

The
Heritage
Practice



CITYSCAPE DIGITAL

14 BLACKBURN ROAD

.....
TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
.....

APRIL 2025

14 BLACKBURN ROAD

TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE AND VISUAL
IMPACT ASSESSMENT

THE HERITAGE PRACTICE

APRIL 2025

CONTENT

	PP
1.0 Introduction	03
2.0 O2 Masterplan	04
3.0 Assessment Methodology	07
4.0 Baseline Conditions	10
5.0 Assessment of Affects	25
5.1 Townscape Assessment	26
5.2 Visual Assessment	30
5.3 Heritage Assessment	51
6.0 Summary Conclusion	54
Appendix 01: Planning Policy And Guidance	58
Appendix 02: Cityscape Verified Views Methodology	63
Appendix 03: Significance Assessment Methodology Chart	76
Appendix 04: Site And Study Area	77
Appendix 05: List Descriptions	78

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report is prepared on behalf of Hampstead Asset Management Ltd (‘the Applicant’) and their delivery partner Fifth State, who will be delivering the regeneration sought by the London Borough of Camden and proposed in the application.

1.2 This Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment will assess the potential effects of the proposed development at **14 Blackburn Road, London, NW6 1RZ** (‘the Site’). The aim of the appraisal is to:

- Assess the townscape and visual baseline conditions, including relevant planning policy, designations, key characteristics, important views and potential visual/townscape receptors;
- Make a qualitative assessment of the potential townscape and visual effects arising from the proposed development;
- Consider the townscape and visual sensitivity compared with the parameter plans approved as part of the wider outline planning permission (2022/0528/P) for the O2 Masterplan Site.
- Takes account of the amendments to O2 Masterplan scheme as part of the pending S73 application [2025/0484/P](#) which include height changes across the detailed design blocks (refer to section 2).

1.3 The Heritage Practice was established in 2011 as a consultancy providing advice on all aspects of the historic environment including townscape and impact on the setting of designated heritage assets more widely. The practice has extensive experience in dealing with a broad range of historic and listed buildings and structures, development affecting conservation areas and the setting of listed buildings and with the planning and listed building consent processes more generally.

The Site

1.4 The site is located in West Hampstead within the London Borough of Camden, to the northeast of West Hampstead station and is occupied by a builders’ merchants (Builder Depot Limited ‘BDL’). The site is located to the rear of properties fronting onto West End Lane in the heart of West Hampstead and extends east/west along Blackburn Road. The site abuts the railway to the south and is to the west of the allocated redevelopment site of the O2 Centre and car park.

Site Area: 0.24ha

Existing Buildings: Low quality buildings (showrooms and sheds) and external yard space comprising 1600sqm (GEA). 640sqm GIA internal ratable space for the showrooms only.

Designations

1.5 The site falls within a wider consented masterplan (The O2 Centre-2022/0528/P) to provide a mixed-use development which extends to the Finchley Road tube station to the East. 14 Blackburn Road is within Outline Phase 2 of the O2 masterplan, referred to as plot S8.

1.6 In terms of the site’s planning policy context, it is located within the following designations:

- Camden Local Plan Growth Area (West Hampstead)
- Fortune Green and West Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan Area
- The area covered by the West End Lane to Finchley Road Principles for a New Place SPD (2021)
- The buildings on site are not listed or locally listed. There are two conservation areas close by (West End Green, and South Hampstead) as well as Redington/Frognaal and Fitzjohns/Netherhall, and slightly further away, to the east
- The site has a PTAL Rating of 6A and 6B
- Adjacent to but not within the West Hampstead Town Centre Boundary (west) and the West Hampstead Conservation Area (south)

West End Lane to Finchley Road SPD

1.8 The supplementary planning document (SPD) has been prepared for the ‘West End Lane to Finchley Road’ area which includes the Site. The Council adopted the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on 24 September 2021.

1.9 The adopted SPD seeks the following visions for the area:

- The comprehensive development and intensification of this insular, low density and poorly connected place will create a new mixed use residential neighbourhood that integrates seamlessly into the wider city
- with a variety of housing, including genuinely affordable homes, that connects the town centres of West End Lane and Finchley Road

1.10 The SPD includes the builders’ merchant on the western end of Blackburn Road (the Site) which is classified as ‘a low-density existing development’.

Relevant planning policy is outlined in Appendix 01.

The Proposal

1.11 The application seeks ‘Redevelopment of 14 Blackburn Road, London, NW6 1RZ (‘the Site’) for a mixed-use development comprising student housing, affordable C3 self-contained housing and ground floor commercial space.’

1.12 The proposed development seeks:

“Demolition and redevelopment of the Site for a mixed-use development comprising purpose-built student accommodation (Sui Generis), affordable housing (Use Class C3), lower ground and ground floor flexible commercial/business space comprising of showrooms, retail and ancillary offices (Use Class E/Sui Generis) and a café/PBSA amenity space (Use Class E/Sui Generis) and associated works including service yard, cycle parking, hard and soft landscaping, amenity spaces and plant.” (‘the proposed development’).

1.13 The proposed development comprises of two distinct buildings that are linked at ground level. The C3 building will be 4-7 storeys including a taller ground floor and the PBSA building will be 10 storeys including a ground floor and amenity mezzanine level. There is a double height space spanning these lower two floors in the café at the base of the PBSA.

1.14 The proposed development would deliver:

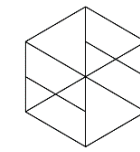
- x192 purpose-built student accommodation rooms (Sui Generis),
- x35 affordable homes (C3) and,
- x1,619sqm of lower ground and ground floor commercial floorspace to include:
 - a new and enhanced flexible commercial/business space (Use Class E/Sui Generis) for the Builders Depot, comprising of show rooms, retail space and ancillary offices and an internal service yard accessed from Blackburn Road. This space is capable of being subdivided to allow for future flexibility.
 - a publicly accessible ground floor café at the base of the PBSA (Use Class E/Sui Generis).

2.0 02 MASTERPLAN



Revised illustrative O2 Masterplan (August 2022)

2.0 02 MASTERPLAN



The
Heritage
Practice
10 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1A 2SL
+44 (0)20 3871 2951
www.theheritagepractice.com
info@theheritagepractice.com

Project Background

02 MASTERPLAN

2.1 The application site formed part of a larger application site for which development was approved by LB Camden on 20 December 2023 ref: 2022/0528/P. The approval site covers an area of 5.7ha (14.1 acres) stretching from West End Lane to Finchley Road. The site is bounded by railway lines to the north (Thameslink) and south (LU tube lines), Finchley Road to the east, and the Nido student accommodation to the west, with a mixture of residential and commercial uses beyond.

2.2 The extant scheme allows for comprehensive mixed use redevelopment and regeneration of the whole O2 Masterplan site to include up to 1,800 residential units are proposed in total, with 35% affordable housing across the whole site. The approved new built development will range in scale upto circa 60.9m above AOD (upto16 storeys) focused around plots N1-N3.

2.3 The application was hybrid with a detailed phase (1) in the centre of the site and outline phases (2 and 3) in the west and east of the site respectively. The proposed development divided the site into ten development plots: N1, N2, N3, N3-E, N4, N5, N6, N7, S1 and S8 (the 'N' plots are located on the northern side of the site and the 'S' plots on the southern side). Three plots are located in Phase 1 the detailed phase (N3E, N4 and N5) and seven plots are within the Phases 2 and 3, the outline phases (N6, N7 and S8 in Phase 2, and S1, N1, N2 and N3 in Phase 3). **The proposed Site is located on plot S8.**

2.4 Detailed and Outline planning approvals are separate and severable for each of the Plots. Plot S8 formed part of the Outline Proposals. The Outline Application gained permission for the following general principles:

a. The Parameter Plans

This allows for;

- Demolition of existing building on the site;
- Maximum and minimum building footprint;
- Maximum basement depth;
- Predominantly Commercial uses at ground floor level;
- Residential And Ancillary (Class C3) on the upper floors;

a. The Parameter Plans

This allows for;

- Demolition of existing building on the site;
- Maximum and minimum building footprint;
- Maximum basement depth;
- Predominantly Commercial uses at ground floor level
- Residential And Ancillary (Class C3) on the upper floors
- Maximum Heights -

+69.03 AOD West Part Of The Site (roughly 5 storeys)

+75/5 AOD East Part F The Site (roughly 8 storeys)

(The approved parameter heights are set out in drawings (02)P111 P01).

b. The Design Codes

2.5 Accompanying the Parameter Plans was a 'Design Code,' which established a set of rules for the development to ensure the delivery of a coherent and high-quality neighbourhood, applicable to buildings, public realm and the landscape design. The Design Code is to be used in the design of buildings on the plots to ensure design coherence and compatibility across the Masterplan site. The document identifies and extends similar design principles to those which inform the Detailed Proposals.

