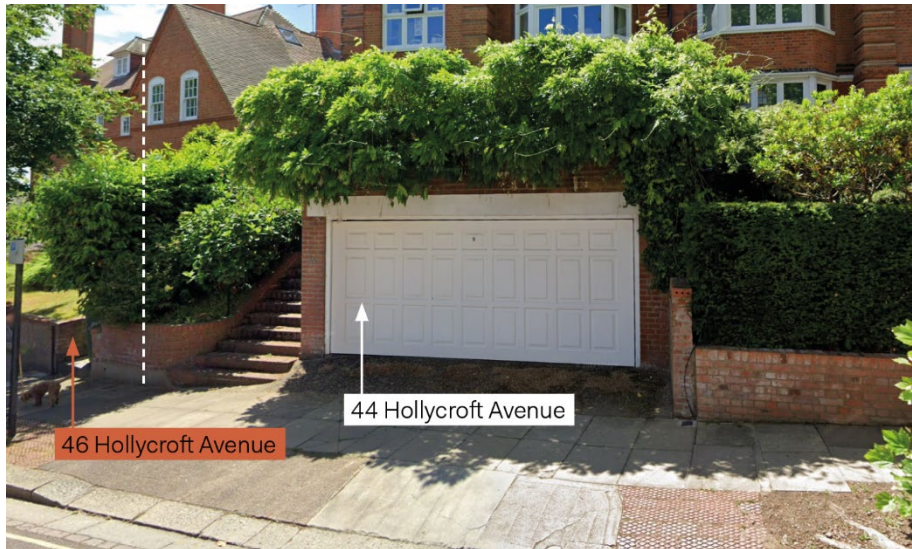


Fig. 5 Front boundary at 44 Hollycroft Avenue.

- 3.7 Over the years, many properties along Hollycroft Avenue have altered their front boundaries, and as a result, there is no one distinct language that defines the character of the boundary treatment in the area [Fig.6]. While some properties retain the original low brick walls with hedges, as it suits the topography of those plots, others have introduced diverse boundary treatments, including taller brick walls, metal railing, and timber fencing, and some have added garages to the front. Some front boundaries feature extensive planting, whereas elsewhere it is quite limited.



Fig.6 Existing front boundary treatments along Hollycroft Avenue



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Fig.6 Existing front boundary treatments along Hollycroft Avenue

- 3.8 Two unsuccessful attempts were made in the late 20th century to alter the existing frontage of 46 Hollycroft Avenue. In 1979, a planning application was submitted for the erection of a double garage in the front garden (Application no: 29690). The planning permission was refused due to the proposal resulting in loss of a protected tree and a large street tree.
- 3.9 In 1993, a planning application was submitted for the formation of a double garage to front of the house, the erection of a two-storey side extension to the south-west of the house and the erection of a single-storey extension to the rear (Application no: 9300026). The planning permission was refused due to the proposed excavation work resulting in significant loss of landscaping.
- 3.10 Following a successful planning application in 2010 (Application no: 2010/0065/P), the property was substantially altered in line with the design by Alan Higgs Architects. The changes involved erection of a two-storey side extension with pitched roof, rear extension at ground level, excavation to create basement level and relocation of the front chimney to the south. The alterations resulted in significant enlargement of the floor area and improved lighting conditions at the lower ground level however, they also resulted in partial loss of the rear garden. Many established and mature trees and shrubs were removed, and the climbers to the front of the house were also lost [Fig. 7].

Manea Kella Ltd  
39-41 Lonsdale Road  
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info@maneakella.com  
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- 3.11 The house is perched high on a landscaped bank above the pavement level and feels imposing upon arrival. The increased footprint of the house, together with reduced planting further emphasise the unwelcoming nature of the property and its approach [Fig. 7].



Fig. 7 Left: Front elevation in 1990s with proportional façade and lush planting; Right: Front elevation shortly after the 2010s renovation works with elongated front elevation and scarce planting.

