

November 2013

Proof of Evidence

of

Piers Gough

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Town & Country Planning Act 1990, Section 78

Appeal by Zen Developments

Proposed development of 4 St Augustine's Road NW1 9RN with a new residential building of 9 apartments and associated landscape

PINS Reference: APP/X5210/A/13/2204277

LPA Reference: 2013/1210/P

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1.0 Personal and Practice Details of Mr Piers Gough

Piers Gough will say:

1.01 I am Piers Gough and I am a founding partner of CZWG Architects, which was established in 1975.

1.02 I studied at the Architectural Association School of Architecture between 1965 and 1971.

I was a founding partner of Wilkinson Calvert and Gough in 1968, which was subsumed into CZWG in 1975. I have taught at schools at Glasgow, Cardiff, Middlesex and the Architectural Association. I have also lectured internationally. I am a member of the RIBA and have recently served on the Gold Medal and Honorary Fellows Committee. I was President of the Architectural Association between 1995 and 1997 and on the Council from 1990 to 2000. In 2000, I was appointed a Commissioner of English Heritage, having been on the London Advisory Committee since 1995. I was also, until recently, a Commissioner and on the Design Review Panel of the Commission for Architecture and Built Environment. I was elected a Royal Academician in 2002 and was recently made an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland. I was elected as Professor of Architecture of the Royal Academy School in April of this year.

1.03 In the 1998 Queen's Birthday Honour's List, I was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire for Services to Architecture

1.04 I produce at Appendix 24 of this proof, a practice profile - a synopsis of the past and present work of the practice. We have received many awards for our designs. In London, the principal buildings of the practice include: China Wharf*, Cascades, The Circle*, Wolfe Crescent, Dundee Wharf, Millennium Harbour, Westferry Studios and Tunnel Wharf*, all in Docklands. Other buildings in London are the Street-Porter House*, 66 Vauxhall; Soho Lofts* in WI, Bankside Lofts and Bankside Central in Southwark; Fulham Island* at

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Fulham and the Green Bridge at Mile End; the Westbourne Grove Public Lavatories and Flower Kiosk*; the new galleries at the National Portrait Gallery* and Canada Water Library. My firm was responsible for the overall masterplan around the Emirates Stadium and across the Holloway Road and for the building design on Drayton Park, and VizioN7 and 295 Holloway Road, significant parts of the “Arsenal on the move” regeneration masterplan. Also under construction is the Brewery Square Quarter* in Dorchester and recently completed, the Maggie’s Centre in Nottingham. In Camden we have designed St Paul’s Mews* (Camden Square Conservation Area) Summer’s Street Lofts*, Wren House*, Camden Wharf*, The Glass building, Rose Joan Mews and 37-63 Fortune Green Road, the last three of which were granted planning permission on appeal.

* Projects marked with an asterisk are in conservation areas.

- 1.05 Further information on the practice can be found at www.czwg.com.
- 1.06 I was personally responsible for designing the proposal in this application.

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2.0 Brief

- 2.01 Our client is Zen Developments.
- 2.02 The brief was to design a residential building of a size, form and arrangement appropriate to the site.
- 2.03 The client took note of the previous applications on the site and, reasons for their refusal (Appendices 3-6 18 and 19) which centred on design rather than on the size or number of flats provided.
- 2.04 Before taking the commission we carried out studies to ascertain if a similar quantum of accommodation could be satisfactorily arranged without the need for the fully basement apartments of the previous schemes. I felt that basement flats that have their only views confined to light wells on both aspects, particularly behind and below the existing substantial wall around the site would be below the amenity standards that should be required of new housing.
- 2.05 Our studies suggested a solution could be possible with a lower ground floor rather than the full basements previously proposed.
- 2.06 All apartments to have a garden, terrace or balcony as well as a shared amenity garden.
- 2.07 A high quality development was envisaged. Good quality materials to be used throughout on the exteriors, interiors and for the landscaping.
- 2.08 The building should achieve Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4.
- 2.09 The client's brief remained consistent throughout the design process but acknowledged and supported changes occasioned through consultations with the LPA, the Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) and the community. Details of the consultations processes are included in the statement of pre application consultation and the Design and Access Statement which accompanied the Planning Application (Appendix 9 D&A Statement Chapter 8)

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3.0 Site and Surroundings

- 3.01 This section relates to Chapter 3 of the Design and Access Statement accompanying the application (in Appendix 9)
- 3.02 The planning policy context is covered in the evidence of Mr Cunnane.
- 3.03 The site is a 0.06 hectare triangular area of vacant land at the junction of St Augustine's Road, Agar Grove and Murray Street. It is a brown field site, most recently used as a builder's yard. It is surrounded by a good quality 1.8m high London Stock brick wall which defines its perimeter. There are two major vehicular openings in the wall with pavement crossovers. The site rises on Agar Grove from west to east by 0.4m and on St Augustine's Road by 0.8m so that the north east corner is 0.4m higher than the south east.
- 3.04 It is on the southern edge of the Camden Square Conservation Area. The area is described in the Design and Access Statement Para 3.2 page 12 (Appendix 9) and in London Borough of Camden's Camden Square Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (Appendix 22).
- 3.05 *"Camden Square conservation Area is a primarily nineteenth century inner London suburb. It is a planned development, in a gridded street layout running parallel to and perpendicular from Camden Road, and the layout is focused around Camden Square. (Camden Square Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy Part 1 Paragraph 2) The site is identified as a 'gap' site. "The area also contains some 'gap' sites. The junction of Agar Grove, St Augustine's Road and Murray Street is a vacant site that fails to define the entrance, and mars the view of the area from the south and east."* (Camden Square Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy Part 1 Paragraph 2)
- 3.06 Part of the major railway tunnel serving lines into St Pancras Station runs under the western corner of the site. This places a restriction against construction on the western part of the site in proximity to the tunnel. (However balconies and the like may 'overhang' a part of the area not directly above the tunnel.)
- 3.07 Agar Grove on the south boundary of the site is part of a major east west

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route from Camden Town to Caledonian Road in Islington. It runs in a shallow arc gradually up hill from south west to east.