2.6 The Design Code included three levels of control and these are expressed through statements of intention that indicate the rigidity or flexibility of the rule using the following terms:

- 'must' which indicates mandatory compliance
- 'should' which indicates a strong but optional encouragement
- 'could' which indicates an optional suggestion or feasible option

The approved design code for **plot S8** included the following:

- **Building Typologies** - Plots S1, S8 and N1 linear buildings facing Finchley Road **must** be **Terrace Buildings**.

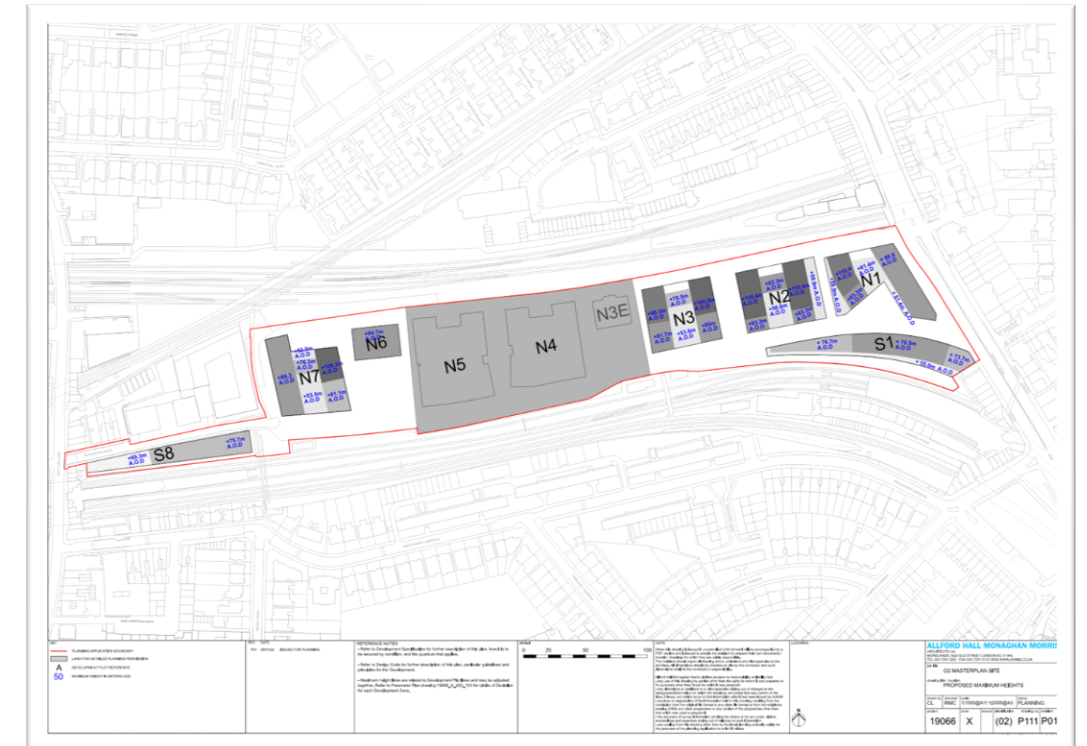


Figure 1: O2 MASTERPLAN of approved height parameter plan

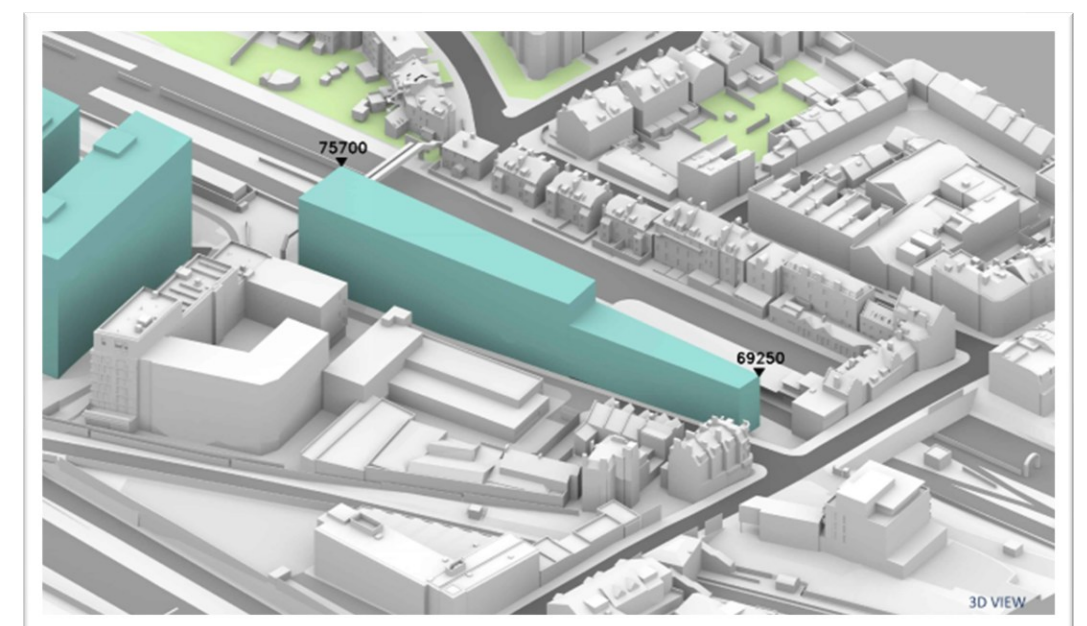
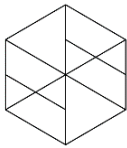


Figure 2: 3d Model showing O2 MASTERPLAN massing of approved height parameter for outline planning permission on the site



- **Roof Forms** - Facing Finchley Road and West End Lane, roofs *should* be varied and *could* have **pitched roofs** like the adjacent buildings, to maintain the character of those streets. Terrace Buildings located closest to Finchley Road and West End Lane *must* have an **articulated roof profile**.
- **Material Strategy** - The use of materials and their colour *must* respond sensitively and appropriately to the existing townscape character surrounding the Site. There could be a gradient of tones moving from red on Finchley Road through buff in the middle section to a **brown hue towards West End Lane**. Masonry should be the primary cladding material for façades, in keeping with the rich masonry tapestry that characterises West Hampstead.
- **Ground Floor Frontages** - The Design Code states that the ground floor *must* be appropriately proportioned relative to the building height and in accordance with their intended use. The ground floor *must* be distinct and differentiated from upper levels. The document recommends that glazing 'should' be maximised on ground floor façades.