- 3.12 In 2012, a planning application was submitted for the creation of a parking space within the front bank alongside associated engineering and landscaping works (Application no: 2012/1809/P). The planning permission was refused due to significant loss of garden space and the obtrusive appearance of the proposed high brick retaining walls.
- 3.13 More planting has been introduced recently to soften the front elevation. However, the oddly shaped herbaceous beds which were introduced as part of the 2010s works remain and along with the steeply lawned bank, are awkward to plant and maintain.
- 3.14 The current approach to the house is steep making it a challenge for daily use by a young family with children and buggies, and difficult to access for people with mobility issues.
- 3.15 The house also does not have designated bin store facilities. Currently, the bins are stored at the bottom of the side access stair, making it impractical to utilize that pathway for entering or leaving the house. Furthermore, this prominent location along the street frontage suffers because of the presence of the bins, diminishing the overall appeal of the street.
- 3.16 The building is currently used as a single-family dwelling and will continue to be. The clients are a young family who wish to have their front garden redeveloped to improve its quality and suit their needs.

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### 4.0 Precedent

- 4.1 There are several properties in the vicinity of 46 Hollycroft Avenue and within the Conservation Area that have had similar proposals approved and successfully implemented:
- 4.2 **2010/5914/P – 43 Hollycroft Avenue:** Planning permission granted for erection of boundary wall to the front garden of dwellinghouse.
- 4.3 **2018/0721/P – 31 Hollycroft Avenue:** Planning permission granted for demolition and replacement of single storey infill extension. External alterations including landscaping works, new retaining wall to the boundary with No 33, and alterations to party boundary wall with No 29.
- 4.4 **2017/2774/P – 14 Hollycroft Avenue:** Planning permission granted for alterations to front garden, including erection of bin store enclosure and new piers to existing front boundary wall.
- 4.5 **2017/3511/P – 3 Hollycroft Avenue:** Planning permission granted for removal of a tree from front garden and installation of replacement, alterations to front boundary wall and garden path, retaining wall and forecourt.
- 4.6 **2021/3734/P – 30 Ferncroft Avenue:** Planning permission granted for the erection of replacement single storey rear extension, enlargement of existing basement including formation of pool with associated mechanical plant. The proposed works also involve alterations to the front garden including excavation work, replacement of the existing pavers, fence, and railings as well as the removal of existing trees and planting.
- 4.7 **2013/5234/P – Flat A, 44 Ferncroft Avenue:** Planning permission granted for alteration and conversion of the existing ground floor flat, excavation of the existing basement and incorporation of lightwells to the front and sunken terrace to the rear, alterations and extensions to the front and rear including new front entrance door to the existing side extension. The proposed works also involve a new front boundary treatment.
- 4.8 **2014/7674/P – 13 Ferncroft Avenue:** Planning permission granted for excavation of cellar to create enlarged basement floor with front, side and rear lightwells, including rear ground floor terrace area, installation of rooflights at side & rear, alterations to fenestration on side & rear elevations, installation of new front boundary wall & timber refuse store enclosure (and removal of part lean-to rear extension).
- 4.9 **2019/1908/P – 59 Redington Road:** Planning permission granted, following an appeal, for the installation of new boundary treatment comprising of metal gates with brick piers, alteration to existing vehicle cross-over, demolition of existing boundary wall.

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### 5.0 Proposal

- 5.1 The proposed design has been prepared by Elizabeth Tyler – a Landscape and Garden Design studio with extensive experience working with historic landscapes and gardens, and a strong focus on plants and sustainable practice.
- 5.2 The proposed scheme has been amended in response to the London Borough of Camden's feedback following an unsuccessful application submitted on 01/05/2024 (Application no: 024/1727/P).