- 3.08 *“Agar Grove is the southernmost street in the Camden Estate development. It links the ancient streets of York Way (Maiden Lane) to St Pancras Way, and continues to Royal College Street. The street also physically runs along the lower edge of the sloping area. This was originally lined with semi-detached houses, with the gradation from larger houses to the west leading to terraces at the York Way end.*
- 3.09 *This pattern is still legible however the character of the street has been eroded progressively, particularly on the north side. It is a busy thoroughfare; the pattern of buildings was divided by the gap caused by the insertion of the railway, bomb damage and the replacement of houses with flats on the corner of York Way, 33-47 Agar Grove and Gairloch House and the surrounding Council estates. The condition of many properties is also poor – in need of investment and reinstatement of detail. There is a key development site on the corner of Agar Grove and St Augustine’s road.”* (Camden Square Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy Part 1 Section 5.3 paragraph 3B)
- 3.10 The part of Agar Grove to the west of the site is characterized by post war housing blocks of various scales set at different angles and well back from the road, with many large mature trees either side of the street. This part is not in a conservation area. Approaching the corner of Murray Street and the site, the north side of the street retains earlier villas also set back from the pavement line. On the corner of Murray Street is a characteristic former public house set at an angle to Agar Grove at right angles to Murray Street.
- 3.11 The south side of Agar Grove at this junction is a wall/fence to the side of the railway bridge which continues opposite the majority of the site. *“Wider urban view out of the area: At street level the best place to see the wider context of the conservation area is on Agar Grove Railway Bridge looking out over the railway lands; and similarly from the rear of the London Irish Centre. When completed, the new King’s Cross development will be visible in long views over the railway lands.”* (Camden Square Conservation Area Appraisal and

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Management Strategy Part 1 Section 5.2)

- 3.08 The western half of Agar Grove in the Conservation Area is characterised by four storey Victorian terraces of houses (towards the east end) and similar height villas of semi detached homes, which gives the street a strong consistent semi grand character in spite of some gaps filled with indifferent post war housing blocks. There are rather randomly spaced street trees of various species and sizes. The street itself is crowded by the considerable traffic including buses and (parallel) parked cars either side.
- 3.09 The characteristic house is on four floors with prominent lower ground floor windows, a ten or more step staircase up to a projecting portico to the upper ground floor with two further floors above under pronounced overhanging eaves to a 30° pitched roof. Above the roof, the centre party wall of the villas and alternate party walls of the terraces support prominent chimney stacks with up to 16 chimney pots. The lower two floors are of painted render in horizontal bands of rustication. The upper floors are London Stock Brick in various states of cleanliness from pale to near black. The front outer corner of the villas are quoined in render. There are a hierarchy of sash windows in rendered surrounds characteristically more decorative at upper ground floor – piano nobile level and lessening above and below. The windows are arranged in pairs for each house. This is because the outer windows align with the front door portico below which is close to the corner. The other wider width window is positioned further away from the central party wall because of the internal projecting chimney stacks and fire places. That the windows are hierarchical vertically and horizontally is more an architectural device expressing the use of the original houses as living, bedroom and servant accommodation and not an actual great difference in floor to ceiling heights. The side flank walls are of plain brick with odd windows. The houses are all set back by some 4m from back of pavement, some with front gardens behind low walls of inconsistent design presumably subsequent to war time removal of railings. Some front areas are unfortunately used as car parking.
- 3.10 Across the road from the site is the wall and fence to the railway bridge previously mentioned. Next to it is a lower concrete wall and gate leading to a

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path and green space running beside the railway, where a Villa, now demolished, once stood. So that the first Villa in the row now reveals its unadorned flank wall to the west.

- 3.11 Immediately to the east of the site on the north side of Agar Grove is a double garage now subject to a planning permission for a house in what was the garden of N^o 27, an uncharacteristic single house Villa of four stories (photograph of villa A in Appendix 16), three windows wide, with a central entrance portico. The whole of the front of the building is rendered. The prominent west and other side wall are of plain brick. The house has a shallower depth due to the convergence of St Augustine's Road. N^o 29 and 31 are a characteristic Villa described above but with plain un-decorative features around the windows. Adjacent to this villa is a 55m long three storey block of post war flats in a pallid brick under a pitched roof with chimney stacks. It has however a consistent front railing and planted garden. It is listed in the Camden Square Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy as a building that makes a negative contribution to the special character of the area. (Part 1 Section 5.9) The adjacent last house before the junction with St Paul's Crescent is a truncated half Villa.
- 3.12 St Augustine's Road rises more steeply than Agar Grove from the junction with Murray Street up to Camden Park Road to the north east. It is a consistent street of predominantly semi detached house villas as in Agar Grove. It also has some street trees but in this case very little traffic between the parked cars either side.
- 3.13 *"This street has an apparently consistent arrangement of set-back grander houses. On closer inspection there is a subtle change in character starting from the south, as it was chronologically with larger plots, stucco and pediments, progressing to stucco or a mix of brick over stuccoed ground and lower floors, to the smaller terraced houses at the northern end. This is all consistent with the overall pattern and evolution of the Estate, as it grew north east up the hill. The south west end of the road has two large vacant sites. Planning approval was granted for flats on the north west plot in 2007, but (in 2010) no construction has yet begun. The difficult and key triangular*

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plot to the south east at the entrance of Murray Street and Agar Grove has recently been the subject of numerous, as yet unsuccessful planning applications for flats.” (Camden Square Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy Part 1 Section 5 Paragraph 4)

- 3.14 The characteristic Villa of the south side of the street has similar lower ground to second storey form as Agar Grove but with render restricted only to the lower ground floor with London Stock Brick above and more decorative window surrounds to upper ground floor windows. The corners do not have quoins. (Photograph of Villa B in Appendix16)
- 3.15 The overall effect is to increase the prominence of the rendered porticos against the darker brick in street views. The inconsistent front walls, railing and palings to the back of pavement are the only poor feature of a fine residential street.
- 3.16 On the north side of the street from its west end up to Cantelowes Road, the villas are a considerable variant. They have completely rendered façades with decorative window surrounds and a strong string course under the cills of the second floor windows.
- 3.17 Unusually they have asymmetrical front doors. The right hand house of the pair has a prominent portico up steps on the front façade while the left hand house has a recessed one on the side of the house giving access to the centre of the plan and leaving a wider front room at lower and upper ground floor with two windows each.
- 3.18 The five villas at the west end of the street towards the site are additionally idiosyncratic as having pedimented fronts with pitched roofs running back at right angles to the street either side of the party walls. They are also fully rendered with strong cornices and string course to form the pediment. The second floor windows in between are semi circular headed. (Photograph of villa C in Appendix 16)
- 3.19 Adjacent to the site on the south east side of the road are two villas of three stories – lower ground, upper ground and first floors. They have similar porticos and steps as their four storey neighbours. To lessen the difference in overall height of the front façade the builders added a parapet in lieu of an

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overhanging eaves above the first floor windows. The exposed side wall of No 6 adjacent to the site is of poor quality brickwork, random windows and exposed pipework.