(The approved The Design Codes is set out in document ref: The Design Codes 2nd December 2022, P03 (report 4602_001-AHM-XXX-RP-A-00001)

S73 Amendments to 02 Masterplan

2.7 A s73 Application which seeks to vary the approved 02 Masterplan. Is currently under consideration by LB Camden. The pending application 2025/0484/P includes various changes across the detailed design blocks (no changes are proposed to outline blocks). The changes at the scale of the buildings are summarised below:

- N3E – 12-storeys (+2-storeys on the Approved Masterplan) •
- N4A – 14-storeys plus rooftop plant screen (+1-storey on the Approved Masterplan) •
- N4B – 9-storeys (no change from the Approved Masterplan) •
- N4C – 16-storeys plus rooftop plant screen (+2-storeys on the Approved Masterplan) •
- N4 Link – 9-storeys (+1-storey on the Approved Masterplan) •
- N5A – 17-storeys plus rooftop plant screen (+2-storeys on the Approved Masterplan) •
- N5B – 10-storeys (no change from the Approved Masterplan) •
- N5C – 16-storeys plus rooftop plant screen (+2-storeys on the Approved Masterplan) •
- N5D – 10-storeys (+1-storey on the Approved Masterplan) •
- N5 Link – 11-storeys (+3-storeys on the Approved Masterplan)

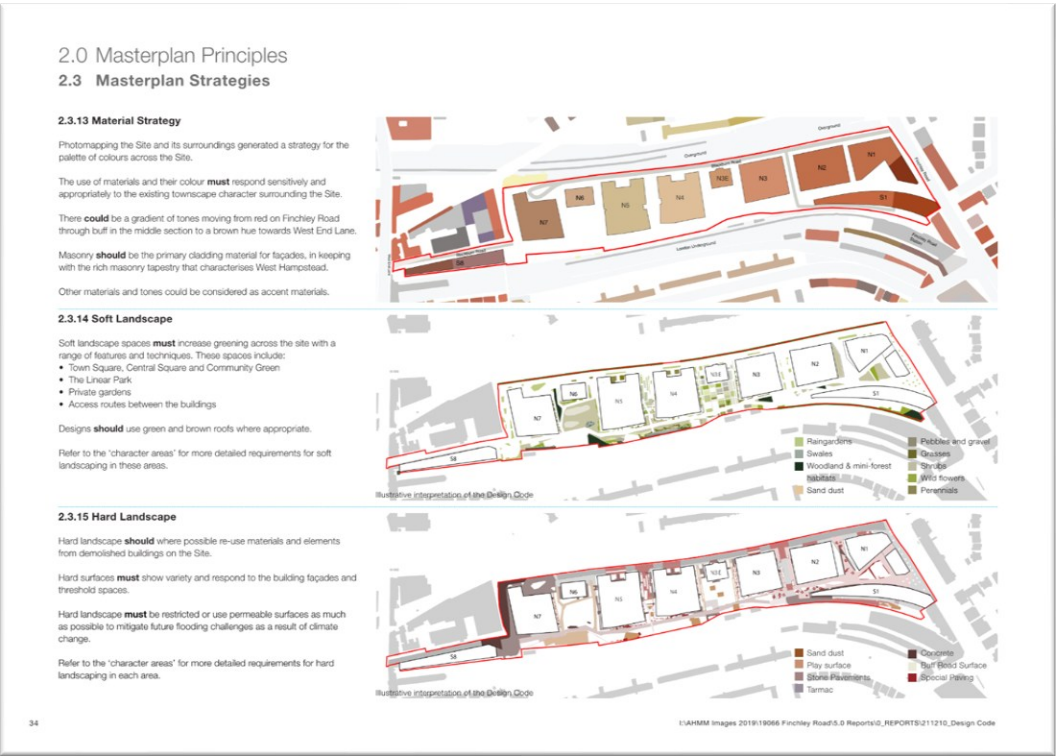


Figure 3: Extract page from O2 MASTERPLAN approved DESIGN CODE document Design Code 2nd December 2022, P03

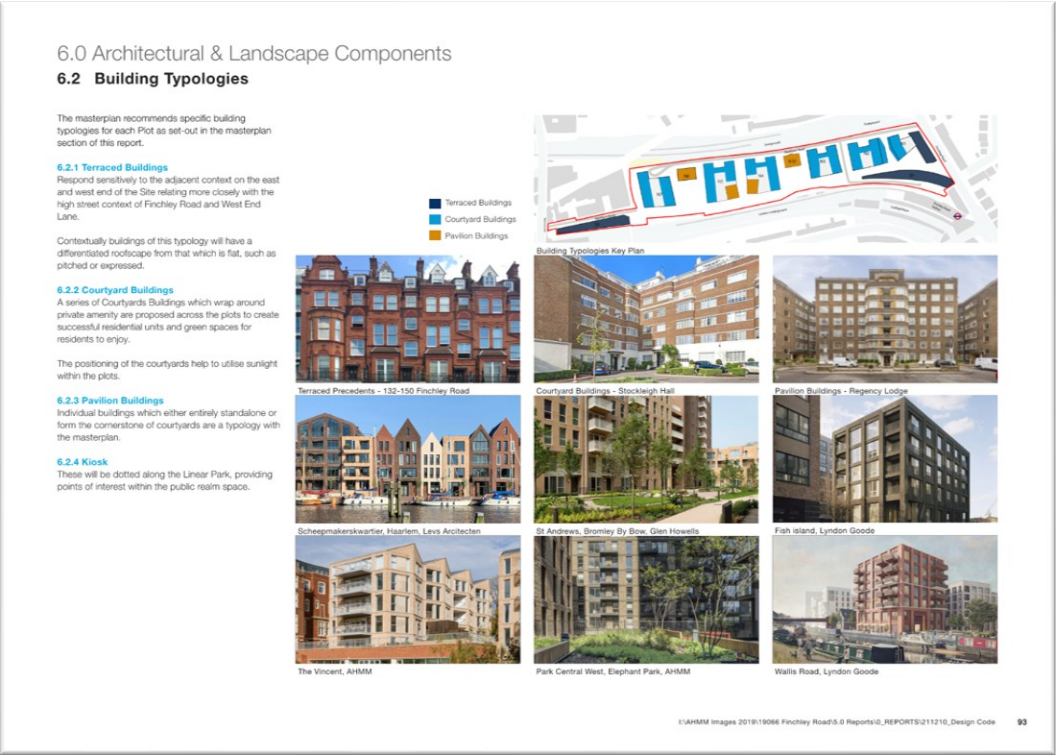
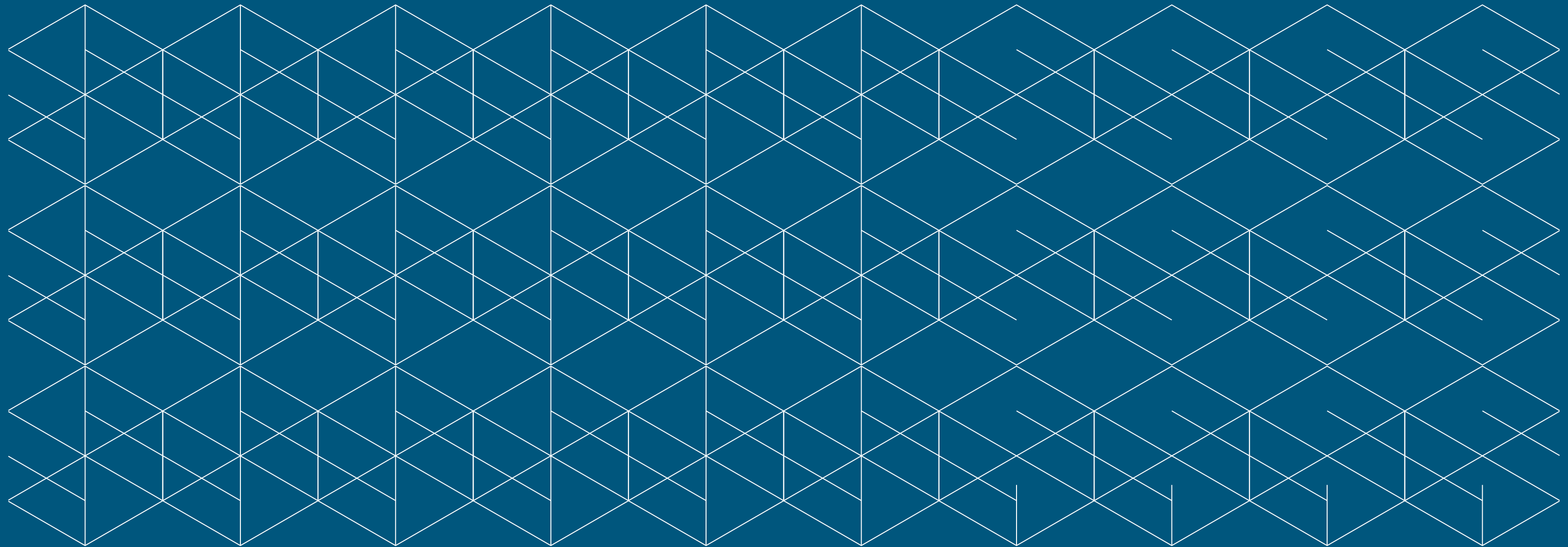


Figure 4: Extract page from O2 MASTERPLAN approved DESIGN CODE document DESIGN CODE document Design Code 2nd December 2022, P03

3.0 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY



Methodology

3.1 This section outlines the methodology for assessing the likely significant effects on townscape character, visual amenity and the heritage significance or ability to appreciate the heritage significance of designated and non-designated, above-ground built heritage assets, from the construction and operation of the Proposed Development.