London Borough of Camden's Feedback:	MK Response:
<i>[2.1] As proposed, the 2080-760mm high front boundary wall [...] would be substantially taller and result in a more extensive hard edged built frontage than these other identified harmful boundary treatments [28 - 30 Ferncroft Av and 44 Hollycroft Av] [...].</i>	<p>This is a factually incorrect statement; the previously proposed front boundary wall, although 2060 mm tall at most, was substantially lower than boundary treatments at the neighbouring properties, which are as high as 2300-3200mm.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the proposed front boundary has been revised and does not exceed 1420mm (below eye-level) at any given point. Staggered in height, the proposed front boundary also references the original design.</p>
<p>01/05/05 Planning submission:</p> 	<p>Revised proposal:</p> 
<i>[2.2] [...] The terracing would lead to a planted area of approximately 68.7 sqm (73.9sqm including the green roof [...]), whereas the existing slope provides approximately 100.80 sqm. This results in a net loss of permeable planting area (and therefore associated loss of potential habitat) [...].</i>	<p>The proposed ramp has been reduced in width to minimise the loss of potential planting area. The current proposal would lead to a planted area of approx. 77.5 sqm.</p> <p>It is worth noting that the existing steeply sloped soil impacts the possibility of rich soil build up and plant richness. Although the proposed works result in a slight loss of potential planting area, the improvement in layout and introduction of flat planters will enable much greater planting diversity and richness, overall increasing biodiversity and enhancing the natural habitat.</p>



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<p><i>[2.3] The majority of front boundary treatments in the wider context of the Hollycroft Avenue streetscape maintain the established character of the area with low brick walls and hedging. Where higher boundary treatments do exist, they serve as examples of how these more solid boundary treatments contrast with the character of the area and should not be used as a precedent for future development.</i></p>	<p>As explained in point no 3.7 of the DAS, over the years, many properties along Hollycroft Avenue have altered their front boundaries, and as a result, there is no one distinct language that defines the character of the boundary treatment in the area. While some properties retain the original low brick walls with hedges, as it suits the topography of those plots, others have introduced diverse boundary treatments, including taller brick walls, metal railing, and timber fencing, and some have added garages to the front.</p> <p>It is worth noting that by no means are we using these examples as precedents but rather to illustrate the evolution of the local streetscape and observable pattern of development in the area.</p>
<p><i>[2.5] No information has been provided showing the detail of the proposed entrance door canopy. A canopy in this location is likely to be acceptable subject to further details regarding its size and materials [...].</i></p>	<p>Further details have been provided; please refer to point no 5.14 of the DAS.</p>
<p><i>[2.6] At 3m L x 2.5m W and 1.8m H, the proposed store is considered to be excessive [...] The proposal is also contrary to the RFCACAMP which encourages the siting of bin stores away from the main frontage of the building.</i></p>	<p>The proposed bin and bike store has been revised. The proposed enclosure stores bins only and measures 1450mm in height x 900mm in depth x 2100mm in width. The proposed store is located away from the street frontage and is further concealed with planting.</p> <p>The RFCACAMP highlights that bins which are being stored in prominent locations, including on road frontages, cause considerable harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Therefore, the proposal is in fact following the RFCACAMP guidance by providing a dedicated bin store facility.</p>

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<p>01/05/05 Planning submission:</p> 	<p>Revised proposal:</p> 
<p><i>[2.9] In summary, it is considered that the justification for both the works to the frontage and bin/cycle store do not outweigh the harm caused to the characteristics and appearance of the conservation area, street scene and host dwelling [...].</i></p>	<p>Please refer to the following point.</p>
<p><i>[2.10] When considered cumulatively, the proposed hard landscaping and engineering works to facilitate the boundary retaining walls, terracing, storage and steps are considered to pose harmful adverse effects [...] There are no associated public or conservation benefits of the scheme that can be used to balance the harm incurred.</i></p>	<p>Having discussed constructively with the Case Officer, we believe that our revised scheme provides both public and conservation benefits.</p> <p>The proposed works to the front garden will greatly improve planting opportunities on site, improving biodiversity in the area. The proposed bin store enclosure will provide a dedicated, functional and discreet space to store the bins, away from the street frontage, further enhancing the streetscape character of the area. The introduction of the ramp will not only benefit the family, but also visitors and general members of the public, particularly those with mobility issues.</p>

- 5.3 The proposed works to the front of the property aim to restore the front garden to its original splendour, re-introducing a greater range of planting specifically larger shrubs, small trees, and climbers on the house.
- 5.4 The existing front garden has a limited range of plants and steeply sloped soil impacts the possibility of rich soil build up and plant richness. Furthermore, the steeply lawned bank is awkward to plant and difficult to maintain.
- 5.5 The proposed works introduce staggered smaller planters, instead of one large planter, which will allow for a more gradual level change between the street and the house. Richly planted borders with key shrubs will help introduce more softness to the front of the house.
- 5.6 Flat areas of planting will allow for a much greater richness of plant diversity. More level soil will also

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greatly reduce the water run-off onto the pavement. This will help to deal with rainfall on site - through absorption by the plants - rather than water running onto the pavement taking topsoil and minerals with it. With increasingly sporadic and heavy rainfall due to climate change, this is of benefit.