3.20 Across the road from the site is a timber hoarding awaiting the construction of a new flats development with planning permission for a pedimented villa building at 3 St Augustine's Road strongly similar to its neighbours on the front, with balconies on its west wall adjacent to the railway. (Drawings at Appendix 25)

3.21 There is a section of brick wall to the railway bridge and some further timber hoardings where St Augustine's Road sweeps round into Murray Street. This curving of St Augustine's Road is a relatively recent realignment away from what was a dangerous to navigate triple angle road junction. It produces two larger areas of pavement in front of the former Murray Arms Pub (now Nisa Stores) and at the west end of the site.

"The south east end of Murray Street has a particular character on its south west side as a parade of shops with residential accommodation above; a cornice, first floor metalwork and a wide fascia links the façades. Pressure on local retail and the desire for residential conversion has led to changes. Only two shops and a restaurant remain operational. The shop frontages survive, however many have been converted for residential use at ground and basement level. Harmful alterations include the excavation of front lightwells, removal and piercing of fascias, blocking of windows and reduction in their size; at the upper storeys some sections of cornice have been removed, window configuration has changed and some rebuilding is evident (possibly due to bomb damage). On the corner with Agar Grove, the Murray Arms public house has suffered similar changes. Opposite this parade is The London Irish Centre and a new (2010) block of flats over intended shops- the first with a pseudo retail ground floor treatment – comprising a variety of styles and the latter upper part responding to the terraced house precedent but lacking in inspiration and with an intrusive lack of concern for the roof details. It is currently capped by unsightly roof top development." (Camden Square Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy Part 1

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Section 5 Paragraph 4)

- 3.22 The south part of Murray Street is an early part of the conservation area. It is characterised by a long terrace of three storey houses of London Stock Bricks above shops on the west side with a consistent parapet/cornice line and dormer windows in Mansard roofs above. The line of the shops fronts is also consistent.
- 3.23 The ex pub corner building itself is more elaborate with a white painted rendered ground floor. Tall first floor windows in decorative pedimented surrounds, large second floor windows below a parapet partially obscuring new dormer windows in a mansard roof. The notable features are the rendered curved corners formerly the signage for the pub which gives the buildings a strong presence on the corner.
- 3.24 Murray Street is designated a neighbourhood centre although it now has few shops.
- 3.25 This is a fine part of the Conservation Area. The buildings are variations on the theme of four storey, two window wide houses with prominent portico porches reached up a flight of steps. They take the form of terraces or semi-detached villas. The latter predominate near the site.
- 3.26 Our approach to the design was strongly informed by this context.

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4.0 History of the Site

- 4.01 This section relates to Chapter 3.2 page 12-13 of the Design and Access Statement (Appendix 9)
- 4.02 Old Ordinance Survey maps of the area from 1870, 1890 and 1950 show that when the Camden Square Estate was first laid out, this triangular site was formed by the meeting of the old St Paul's Road (now Agar Grove) and the orthogonal grid of the Estate. (Design and Access Statement page 13 Appendix 9).
- 4.03 A semi detached villa type of two houses occupied the site. This villa did not follow the frontages on either St Paul's Road or St Augustine's Road but was angled between them. Each house having a triangular site meeting at the apex on the corner.
- 4.04 The plans show that the houses had bay windows facing south west towards the corner. These bay windows are a feature of the garden side not the street side of the other houses in the area (south side of Agar Grove) making a precedent for a different type of façade facing the corner.
- 4.05 The entrances to the houses up a flight of steps shown on the plan are on the street facing sides of the villa. The east facing side of the houses appear more haphazard but this may only be on the ground floor drawn on the O.S map. The angle of the house front on St Augustine's Road is another precedent for the new proposal.
- 4.06 The villa is positioned very close to the railway tunnel which puts the house fronts close to the boundary wall on both street fronts. This appears deliberate as the villa could have been set further east on the plot.
- 4.07 In any case, its proximity to the railway tunnel seems to have been its downfall as the houses were demolished, probably as early as 1898. N° 72 and 74 Agar Grove seem to have suffered similarly but were demolished after 1950.
- 4.08 More recently there have been two planning applications on the site designed by different architects. Drawings and associated reports are at Appendices 3, 5, 18 and 19.

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- 4.09 The first was recommended to the committee by officers and was refused by the committee which was upheld by the inspector on appeal. (Appendix 6 and 7)
- 4.10 In plan it was divided into two flats north east and south west around a central core. The north east part of the plan followed the street front alignment of St Augustine's Road and Agar Grove. The flats had north facing living rooms and the balconies were shallow "Juliet" type. The flats of the south west part projected forward on Agar Grove but not on St Augustine's Road with a curved external wall to the south west. The living rooms were on the west end and had full balconies partially inset and partially projecting. The third and fourth floors were a duplex.
- 4.11 It had two flats in a full basement below ground level with outlook into light well areas making six stories in all.
- 4.12 The external form stepped up east to west from three stories above ground to five. It could be characterised as having two architectural styles. To the east full rendered elevations with features taken from the existing buildings of the street. To the west end a free form flamboyant asymmetrical composition on piloti with alternating windows and balconies. The principal elevation material was to be ceramic tiles.
- 4.13 The more recent design was recommended by planning officers for approval but turned down by Committee principally on detailed design grounds. It was not appealed. (Appendix 3, 4 ad 20)
- 4.14 The design might be characterised as a wholly modernist building but restrained rather than flamboyant. It also stepped up from three stories to four from east to west to 'acknowledge' the lower neighbouring villas. It stepped forward from the existing street lines towards the west. This building was to be wholly in two tones of brick with recessed balconies and a blank wall facing the corner (a long slot window was added during the process) giving it a rather forbidding appearance. It was also criticized for not expressing any hierarchy in window heights.
- 4.15 The plan form had east and west flats either side of a central core. There were to have been two flats in a full basement looking into light wells front

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and back. Some sections of the external perimeter wall were to be removed to allow extra light into them.