3.2 This assessment is prepared in accordance with the guidelines as set out in “Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Third Edition”, (GLVIA3) published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. However, given the urban nature of the context of the Site, the GLVIA3 approach is applied with reference to townscape impact rather than landscape impact. The term townscape is in fact used to encompass all the urban and landscape characteristic of the Site and its context.

3.3 Townscape, visual and built heritage assessments are separate, although linked, procedures. The townscape and built heritage baseline analysis contributes to the scope of the baseline for the Visual Assessment.

3.4 In accordance with the GLVIA3 approach to assessment, there are two key effects to be considered in the eventual preparation of the full TVIA report:

Townscape Effects relate to changes in the fabric, character and quality of the urban landscape. These include direct impacts such as loss of vegetation and additional built-form or indirect impacts such as changes to tranquillity. Townscape effects do not need to be solely visible.

Visual Effects relate to specific changes in views and the effects on visual receptors (e.g. users of public rights of way or recreational facilities). Changes to the visual setting of protected cultural heritage features are also considered (e.g. Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas).

3.5 In response to the particular urban nature of the Site and its context, this assessment refers principally to townscape impacts. GLVIA3 defines the term ‘townscape’ as:

“the landscape within the built-up area, including the buildings and the relationship between them, the different type of urban spaces, including green spaces, and the relationship between buildings and open spaces”.

3.6 This TVIA will consider the Site and study area as shown in Map 01 in appendix 04 and figure 05.

Townscape and visual assessments

- 3.7 This section sets out the proposed methodology for undertaking the TVIA in accordance with best practice and guidance, namely:
- ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment’, (GLVIA3) produced by the Landscape Institute with the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (Third Edition, 2013);
 - ‘Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations’ Technical Guidance Note 02/21, by the Landscape Institute;
 - ‘Townscape Character Assessment’, Technical Information Note 17/2018, by the Landscape Institute (5 December 2017);
 - London View Management Framework Supplementary Planning Guidance (LVMF SPG) (2012);
 - Character and Context Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA 2014).

Built Heritage

- 3.8 The relevant key guidance for assessing the effects of a development on the settings and heritage significance of built heritage assets, is as follows:
- Historic England, Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (Historic England Advice Note 12 (2019)
 - Historic England, Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment Historic Environment (Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2) (2015)
 - Historic England, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017)
- 3.9 The following Camden Guidance documents are also relevant
- Design - Camden Planning Guidance (January 2021)
 - Camden Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategies
- 3.10 The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategies listed below are relevant to this assessment. These documents describe the character and appearance of each conservation area and identify key views:
- South Hampstead Conservation Area: Character Appraisal and Management Strategy (February 2011)
 - West End Green Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (February 2011)

Baseline Conditions

Study Area

3.11 Initial baseline investigations note that the highly-urbanised context of the Site creates a strong visual enclosure, limiting views of the Site mostly to those at relatively close range. However, its open boundary to the east allows for extensive visibility along the railway corridor.

3.12 This, and the relationship with designated landscape and townscape features, suggests that a study area of a 500m radius from the Site boundary is appropriate for the assessment of townscape effects. This is consistent with the Study Area radius for the O2 Masterplan which also had a 500m radius.

Desk-Based Study

3.13 A desk-study is undertaken to identify planning policy and designations relevant to the assessment of landscape and visual effects.

Field Study

3.14 A field survey was undertaken in January 2025 to assess:

- The Site’s context characteristics;
- Views of the Site from the surrounding areas;
- The location of visual receptors; and
- The potential visual effects arising from the proposed development.

3.15 The survey was generally undertaken from publicly-accessible locations such as roads, bridleways, tracks, footpaths and public open spaces. Viewpoints were initially identified for the potentially affected receptors.

Consultations

3.16 During pre-application engagement with the local authority, the design evolutions discussed and its implication on the identified visual and townscape resources. Changes to the proposed massing and architectural detailing followed these discussions.

3.17 Receptors and representative viewpoints were discussed through the pre-application process with the relevant officers agreeing to the viewpoints identified in this report.

Assessment Criteria

Townscape and visual sensitivity

3.18 Townscape and visual sensitivity are described using a scale from low to high which reflects the following parameters:

Townscape sensitivity:

- **Low Sensitivity** – the receptor is not considered of high value, therefore lacking distinctive or unique qualities; it is also characterised by a low susceptibility to change whereby the baseline condition would not be altered by the proposed development.
- **Medium Sensitivity** – the receptor is of moderate value as including some elements of distinctive quality and importance, but lacking consistence or uniformity; albeit capable to accommodate the proposed development some changes to the baseline condition are expected therefore the receptor would be characterise by some susceptibility to change.
- **High Sensitivity** – the receptor is considered of high value due to its distinctive qualities and uniqueness; the proposed development is likely to unduly alter the baseline condition resulting in a high susceptibility to change of the receptor.

Visual sensitivity:

- **Low Sensitivity** – the view is of limited value, with low aesthetic qualities and detracting elements; the receptors are engaging in activities that would not involve or are not dependant on the appreciation of views of the surrounding landscape, therefore susceptibility to change is low.
- **Medium Sensitivity** – the view is valued at local level and reasonably attractive, but otherwise unremarkable with some detracting features; the receptors are engaging with activities where appreciation of the contextual landscape is not the primary focus (i.e. cyclists on roads or travellers on rail) but it contributes to the setting of the route. In residential visual amenity terms, it is a secondary/periphery view.
- **High Sensitivity** – the view is valued for its high scenic qualities and/or protected by planning designations, it is a distinctive view, visually intact and coherent with no detracting/deteriorating features; the receptors are engaging in activities where awareness of the contextual landscape is likely to be high (i.e. ramblers on public footpaths). In residential amenity terms, it is a primary/main view.

Magnitude of Impact

3.19 The effects of the proposals are quantified by identifying the magnitude of the change on the townscape and the visual receptors described in the baseline.

The magnitude of impact is summarised using the broad categories:

- **None** - No change.
- **Negligible** - A change that would be barely perceptible.
- **Low** - A change that would have a slight effect on the receptor that may not be immediately noticeable.
- **Medium** - A clear change that would be noticeable but would not dominate the composition of a view, townscape character or the ability to appreciate the heritage significance of a heritage asset.
- **High** - An immediately apparent change that would become the focal point of a view or area of townscape or dominate the ability to appreciate the heritage significance of a heritage asset.

3.20 The significance of effects on a townscape or visual receptor is a function of the magnitude of the effect and the sensitivity of the receptor. The relationship between the two factors is portrayed in Table 5-1 resulting in the significance level. The potential impacts identified in the TVIA help inform the mitigation measures to be incorporated into the design.

3.21 Impacts, as the effects, can be beneficial or adverse. Table 01 Appendix 03 sets out the significance of effects, which are described as beneficial, neutral, or adverse. These are largely professional judgments drawn from the assessment process.