- 5.7 The proposed planters will incorporate shade to part-shade tolerant species with lots of different shades of green and texture. Please refer to the supplied planting schedule for further details. Climbers are proposed close to the house to further soften the façade. The proposed planting will overall bring more variety and colour to the front of the property [Fig. 8] [Fig. 9].



Fig. 8 Front Garden – planting mood imagery.



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Fig. 9 Front Garden – planting mood imagery

- 5.8 As part of the proposed works, the existing front boundary will be rebuilt to accommodate the reconfigured flat planters. The proposed new front boundary wall will feature red brick - to match the existing house, and York stone coping. Staggered in height, the proposed wall references the original design [Fig.10].



Fig. 10 Indicative 3D View of the proposed works to the front of the property.

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- 5.09 Given the geographical location, there is a significant level change across the site. This has been exacerbated by historic changes to levels on either side. The family residing at the property have young children and are often visited by older relatives with mobility concerns. As part of the proposed works, ramped access is introduced. Designed with a reasonable gradient, the ramp will greatly improve the daily experience of accessing the house by the family, the visitors and members of the general public, particularly those with mobility issues. The proposed ramp is mostly concealed between the staggered planters, minimising its visual impact on the street frontage. The design features York stone paving which compliments the red brick featured across the site.
- 5.10 The existing external stepped approach will be reconfigured to accommodate the new ramp and reduce the steepness of the stair, making the site more accessible for all. The proposed new stair will incorporate brick risers with Yorkstone treads. Yorkstone paving will also be used on the new paths and landings [Fig.11].
- 5.11 New railing will be introduced across the site including new handrails to the proposed reconfigured stair, as well as guarding along parts of the ramp for safety. Discreet railing has been designed in a way to blend seamlessly with the planting – finished in dark green powder coating, as a nod to the Arts & Crafts style [Fig.11].



Fig. 11 Front Garden – Material palette: red brick, Yorkstone paving and coping, metal railing.

- 5.12 As part of the proposed works, a new bin enclosure will be created providing a much-needed discreet storage for bins [Fig. 12]. The proposed store will be located away from the street frontage and will be further concealed with planting. The proposed structure will be finished in hardwood timber which will silver naturally. The proposed green roof will further soften the appearance of the structure and minimise its visual impact on the street [Fig. 13]. A dedicated bin store facility, alongside a re-configured front garden layout, will allow for the side access to be used as an alternative route to the house again.



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Fig. 12 Indicative 3D View of the proposed bin and cycle store.



Fig. 13 Hardwood timber is proposed for doors of the bin enclosure.

- 5.13 As part of the proposed works the retaining side boundary walls around the site will be partially rebuilt to improve their structural integrity. The existing boundaries of the whole site are a hotch-potch of various iterations throughout time, as neighbours and inhabitants have updated boundaries and fences on their own sides. Of particular concern is the retaining structure between 46 Hollycroft Avenue and 28 Ferncroft Avenue. There is a considerable level change here and the cracking and bulging of the front retaining wall may speak to the instability of the current situation. The proposed design will look to introduce a well-built retaining wall along the boundary - on the land of 46 Hollycroft Avenue, ensuring a safe and solid solution for years to come. The new walls will be finished in red brick to match the existing house and landscaping.



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- 5.14 As part of the proposed works, a discreet galvanised zinc canopy will be introduced above the side entrance door. The design of the proposed canopy will reflect the architectural detailing of the house and complement the Arts & Crafts language featured across the site [Fig. 14].



Fig. 14 Precedent image for the proposed zinc canopy over the side entrance door.