- 4.16 In both the unbuilt on western triangle of the site was laid out for car parking, bin and bike stores.
- 4.17 In view of the failures, a more rigorously contextual approach has been sought and the project completely re-thought and reconfigured including the landscaping.

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5.0 Concept Design

- 5.01 This section relates to Chapter 4 of the Design and Access Statement pages 21-23 (Appendix 9)
- 5.02 The typical and atypical villas of the Conservation Area including the one demolished on the site have informed the design.

All conservation areas are different. Some are so coherent and perfect that the loss of a part would be best served by a reproduction of the original designs. The character of other areas are given by the sheer variety of juxtaposed styles such that a new building is able to add yet another to the mix. This conservation area, built in one period of the 19th Century from 1860 to 1880, has variety within a limited range of types. In St Augustine's Road and Agar Grove there is a strong coherent townscape admittedly with gaps and variations. Murray Street opposite the site is more mixed.
- 5.03 It was felt that the new building should support rather than contrast with the ensemble.
- 5.04 The villas of the area were built as family houses although most are now converted into flats. The brief for the new building was that it be designed as flats.
- 5.05 The existing villas of the area have just one primary street frontage, one secondary garden frontage and two tertiary nearly invisible side walls. This prominent corner site patently called for a building with three primary frontages. Given their natural prominence in the townscape, it seemed apposite that they should relate to those of existing buildings rather than be a wholly different in typology.
- 5.06 The building is conceived therefore as a modern mannerist interpretation derived from the neighbouring buildings.
- 5.07 The overall form is a single villa under a shallow pitched roof (of 30° like its neighbours).
- 5.08 It has a trapezium form given by the site shape and the restriction of building to the eastern 3/5 of the site.
- 5.09 The tertiary façade is set 1.2m away from the east boundary wall in common

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with the villas of the area. The primary façades follow the set back building lines of 3m on Agar Grove and 6m on St Augustine's Road but, in the latter case, the front curves out slightly towards the west which acknowledges the curve in the road to the west but would be a reasonable idea anyway at the end of the street. The angling of this end corner also has a precedent in the previous demolished villa on the site. By bringing the pitched roofs to a gable end, the west facing façade can be a free interpretation of the gable fronted villas on the north west side of St Augustine's Road

- 5.10 The flat plans are organized differently to the two previous applications but more in line with the demolished villa that was on the site. The building is divided north and south along its length such that each apartment gains a westerly aspect towards the corner (as the houses used to).
- 5.11 The circulation of the building is between the flats on the wider east end where windows would be restricted due to overlooking of neighbours gardens. The overall longer plan form is apposite for a special corner building.
- 5.12 This circulation core position is best entered from the north east corner on St Augustine's Road, the highest point on the site, so that an entrance portico can be provided that reflects the others so prominent in the street and retaining their rhythm. The asymmetry of just one entrance on the north east end has a precedent in the villas on the north west side of the street.
- 5.13 Apartments require private external amenity space in the form of gardens, terraces or balconies. The west elevation seems the best place for those balconies so that they enjoy south and west evening sun but also do not appear as part of the north or south frontages on Agar Grove or St Augustine's Road. The west elevation, being a special feature of the corner site, is the appropriate place for balconies (which are not otherwise a feature of the houses of the streetscape). There is also a kind of precedent in the bay windows of the demolished villa on the site in so far as they were not a feature of the front elevations of the villas in the area but rather the back garden elevations. The provision of balconies on this frontage coupled with the planting of gardens in front of them similarly suggests a garden frontage

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as well as simultaneously an important one on a prominent corner in the streetscape.

- 5.14 Since in St Augustine's road neighbouring three storey villas simply step up to being four storey to the east, it seems reasonable, unlike previous applications, to simply step back up to a four storey façade on this site. On Agar Grove the neighbouring villa buildings are four storey (plus a pitched roof).
- 5.15 This height is able to accommodate apartments at lower ground floor rather than total basement as well as upper ground, first, second and a third floor within the pitched roof, with the latter's reduced width making it suitable only as a single flat, giving 9 apartments in all.
- 5.16 The lower ground floor flats also benefit from having private external amenity gardens and patios. The whole building has a shared amenity garden at the west end where the previous schemes just had car parking space and bin storage. This is an opportunity to enhance the landscape of the conservation area with planting visible above the surrounding wall.
- 5.17 The overall form of the building acts as a comfortably scaled "book end" to the long run of terraces and villas on St Augustine's Road and Agar Grove.
- 5.18 The concept design is based on the analysis of the site and its surroundings in a conservation area. It responds to the context and relates to the identified character of the area. Bolder change might be justified but has already twice failed to win approval. This scheme envisages a more nuanced contextual approach.
- 5.19 The Camden Square Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy describes the desirability of this type of approach; *"High quality design and high quality execution will be required of all new development at all scales, and opportunities for enhancement and further revealing the significance of the conservation area should be taken. The design statements supporting such applications will be expected specifically to address the particular characteristics identified in the appraisal. Successful modern design can be of the 21st century and enhance the conservation area, by carefully assessing and responding to the form and qualities of surrounding*

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buildings and spaces.” (Part 2 Section 7.4 in Appendix 22)

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6.0 Layout Plans and Sections