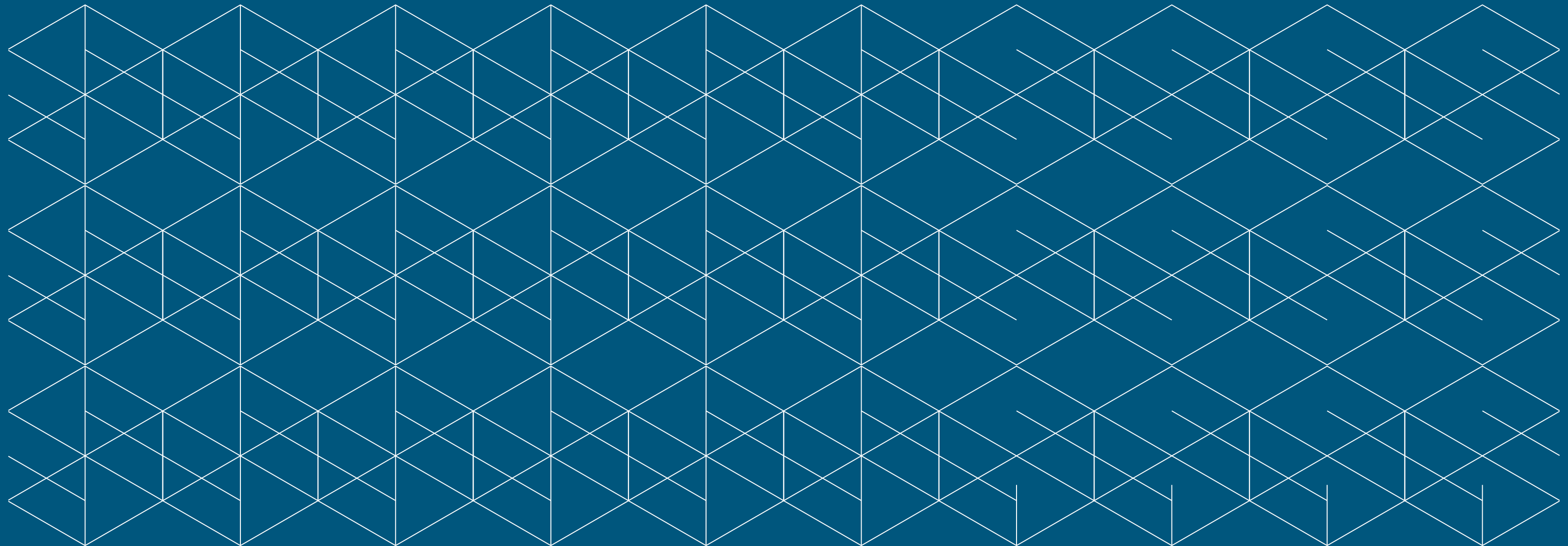
3.14 In townscape terms, **adverse effects** are the result of direct loss of essential/distinctive elements that contribute to the characterisation of the Site context. Such loss affects negatively the integrity of the townscape character and designations. An adverse effect could also be caused by means of great contrast between the qualities of the proposal and a valued townscape, such that high-quality architecture is not sufficient to justify the baseline change.

3.15 Instead, **beneficial effects** enhance the townscape character and contribute to the value of the Site’s context at various scales. In this instance, the contrast with a valued townscape is considered positively as the result of a high-quality design.

4.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS & TOWNSCAPE CONTEXT

'[Townscape is] the landscape within the built-up area, including the buildings, the relationship between them, the different types of urban open spaces, including green spaces and the relationship between buildings and open spaces.'

Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3), paragraph 2.7



4.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS & TOWNSCAPE CONTEXT

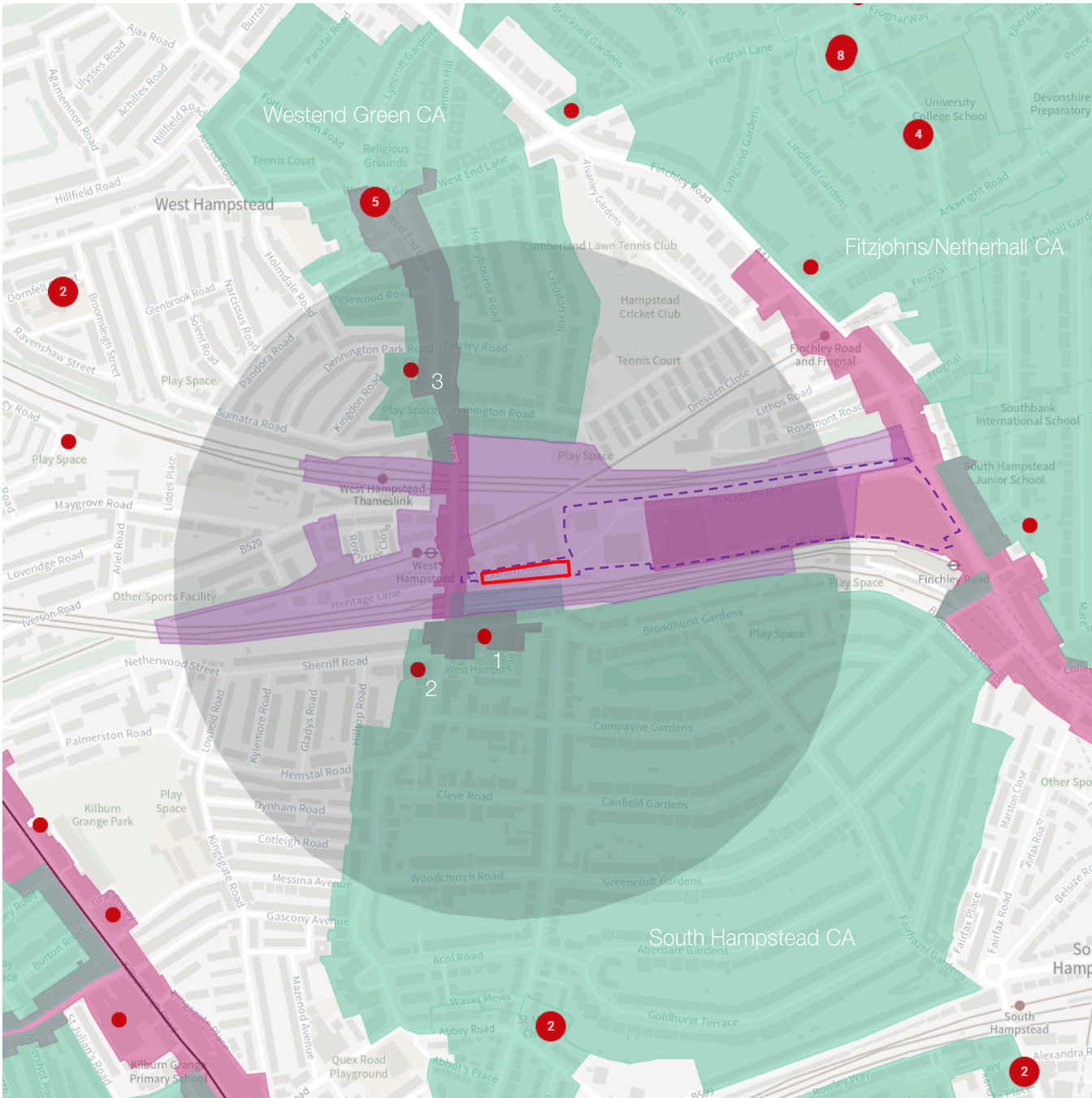
Designations

4.1 This section considers the relevant designations, constraints and existing documentation that provides the context for understanding the townscape character.

4.2 Planning designations and constraints, within 500m of the Site, relevant to the assessment of townscape and visual effects are set out in Table 1 below and shown on Map 01 in Appendix 03.