- 5.15 The existing side access gate will be replaced with a new wrought iron gate - finished in dark green powder coating, as a nod to the Arts & Crafts style.
- 5.16 Discreet low-level lighting in dark brass finish will be introduced to guide from the street level along the steps, ramps, and paths.
- 5.17 No existing trees will be removed as part of the proposal. Two new trees will be introduced within the front garden. Please refer to the supplied planting schedule for further details.
- 5.18 Aside from the aesthetic potential of the new design, helping the house look more as it was intended when it was first built, the proposed planting will greatly improve biodiversity on site. A wider range of flowering plants will extend the season at which pollen is available for pollinators (we note that the property is close to the Camden Bee Line). A greater plant diversity will also provide improved habitats and food plants for a broader range of invertebrates, and the birds and animals that feed on them.
- 5.19 Natural high-quality materials, such as Yorkstone paving, have been specified, in accordance with the conservation area guidance.
- 5.20 All garden areas of the property will be under the care of an experienced gardening team, who will visit the site regularly throughout the year. An automatic irrigation system will be in place to ensure new plant material is able to establish - the planting in the front is designed to have a lower water requirement so it may be that automatic irrigation is no longer needed once the establishment phase has passed. The new planting in the front garden will be shrubs, perennials, and grasses, designed to be fairly self-sufficient and requiring a medium level of maintenance.

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### 6.0 Access

- 6.1 The main access to the property will remain as it is although, a new stair with a reduced pitch will be introduced as part of the proposed works. The side access route will be reconfigured, and a new side access stair will be introduced. A ramped access will be added to enable a gentler approach to the house.

### 7.0 Refuse

- 7.1 No changes are proposed to refuse collection as such; however, the refuse will be stored in a designated and improved refuse storage area.

### 8.0 Planning

- 8.1 The design accounts for the character of Hollycroft Avenue with appropriate proposed materials and sympathetic, subordinate alterations to the existing front garden that complement the original features of the house and are in line with previously approved schemes.
- 8.2 The proposal will conserve the significance of the property as a heritage asset within the Conservation Area by being sympathetic to the Arts & Crafts style in terms of detailing and form, satisfying the London Plan Policy 7.8 Heritage Assets and Archaeology and Camden Local Plan policies D1 and D2 – Heritage.
- 8.3 The materials proposed for the new hard landscaping in the front garden are sensitive to both the specificity of the house and the wider conservation area. A limited palette of red brick and York stone, in line with the Conservation Area Guidance, will make up the steps, walls and slopes of the new paths. The proposed slim, powder-coated metal railings feature detailing which reflects the architectural detail of the house.
- 8.4 Works will take place during allowed hours and the property's distance from the road will mean no heavy machinery during construction in accordance with Camden Local Plan Policy A1 – Managing the impact of development, Policy A4 – Noise and vibration and Camden's Amenity CPG.
- 8.5 The proposed works have been coordinated with an Approved Inspector to ensure compliance with the building regulations.

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### 9.0 Conclusion

- 9.1 The proposed scheme has been amended in response to the London Borough of Camden's feedback following an unsuccessful application. It is anticipated that the revised design aligns with the local planning guidance as the previous proposal was discussed in detail with the planning officer and all key concerns have been addressed. Please refer to the supplied meeting minutes for further details.
- 9.2 It is anticipated that the proposed works are in line with the observable pattern of development within the greater area.
- 9.3 It is anticipated that the proposed works to the front of the property will restore the front garden to its original splendour, re-introducing variety and colour and further enhancing the green and leafy character of the area.
- 9.4 It is anticipated that proposed reconfiguration of the front planters, although resulting in an increased height of parts of the front boundary wall, will enable a greater amount and variety of planting, and a simplified maintenance process, overall improving the street frontage and benefiting the wider community.
- 9.5 It is anticipated that the proposed bin and cycle enclosure, due to its scale and detailing, will have minimal impact on the street frontage, whilst significantly improving the daily life of the family and functionality of the site.
- 9.6 It is anticipated that the proposed ramped access, concealed between the planters, will also have a minimal impact on the streetscape, whilst significantly improving the accessibility of the property.
- 9.7 Overall, the proposed changes will enhance the quality of living for the family, as well as improve the functionality of the house, whilst preserving and enhancing the unique architectural language of the conservation area with improved biodiversity and re-introduction of traditional natural materials.
- 9.8 The proposal is subordinate to the main body of the house and will be similar in design and construction detailing.