- 6.1 This section relates to Paragraphs 5 and 5.1 of the Design and Access Statement p. 22-27. (Appendix 9)
- 6.2 The building is entered from the highest north west corner of the site with an opening through the existing wall and with a path leading directly to a protective portico to the front door. The portico height is similar to the neighbour's but has level entry rather than front steps. The entrance hall runs along the east wall to the lift and stairs at the middle of the elevation, locationally similar to that of a neighbouring house but in this case, due to the level entry, the entrance hall is one and a half floors high.
- 6.3 Timber bin stores are conveniently located either side of the path and the bicycle store in the south east corner is accessed along the alleyway on the north side of the building. A substantial timber fence is proposed to this boundary of the site.
- 6.4 The double-sided lift and stairs descend half a level to the lower ground floor where a hallway leads to the two front doors of apartments at this level. The apartment on the St Augustine's Road side is arranged into two bedrooms to the east and living/dining kitchen space to the west. It is a fully wheelchair accessible flat. The Agar Grove side one has three double bedrooms, a separate kitchen to the living/dining room making it eligible for six person occupation. They each have good daylight penetration.
- 6.5 Each apartment has level access to a patio running the full length of their long elevation with a planting bed against the existing boundary wall. They also have a private garden/terrace on their west end aspect.
- 6.6 The boundary wall provides a high degree of privacy. The two present vehicular openings will be infilled with matching brickwork and detailing.
- 6.7 Beyond these private areas is a shared garden for residents at the west end of the site. This is accessed along a path from the entrance way which is down a shallow slope like the pavement beyond. The landscape design is described in Chapter 7.
- 6.8 A lift and a half flight of stairs serve the upper ground floor. The apartments

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are similar to the lower ground floor ones but have amenity balconies off the living rooms at the west end. The balustrade design is such that it gives a degree of privacy from north and south street views whilst allowing a clear view west onto the garden and beyond.

- 6.9 The first floor extends over the entrance hall so the apartment on the St Augustine's Road side can have an extra bedroom to make two double bed and one single bedroom accommodation suitable for five persons. The Agar Grove side apartment is similar to the ones below.
- 6.10 The second floor is similar to the first floor.
- 6.11 The third floor is set within the roof space which restricts its usable width either side and at the east end. There is space for a three double bedroom apartment with a study, separate kitchen, utility room, living/dining room. Most rooms have direct access to two long terraces to north and south behind the façade parapets. A semi circular window in the west end wall lights the living room and gives it an excellent view over the city. (An additional balcony to this window was removed during the planning process to lighten the appearance of the elevation.)
- 6.12 In section, the apartments have floor to floor heights of 3m and floor to ceiling heights of 2.6m. Being partially in the roof, the 3rd floor apartment has ceiling heights that vary between 2.1m to 3.4m.
- 6.13 The external elevations are based on the typical and atypical villas of the area interpreted in a modern mannerist idiom.
- 6.14 The height of the building aligns with the first 4 storey villa on St Augustine's Road, under a similar roof pitch of 30 degrees as the houses in the street. The roof is similarly hipped around the north, east and south side but gabled on the west elevation in the manner of the gabled roofs of the five villas on the north side of St Augustine's Road.
- 6.15 The St Augustine's Road elevation aligns with its neighbour at the north east end moving out towards the street in a concave curve. Similar to its neighbours, it is of London Stock Brick over a lower ground floor of white render – in this case, self-coloured rather than painted as are the entrance portico and window surrounds.

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- 6.16 The portico/porch is next to the corner of the building in the same position on the façade and of similar height as the adjacent buildings. To ensure level access required by regulation there are no steps up to this portico but it is otherwise the same in its distance forward from the building line. It is clearly the (only) entrance to all the apartments of the building.
- 6.17 The windows on this elevation follow a vertical hierarchy with the highest at lower and upper ground floor, reducing in height at first floor and again at second floor. Because the floor to floor heights are the same, this is achieved by raising the cill height at each floor to 0.4m and 0.8m respectively which leaves an increasing space between the windows vertically - also similar to the villas of the street.
- 6.18 Horizontally the windows are also increasingly spaced apart from east to west. This configuration both suits the internal arrangement of the rooms of the apartments behind the façade and produces a mannered version of the unequal spacing of the neighbours, which subtly emphasises the outward curve of the wall and produces an overall pattern where the windows get further apart horizontally and vertically as they move away from the entrance porch. Another more modernist feature is that the windows themselves are brought forward in their surrounds as opposed to being recessed.
- 6.19 The pitched roof is set back on a cill at the top of the wall in a modern version of the traditional eaves detail. The windows to the top floor are set back into the roof behind a parapet of the same height as the cill. They do not project out of the roof like a dormer but are recessed back to the internal wall line of the apartment.
- 6.20 The longer elevation to Agar Grove is divided into two by a deep recess just off centre of the elevation. This visually divides it into two unequal parts of similar width to the adjacent typical and atypical villas in a quasi symmetrical way. The vertical window spacing is the same as those on the St Augustine's Road elevation. Horizontally the groups of two and three windows are evenly spaced. The roof and top floor windows have a similar arrangement.
- 6.21 The tertiary north east elevation towards the boundary wall is more prosaic with entrance hall and staircase windows arranged as necessary and without

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surrounds. Partially projecting from the roof is the brick lift enclosure. It is the same height as the ridge of the roof and the visual equivalent of the chimney stacks of the neighbouring buildings. The north east elevation segues into a short section of east elevation adjacent to Agar Grove. This part is much more visible than other near boundary walls of the area due to the lower garage structures of N^o 27 Agar Grove adjacent. This part of the wall is designed with windows in surrounds as the north and south elevations.

- 6.22 The west elevation on this prominent corner of the conservation area takes its cue from the pedimented rendered frontages of the five villas on the north side of St Augustine's Road. Added to it are balconies to the apartments to form a celebratory outward looking aspect to the corner. The balconies are served by full length French windows in common with the lower ground floor windows, in the rendered base these are recessed. In the final design, the balconies themselves have a hierarchical reduction in width up the elevation. A mannerist feature is that the render to brickwork relationship on this frontage is reversed so that the lower ground floor becomes brick.