DESIGNATION/PROTECTION	STUDY AREA STATUS
National Park	None within the study area.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	None within the study area
Area of High Landscape Value (or similar local designation)	None within the study area
Green Belt	None within the study area
World Heritage Sites	None within the study area area.
Scheduled Monuments (SAM)	None within the study area
Conservation Area	South Hampstead CA Westend Green CA
Listed Buildings	1. Lilian Baylis House (former Decca recording studios), including walls to Broadhurst Gardens), grade II 2. Church of St. James grade II 3. Hampstead Synagogue II*
Registered Parks and Garden	Hampstead and Cumberland Clubs;
Local Nature Reserves (LNR)	West Hampstead Railsides Medley Orchard and Westbere Copse Local Nature Reserve; and Broadhurst Gardens Meadow
Recreational Routes and Public Rights of Way	Billy Fury Way
Protected Vistas	None within the study area

- Conservation Area
- West Hampstead Growth Area
- Designated Town Centre
- Listed Buildings
- Locally Listed Buildings
- O2 Masterplan site
- Site Boundary
- Study area of a 500m radius from the

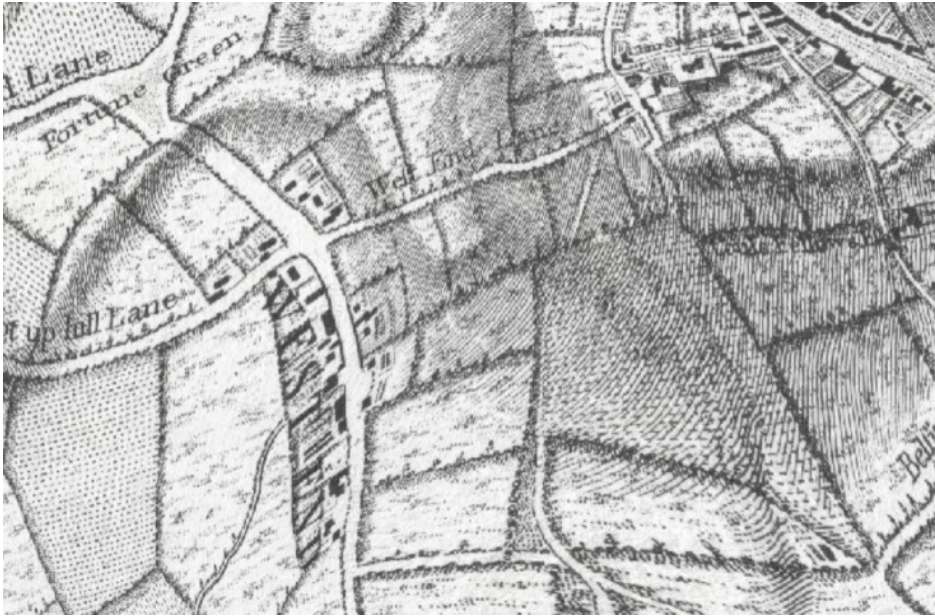


Map 4.01 – Townscape and heritage constraints map

Table 01: Landscape Designations

Historic Development of the Area

4.3 Up until the 18th century the area that would become West Hampstead remained rural, characterised by a landscape of open fields, winding lanes and dotted cottages and farmsteads. Roque’s map of 1746 shows the small settlement of West End, clustered around the junction of West End Lane and Shoot Up Hill Lane. The distinct village of Hampstead was positioned to the NE, with the built-up areas of the capital to the south giving way to open fields along the line of modern-day Bayswater Road and Oxford Street.



4.4 During the 18th and early 19th century the high ground to the north of London began to attract members of the gentry and merchant class, who built large houses and villas on its south facing slopes, taking advantage of the clean air and water, whilst still within easy reach of London. New road building in the early 19th century promoted development further south. This included the Finchley Road Turnpike Act, passed in 1826, with the road completed in 1835, improving connections and travelling times to Central London. The Eyre Estate in St John’s Wood was laid out during the 1830s and 40s, linear development spread up Kilburn High Road to the SW and Belsize Park began to be developed to the east of Finchley Road.

4.5 The 1866 Ordnance Survey map shows open fields remaining between the northern extent of central London, as well as large 18th and early 19th century villas such as Treherne House and Sandwell House, set in landscaped gardens to the east and west of West End Lane. However, it was the arrival of the railways that provided the catalyst for the rapid development of West Hampstead in the later decades of the 19th century. The Hampstead Junction Railway was opened in 1860, with stations at Finchley Road (Finchley Road and Frognal) and Edgware Road (Brondesbury). The Midland Railway opened their stations on Finchley Road (now closed) in 1868 and West End Lane (West Hampstead Thameslink) in 1871. London Underground’s Metropolitan Line reached West Hampstead in 1879, with new stations on West End Lane and Finchley Road. Together these transport improvements precipitated the laying out of new roads which were rapidly filled with terraced and semi-detached housing. West End Lane was transformed from a village to a new suburban centre, with shops, churches and leisure uses.

4.6 The land to the south of the railway lines and to the east of Finchley Road remained largely undeveloped until the 1870s. The majority of this formed part of the Maryon Wilson Estate. When Sir Thomas Maryon Wilson died in 1821, a long legal dispute over his will by his son Thomas, and the refusal of Parliament to overturn it inhibited development in the area. The younger Sir Thomas died in 1869, and his son John negotiated his manorial rights to part of the Heath, leading to the Hampstead Heath Act of 1871 and the securing of the Heath as public property, freeing him up to develop the estate.

4.7 The roads that would form the South Hampstead Conservation Area were laid out from 1874 onwards, both on the Maryon Wilson Estate and to the west of Priory Road on the Kilburn Priory Estate, with the area fully developed by the outbreak of World War I. The Fitzjohns/Netherhall Conservation Area was also developed rapidly in the 10 years after 1876.

4.8 The pace of this change can be seen on the 1891-94 Ordnance Survey map when compared with the earlier map of 1866. New roads of housing were in place to the west of West End Lane. The land to the east was still dotted with earlier villas, but these too would soon give way to new development. Housing had also filled the open fields to the east and west of Kilburn High Road and West Hampstead had fully merged with central London.

4.9 The position of the overlapping lines of the Midland Railway, Hampstead Junction Railway and Metropolitan Line, as well as their associated sidings, separated the residential areas of South Hampstead from the commercial sections of West End Lane and its surrounding streets to the north. The awkward pockets of railway land that were created were inevitably associated with industrial and commercial uses, with a range of factories and workshops.

4.10 During the 1970s these railway lands and commercial areas became available for redevelopment, which included the opening of the O2 centre facing Finchley Road in 1998, with large areas of carparking to the rear, and various new commercial sheds.



1886 map (top) and 1891-94 (bottom)

Development of the site at 14 Blackburn Road

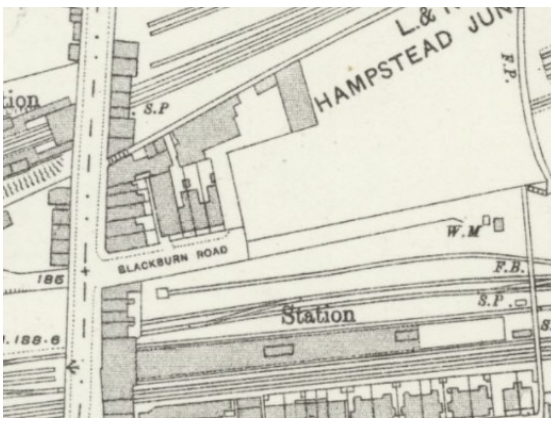
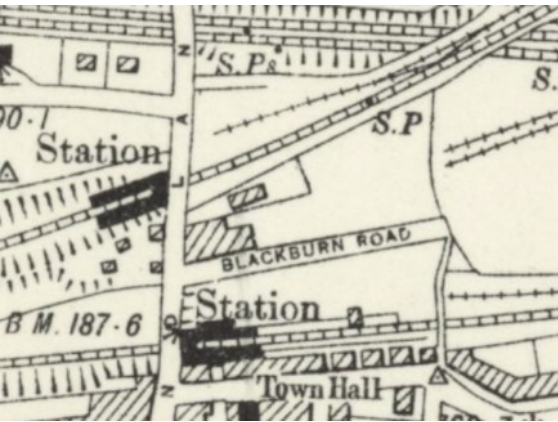
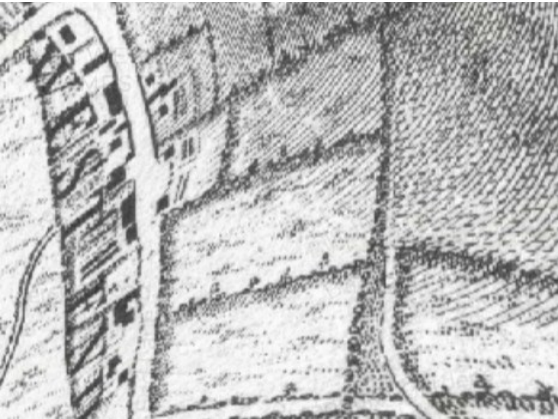
4.11 The site of Blackburn Road remained empty until the late 19th century, forming part of the area's landscape of open fields.