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7.0 Landscape

- 7.01 The landscape was designed by Geoff Southern (CMLI) a landscape architect of our office. It is fully described in Section 11 of the Design and Access Statement - pages 65-69. (Appendix 9)
- 7.02 The scheme provides for both private external spaces (gardens and balconies) and a communal garden. The private and communal gardens combining to form the walled garden of the development.
- 7.03 The landscape envisaged will support and enhance the conservation area, including the creation of some part-sunken terraces to the lower ground floor which are typical of the area (and can be seen all the way up St Augustine's Road).
- 7.04 It represents a distinct increase in soft landscaping from previous proposals for the site. This is due to the car parking being decanted onto the street to take the position vacated by canceling the crossover on St Augustine's Road.
- 7.05 Tree planting is distributed around the perimeter of the site providing visual amenity to both the gardens and the street. The trees will also provide some environmental buffering to the communal gardens from Agar Grove.
- 7.06 The planting will be a combination of formal planting (such as the espaliered trees) to provide structure; robust low-maintenance planting in the communal gardens; and more ornamental planting to the private gardens. This planting will greatly improve the site's biodiversity and its visual amenity from the upper level apartments.
- 7.07 The hard material palette for the landscape was chosen to respond to the streetscape and *town-house* facades. The silver-grey colour (slabs) at street level provides a formality which is reduced as you move to the ochre colours (brick) of the private gardens.
- 7.08 The scheme is generally a modern but modest development of the conservation area's landscape and street-scene.

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8.0 Views of the Project in the Townscape

8.01 This section relates to Computer Generated views of the scheme in Appendix 11.

8.02 View 1: West along Agar Grove

8.03 Existing streetscape has repetitive semi-detached villas on the southside of the road set back from the pavement with front steps and porches projecting forward. The front walls (replacement for railings removed in the war?) are varied and of poor quality. On the north side of the road is a more varied arrangement of a post war all brick flat block, a semi detached villa with the two floors of brickwork above 2 floors of stucco, a detached villa with all stucco façade under a just visible pitched roof. This is the least consistent aspect of the conservation area surrounding the site.

8.04 The proposal follows the building frontage line of these existing villas some 3m behind the good quality existing front wall. The division into two parts by the recess in the brick upper floors is clearly emphasised by the window spacing. Vertically the windows in their surrounds echo the traditional hierarchy of window sizes upwards from the piano nobile of the upper ground floor.

The brick sits on a single storey rendered plinth of the lower ground floor. The return wall east elevation, exposed by the wider gap to the neighbours, is fully fenestrated to enliven it (and provide good views from the apartments). Considerably further beyond the proposed building is the former Murray Arms pub, now flats over a shop. Its outward street corner facing wall is emphasised with corner quoining and pedimented window surrounds in white stucco over a similar material base. The rendered vertical curved corner name panel is just visible through the existing trees.

8.05 The shallow pitch of the roof makes the top floor windows virtually invisible even from this far pavement view.

8.06 The proposed building fits comfortably into the more varied street scene of the north side of this part of Agar Grove. The (off) centre recess is effective in relating to the widths of its neighbours.

8.07 View 2: View from Agar Grove north east from the junction with Murray Street and St Augustine's Road

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- 8.08 The existing streetscape shows an oblique view of the pedimented, gabled villas on the north side of St Augustine's Road. The fine wall around the site is a strong feature. Narrower and wider villas and longer, lower frontages of the post war block of flats are seen on Agar Grove. The left hand south side of the road has an ungainly fence on top of the railway bridge parapet wall.
- 8.09 The proposal sits comfortably into the Agar Grove continuum, the street front divided by the recess picks up the 2 widths of the neighbouring villas. The stucco faced west elevation takes its cue from similar villa fronts across St Augustine's Road. It is embellished by twin balconies emphasising the corner, their lovat green/grey metal work enhances the greenery planting of the landscaping. The pitched roof and recessed windows of the top floor are invisible in this view also.
- 8.10 The overall appearance is of an expressive corner building celebrating long views of it and from it. The buliding is modern in detail but fits with the forms and materials of the conservation area to which it clearly belongs and enhances.
- 8.11 Eventually the new trees of the landscaping may grow larger than shown and particularly in summer become a strong feature of this view.
- 8.12 View 3: View east of St Augustine's Road at the junction with Murray Street
- 8.13 The existing streetscape shows the semi detached villas of St Augustine's Road climbing up the hill with their prominent stucco porches at upper ground floor level and hierarchy of window surrounds above. The sloping roofs are barely visible but the chimney stacks and pots are and add to the apparent height of the street. The curve of the road is notable in the foreground. The existing wall around the site is prominent and improved by the infilling of the existing gate opening in it. (The available space for the electric car is also apparent.)
- 8.14 The proposed building is anchored into the sequence of villas of St Augustine's Road by its similar height of projecting rendered porch, its London Stock brick upper floors over a lower ground storey of render, the vertical hierarchy of windows and their surrounds upwards from the tallest at the piano nobile of the upper ground floor. The parapet line is level with the first four storey villa up the street. [The three storey villas in between appear less than a floor lower because of their parapets in lieu of eaves.]

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- 8.15 The outward concave curve of the street front chimes with the foreground curve in the road bringing the west front of the building to a symmetrical position on the site also relative to the surrounding brick wall. The pedimented gable end wall is aggrandised with white stucco and curved balconies acting as a bookend to the long street as well as a strong corner element in the townscape. The pitched roof and recessed windows are not visible in this view.
- 8.16 The overall appearance is of a strongly expressed corner building making a fitting termination of a fine street which it enhances and to which it clearly belongs.
- 8.17 View 4: View south west down St Augustine's Road.
- 8.18 This view on the north side of the road clearly shows the typical features of the semi detached villas of the south side of the street. Three stories of brick work under overhanging eaves above a lower ground storey of white stucco. The porch and front stairs up to it rise from the base and project out forwards as prominent markers. The windows are all in white stucco surrounds with a hierarchy of sizes and elaboration of pediments upwards from the piano nobile upper ground floor. Haphazard front walls suggest the removal of matching railings. Roofs are invisible, chimney stacks are prominent even from relatively close to the buildings. The pedimented villas to the north side are obscured by trees in this view but are a strong feature of this end of the street. The vista is terminated by the presence of a twenty storey post war double slab block with strong horizontal banding.
- 8.19 The proposed building fits into the run of villas with its London Stock brick elevation hierarchy of windows and surrounds and entrance porch. The roof is mostly visible above the blind return elevation and from this higher elevation the recessed windows in the pitched roof are just visible. The curving wall presages the curve of the street. The edge thickness of the west wall and gable end hints at a book end elevation to terminate the run of the street. The brick lift shaft of the building is visible on the east elevation and is rather similar to the chimney stacks of the existing buildings.
- 8.20 The overall appearance is of comfortable and appropriate continuation of the streetscape of the south east side of the road with a hint of something special happening on the termination corner. It clearly belongs to this street and enhances it.

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9.0 Schedule of Accommodation

- 9.1 The Schedule of Accommodation in Chapter 7 page 41 of the Design and Access Statement (Appendix 9) clearly sets out all the number and sizes of the living accommodation which meet the requirements of the Mayor's Policies and Lifetime Homes.

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10.0 Pre and Post Application Consultations

- 10.01 This section of my proof of evidence is to be read in conjunction with Chapter 8 of the Design and Access Statement (D&AS) - pages 43-49. [Pre-Application] (Appendix 9)
- 10.02 I attended the pre-application meeting with officers of the council on 16/11/12 and presented the proposal. The design was warmly welcomed with limited caveats as the ensuing comments describe on page 45 of the D&AS.
- 10.03 The suggestions made by the officers were constructive and we were happy to incorporate these improvements in the revised design.
- 10.04 The public consultation was arranged with Hugh Lake, the secretary of the local Camden Square Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC). The 500 invitations were hand delivered around a wide part of the conservation area.
- 10.05 I attended the public consultation at the Irish Centre on 12/12/12 and presented the scheme on the illustrated boards to the well attended meeting of some 60 people including other members of CAAC.
- 10.06 At that stage the design of the west façade of the building was rather different based on open metal frameworks carrying planting walls around full width balconies.
- 10.07 The relatively minor points raised at the meeting are enumerated on Page 46.
- 10.08 The notable element of the evening was the warm support voiced by the local residents to the scheme. They were asked to fill in forms designed by CAAC (not us) on the acceptability of the project. Details of the forms and the analysis carried out by Hugh Lake are in Appendix 12.
- 10.09 It was gratifying that the quality of the proposal was recognised and the majority of the respondents were clearly in favour of the scheme (A or B score).
- The only significant C and D assessments were Q 2c; view from along Murray Street of 22% and Q 2d; view from up St Augustine's Road of 40%. We subsequently recognised the validity of some of the residents' comments and substantially altered the west frontage in these views.

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- 10.10 On the major overall issues of Question 3; Height, Question 4; Bulk there was a positive response of 71% and 85%. The general opinion of the proposal was overwhelmingly positive at 85% with only one D and two C's.
- 10.11 I attended a second pre-application meeting with officers of the council on 18/01/13 and presented all the changes to the proposal that had been made in the light of the first pre-application meeting and the public consultation meeting.
- 10.12 The changes were all welcomed by the officers. Some minor comments were made about window colours. We were asked to confirm various technical matters.
- 10.13 The officers were encouraged by the written and reported responses of the Local Residents.
- 10.14 The application was then made on 4 March 2013 and registered on 25 March 2013. (Appendix 8)
- 10.15 During the consultation period, only 6 letters of objection were received by the council.
- 10.16 After the consultation period, the officers received a letter from CAAC dated 20/04/13 which is in Appendix 13.
- 10.17 We met with the same planning officers of the council to review the letter and discuss the responses to it. We agreed to make some changes to the design and a written response to explain our considered view of points in the letter.
- 10.18 In view of the support of the local residents for the scheme we and the officers were surprised by the content of the letter which concluded by objecting to the proposal.
- 10.19 The letter accepted that "Although the proposal is bulkier than its neighbours, it suits the prominent position and is not overwhelming". (Paragraph 2)
"The widening of the west elevation and a contrasting treatment is appropriate as a prominent termination". (Paragraph 4.2) However "the overall style of the building is extremely bland". (Paragraph 6)
- 10.20 The support for the scheme offered by local residents and planners is perversely translated into a negative point. "With its flexible contextualisation, it appears that individuality has been suppressed to increase the likelihood of

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success with planners and potentially difficult local residents”. (Paragraph .1)

- 10.21 We altered the drawings particularly to introduce a hierarchy of balcony widths on the west elevation and remove the top most balcony. The height of the portico entrance was also reduced.
- 10.22 My reply to the CAAC letter dated 1st May, also at Appendix 13, suggested that our proposal had “a hierarchy of elevations”. That although “the proposal intends a more lasting quality than “excitement” it is “far from bland” (Paragraph 6) and that it is not a site for excessive individuality and drama”. (Paragraph 6.1)
- 10.23 A second letter from CAAC to the council officers on 16/06/13 appears in Appendix 13 Regrettably it confirmed the objection to the proposal but admits to “divergent views within the CAAC team of specialist advisers especially with respect to style”. (Paragraph 1) It did acknowledge some improvements in particular or by omission but concluded that the result “remain unacceptably bland”.
- 10.24 The design however is a very carefully conceived response to this particular site, the details have been refined during the design and consultation process. The building takes much of its vocabulary and propositions from the surroundings and adds others where there are no local exemplars – such as balconies. These are continued into a complete composition celebrating the corner portion in the conservation area whilst continuing/terminating the existing streetscenes.
- 10.25 We continue to believe that the elevation and views of the project show a building that far from being bland would “suit the prominent position and is not overwhelming”. (CAAC letter of 20/04/13 Paragraph 2)

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11.0 Consideration of the Reasons for Refusal

- 11.1 Reason 1 “The proposed development, by reason of its scale, massing and detailed design, would appear as an unsympathetic addition to the street scene and would fail to achieve the necessary quality of architectural design befitting this prominent site. As such it would neither preserve nor enhance the character and appearance of the Camden Square Conservation Area, contrary to policies CS14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy and policies DP24 (Securing high quality design) and DP25 (conserving Camden’s heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies” (Decision Notice Appendix 2)
- 11.2 The particular reference in the refusal to scale and massing in addition to detailed design was suggested to members of the planning committee by the council’s legal officer at the meeting.
- 11.3 On the matter of scale and massing and detailed design, the officer’s report to the committee, section on Design, paragraphs 6.17 – 6.26 is a concise description of how the design is suitable for this particular “difficult and key triangular plot” and would “*enhance and preserve the character and appearance of the wider conservation area.*” (Delegated report to committee Appendix 1)
- 11.4 *Agar Grove and St Augustine’s Road are both characterised by substantial semi-detached classical detailed town houses with strong principle floors. The proposal site however, gives way to a more varied townscape and raises more complex urban design considerations. The site is open to a number of views and unlike much of the buildings in the Camden Square Conservation Area, which present only one elevation to the public realm, a multi faceted form is required at this site.*
- 11.5 *As mentioned previously, two schemes have been refused by the Council primarily on the grounds of scale and design. The first scheme (2008/4783/P), which was also dismissed at appeal, was 3-5 storeys high*

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with a complicated design that included a five storey element clad in white tiles, with balconies on three sides and asymmetrical fenestration. It also included a rendered three storey element providing a transition to the terraces to the east. The Inspector considered the tiles and distribution of windows to relate poorly to adjacent buildings, and along with the scale of the development the proposal would have been unduly dominant and overwhelming.