4.12 The road was laid out in around 1869 and named after a local builder. The 1891-94 Ordnance Survey map shows it as a relatively short cul-de-sac leading east off West End Lane. A block of development can be seen on its northern side, however the application site remained empty.

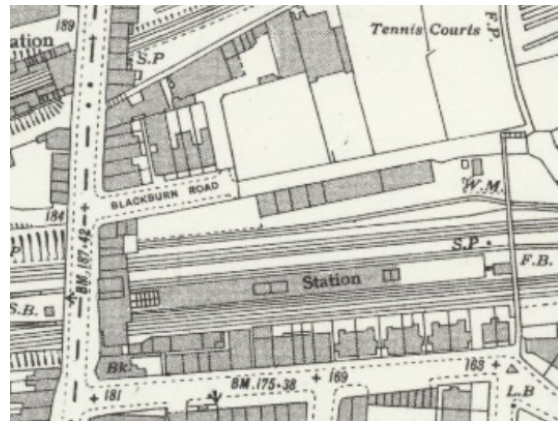
4.13 The 1912-13 Ordnance Survey map shows more detail, with a series of terraced properties along the northern edge of the road and the southern side occupied by railway sidings.

4.14 By 1935-37 the site had received a series of buildings. These are shown in an aerial photograph of May 1946 as four separate, but attached structures with pitched roofs, presumably associated with the railway.

4.15 The commercial and light industrial character of the railway lands can be appreciated on the mid 20th century Ordnance Survey maps. By 1973 the original buildings on the site had been augmented with a new building which wrapped around to the south and west and was now marked as a *Milk Distribution Depot*.



1756, 1866 (top row), 1891-94, 1912-13 (bottom row)



1935-37, 1946 aerial (top row), 1953, 1975 (bottom row)

Townscape Character Appraisal

4.16 The assessment of existing townscape character is an integral part of the prescribed methodology for determining townscape effects arising from development. This requires a full appreciation of the features that make up the quality and value of an area. The identification of these features will also inform future mitigation measures if required.

4.17 In this case, the Site is located within the urban area of Camden. It does not form part of conservation area or designated character area as part of the LBC Camden Character Study (2015)¹.

4.18 The London Borough of Camden commissioned and published its Camden Character Study in 2015. This sought to identify the character of different parts of the Borough, focusing upon areas which were not currently documented, thus excluding conservation areas.

4.19 In order to assess the character of the townscape surrounding the site, this has been divided into a number of Townscape Character Areas (TCAs) which are based on those identified in the Camden Character Study 2015. The assessment relates to built form within a 500m radius of the application site and includes the following:

- TCA1: Finchley Road
- TCA2: West Hampstead/North Kilburn
- TCA3: West Hampstead/Fortune Green
- TCA4: Kilburn
- South Hampstead Conservation Area
- West End Green Conservation Area

4.20 The boundaries of the townscape character areas are not fixed and there is some inevitable overlap on the fringes. Significant parts of the surrounding area are located within the West End Green and South Hampstead Conservation Area, which have been assessed above, and their significance and setting have not been repeated here.

TCA1: Finchley Road

4.21 The application site is located in the West Hampstead Interchange Growth Area, as identified in Figure 3.2 of the Camden Character Study and sits within the Finchley Road Character Area. The Growth Area is acknowledged as an area which has the potential for change.

4.22 Blackburn Road is a cul-de-sac and sandwiched between the railing lines. The scale of development along Blackburn Road has begun to intensify, with the introduction of The Nido student accommodation blocks on its northern side, rising to nine storeys in height.

4.23 Finchley Road (A41) is a major arterial route leading NW out of Central London to join the A1 at Hendon. It is heavily trafficked, with poor air quality. The southern section has retail units at ground floor level with residential accommodation above and the Victorian townscape is interspersed with larger and bulkier buildings from the 1930s onwards. Here there is a lack of greenery and a cluttered and uncoordinated public realm, with buildings that are often in poor condition and lacking investment. There is a strong sense of enclosure to the road, despite its width, due to the height of the buildings, which rise up to five to seven storeys, and their position at the back of pavement. Moving north the quality of the townscape improves and there is generous tree cover, with some of the buildings setback from the street, mitigating against some of the worst effects of the heavy traffic.

4.24 The railway lands to the east of the application site were redeveloped in the late 1990s with the O2 centre, which fronts Finchley Road. There are large areas of surface level parking to the west of this, and new commercial/retail sheds, creating a loose and rather fragmented urban grain. Canfield Place is sandwiched between the railway lines to the south of the O2 centre and is a surviving mews street, lined with a variety of small scale residential and commercial buildings, some of which are Victorian and others 20th century replacements.

4.25 To the north of the O2 centre there is a pocket of housing between the railway lines. Some of this, along Lithos Road, is small scale late Victorian housing of two to three storeys. Other parts date from the late 20th century with some elements rising to five storeys in height. Rosemount Road has a mews character, with a combination of Victorian and later 20th century buildings. Further north on Dresden Close there is a development of three storey 1980s red brick terraced housing laid out in a series of parallel blocks with garden spaces between them. Modern residential apartment development to the east, Pulse Apartments, rise up in height and bulk from Dresden Close towards Finchley Road.

4.26 The area between Crediton Hill and Finchley Road is characterised by the expansive open space of the Cumberland Tennis Club, with large detached interwar houses along tree lined Alvanley Gardens providing a distinct contrast to the character of Finchley Road.

4.27 Whilst the railway provides connectivity and ease of movement across London, and to and from West Hampstead, the lines themselves fragment the area. Awkward pockets of land are created, and the tracks introduce a decisive visual and physical break in the townscape, separating the residential areas to the south from the commercial heart of West Hampstead along West End Lane to the north.

Sensitivity: Low

TCA2: West Hampstead/North Kilburn

4.28 This townscape character area covers the area to the west of West End Lane and between the London Underground and Mainline railway tracks.

4.29 The 500m zone from the application site takes in part of character areas NK8, and areas NK9 and NK10 of the Camden Character Study, forming the eastern section of the much larger North Kilburn/Cricklewood area. It is very varied in character, with a mixture of residential and light industrial uses. The character area lacks the homogeneity and architectural coherence of the late Victorian and Edwardian residential areas which make up the context to the north, south and east of the application site. This reflects the position of the character area, sandwiched between three sets of railway lines.

4.30 Further west, Iverson, Arial and Maygrove Roads are characterised by their terraced housing from the late Victorian and Edwardian periods. The houses are setback behind small front gardens, with a proliferation of street trees which soften the townscape and filter views of the buildings. The houses range in height from two to three storeys. The roads are relatively narrow, and the scale and position of the houses creates a tight urban grain and good sense of enclosure. This means that views are generally self-contained and limited in their extent and reach by existing buildings and mature tree cover. However, there are views looking east along Iverson Road towards the bulkier modern development at nos.159-171 Iverson Road, and views south from the junction with Medley Road towards the West Hampstead Square development.

4.31 The eastern end of Iverson Road is very heterogeneous in character, with a high proportion of more modern buildings. These include mid 20th century low rise commercial buildings, later 20th century commercial blocks, residential apartments from the late 20th and early 21st centuries which rise to between three and six storeys. The redeveloped West Hampstead Thameslink Station is contemporary in design and set back from the road behind a large public space. The locally listed terrace of workers cottages at nos.202-220 add some historic character and provide a link with the adjacent railway. The scale of the buildings here reflects their proximity to the commercial areas and transport hub of West End Lane, including West Hampstead Thameslink and West Hampstead Overground stations.

4.32 Situated to the south on a thin strip of land between the London Underground and Overground lines is the new West Hampstead Square residential development. This consists of a series of seven contemporary blocks, rising from five to twelve storeys in height.

4.33 To the north of Maygrove Road there are taller three and four storey commercial buildings to the west. Adjacent to this the site is in the process of being redeveloped for a new residential building of up to eleven storeys, as well as the new Kingsgate Primary School. There is particularly heavy tree cover on the corner of Maygrove Road and Iverson Road, where street trees screen the low-rise commercial premises which is situated adjacent to the school buildings and the railway lines.

Sensitivity: Medium

TCA3: West Hampstead/Fortune Green

4.34 This townscape character area is largely residential, with some retail parades along Mill Lane. It was developed rapidly at the end of the 19th century when the streets either side of West End Lane were laid out.

4.35 The 500m zone from the application site takes in character areas WH1, WH2, WH3 and WH4 from the Camden Character Study. These areas include a series of gently curving streets lined with terraced housing from the late Victorian and Edwardian period. The houses are setback behind small front gardens or lightwells with a proliferation of street trees which soften the townscape and filter views of the buildings.

4.36 The houses range in height from two to four storeys. The roads are relatively narrow, and the scale and position of the houses creates a tight urban grain and good sense of enclosure. This means that views are generally self-contained and limited in their extent and reach by existing buildings and mature tree cover. The area has a quiet, residential character and there is little appreciation of busier commercial areas beyond.

4.37 The short period of time over which the roads were developed contributes to their strong and cohesive architectural character, mostly constructed in red brick with painted render dressings and typical detailing for speculative housing of this period. The buildings and townscape have survived relatively intact and are a good quality example of housing of the period.

4.38 Whilst set outside the West End Green Conservation Area, the buildings provide a positive setting to the designation and continue the coherent Edwardian and Victorian character of West End Lane and its surrounding residential streets.

Sensitivity: Medium

TCA4: Kilburn

4.39 This area runs from Kilburn High Road in the west, to the rear of the buildings which line the western side of West End Lane. It spread south from the London Overground and Metropolitan railway lines to Quex Road.

4.40 This townscape character area is largely residential, with a lively mix of uses along Kilburn High Road, including shops, bars, cafes. The area developed rapidly at the end of the 19th century over a similar period of time to the roads which now form the South Hampstead Conservation Area.

4.41 The 500m zone from the application site takes in the residential areas to the east of Kingsgate Road, including character areas K4 and K5 from the Camden Character Study. These are characterised by a series of straight and gently curving streets, lined with terraced housing from the late Victorian and Edwardian periods. This ranges in height from two to four storeys. The houses are setback behind small front gardens or lightwells, with raised ground floors. Street trees soften the townscape and filter views of the buildings.

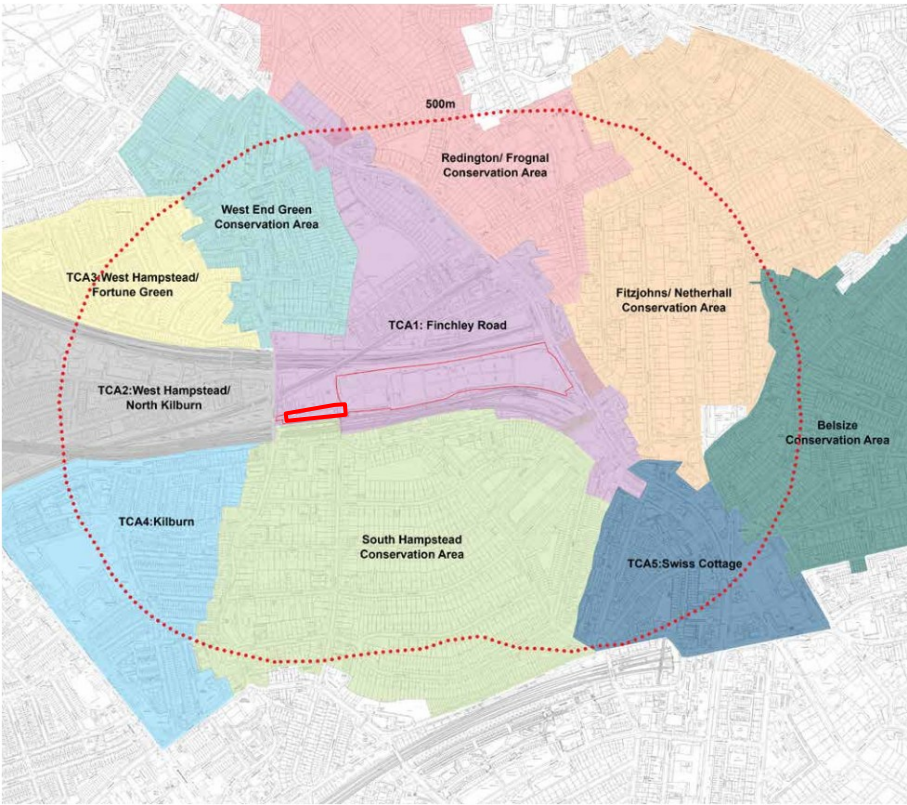
4.42 The roads are relatively narrow, and the scale and position of the houses creates a tight urban grain and good sense of enclosure. This means that views are generally self-contained and limited in their extent and reach by existing buildings and mature tree cover. The area has a quiet, residential character and there is little appreciation of busier commercial areas beyond. However, there are some vantage points in the northern section of the character area where taller modern buildings are visible. This includes views north along Gladys Road and Hilltop Road where the tall buildings of the West Hampstead Square development close the view and rise above the roofline of the Victorian houses.

4.43 The area has a strong and cohesive architectural character and reflects speculative architectural styles of the period, using a mixture of red and yellow brickwork. The buildings and townscape have remained largely unchanged and are an intact and good quality example of housing of the period.

4.44 Beyond Lowfield Road in the NW corner of the character area the townscape is more varied, with larger and bulkier buildings and a loose urban grain. This includes the extensive low rise Webheath Estate, first opened in 1970, a former London Board School, now converted to apartments and the Kilburn Grange Children’s Centre.

4.45 Whilst set outside the South Hampstead Conservation Area, the buildings provide a positive setting to the designation and continue the coherent Edwardian and Victorian character of its residential streets.

Sensitivity: Low



Map 4.02 Landscape Character Areas

Townscape Receptors

4.46 Based on the townscape baseline study findings, the following receptors, divided into areas and components, have been identified.

Townscape areas:

- **Pre-1900 Residential Terraces and Large Terraces:** This receptor is associated with the distinctive architecture of the South Hampstead Conservation Area to the south of the Site and of Victorian/Edwardian Terrace House, it preserves a sense of time depth and identity within the study area.
- **Railway Corridor:** This receptor is directly associated with the Site and characterised by the strong commercial character that is typical of the West Hampstead interchange area.

Townscape components:

- **The Site:** This receptor is associated with the O2 Master Plan and West End Lane to Finchley Road SPD and contributes to the setting of a cluster of Cambridge’s CAs. While it does not currently afford distinctive qualities, it is a key townscape area which performs several functions for the local character.
- **Street frontage:** This receptor is currently associated with inactive and negative space around the Blackburn Road, particularly as the western entrance to O2 site and represents an opportunity to improve the relationship of the proposal with the surrounding townscape and is a key element in the O2 Masterplan and SPD where proposed development is required to enhance this key aspect of the local townscape.