- 11.6 *The second proposal (2010/6748/P) featured a part 3, part 4 storey building of a simpler design finished in brick with more uniform fenestration. This was refused as it was considered its scale and design would appear as an incongruous feature on the prominent site, failing to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Camden Square Conservation Area or the wider area.*
- 11.7 *The prime concern of the Inspector with the original scheme was the impact of the development on its immediate environment. The Inspector considered that it was not necessary for a proposed development “to replicate the height, form or design of buildings on the neighbouring streets”. Indeed it was considered that a contemporary approach may well be acceptable subject to the need for any new building to “respect its context and fit appropriately into the historic urban fabric”. However in regard to the 2008 proposal, the Inspector found that its rise in height to a 5-storey curved block would be much taller than the other properties in the vicinity. This combined with its detailed design, choice of materials and built proportions, would make this element appear “unduly dominant, overwhelming the junction and not respecting the pleasant domestic scale of the adjacent roads”*
- 11.8 *The proposed building is five storeys high, but this is not readily apparent. The lower ground floor would be largely shielded from public view by the boundary wall, and the top floor would be akin to an attic floor with rows of windows on the St Augustine’s Road and Agar Grove elevations set into the pitched roof behind the parapet. In these ways it would both appear lower, and be lower in scale than the 5-storey curved block element which the Inspector had found unacceptable in the 2008 scheme.*

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- 11.9 *The proposed building would be built in London stock brick to three of its elevations, resting on a white stuccoed lower ground floor. The use of brick responds to the established building materials in the area. The windows to the main elevations would be set in projecting stucco surrounds also taking their cue from neighbouring buildings, and be similarly hierarchical with the tallest at upper ground floor level, reducing in height by 0.4m and 0.8m upwards to the first and second floors. This has the effect of spacing the windows further apart as they rise. The Inspector, in his assessment of the original scheme, was concerned with the proposed asymmetrical windows given the lack of an “appreciable sense of hierarchy” which resulted in a design that “would contrast sharply with the established patterns on the houses adjacent”.*
- 11.10 *The only rendered elevation would be the western elevation, which although a side elevation is particularly prominent in the street scene. This elevation features balconies from upper ground to second floor level. The scheme has been revised to reduce the width of the ascending balconies to reflect the hierarchy of the windows on the main elevations.*
- 11.11 *The existing boundary wall would be retained and rebuilt where necessary. A dedicated refuse and bike store area has been designed into the scheme, concealed from view behind the boundary walls and are considered to be acceptable. A condition is recommended requiring the submission of details of the design of these stores.*
- 11.12 *In terms of scale, the site is considered to be a “gateway” or entrance to the Conservation Area which can accommodate additional scale to “mark” the entrance. The parapet line and roof line are not dissimilar to the scale of building found along Agar Grove. The height of the proposed development is similar to the prominent height of buildings along St Augustine’s Road, the two pairs of cottages adjoining the site do step down in scale, however, this is not considered a requirement of the site, due to its gateway location. The local Conservation Area Advisory Committee have also confirmed they have no objection to the proposed height and scale.*

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- 11.13 *The Conservation Area Appraisal acknowledges that the site is a “difficult and key triangular plot”. It is considered the proposed building would provide a high quality residential scheme which seeks to respond to distinct elements found on the adjoining properties, and the vocabulary of the wider conservation area. It is considered that the scale and mass of the proposed building are appropriate for this gateway location, and as such the proposal would enhance and preserve the character and appearance of the wider conservation area.*
- 11.14 In the CAAC letter of 20 April 2013 (paragraph 2) and reiterated in their letter of 16 June 2013 (paragraph 3.1) say, “Although the proposal is bulkier than its neighbours, it suits the prominent position and is not overwhelming.”
- 11.15 The larger scale of the building compared to its neighbours derives essentially from its footprint, not its height. The elevations to St Augustine’s Road and Agar Grove are wider than the typical villas of the street.
- 11.16 A typical villa on St Augustine’s Road and Agar Grove has a front elevation 12.7m wide. The proposed building has an elevation to St Augustine’s Road 17.4m wide (about 34% wider than the typical villa). On Agar Grove the frontage is 23.2m wide but is visually divided into two elements 12.9m wide and 8.8m wide. However the west elevation of the proposal at 8.6m wide is less than the similar pedimented façade of villas on St Augustine’s Road of 12.8m wide. The relative slimness of this key elevation reduces the apparent mass of the building.
- 11.17 The height of the building is very similar to the villas of St Augustine’s Road. The roof slope is also the same height, the height of the elevation walls are a little higher by virtue of not having the overhanging eaves of the existing buildings but a set back detail. However the height aligns with the first floor storey villa slightly higher up the street.
- 11.18 Because they are seen in the round, buildings on street corners are bound to have a greater visual presence than those that are part of a row. Some corner buildings deliberately rise higher to give townscape emphasis. However, this proposal rises only a little higher relying on the elevational materials and treatment to provide the appropriate corner expression.

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- 11.19 The massing is made elegant by the relative proportions of the west elevation and its contrasting stucco render finish. The CAAC letter of 16/06/13 Paragraph 5.3 says, “The widening of the west elevation and a contrasting treatment is appropriate as a prominent termination.”
- 11.20 The scale of a building is also given by its details elements such as the sizing and spacing of windows and balconies horizontally and vertically.
- 11.21 In this case the scale is taken from the surroundings. Floor to floor heights, window openings in a traditional hierarchy up the elevation all indicate a building similarly scaled to its neighbours.
- 11.22 The width and depth of the west elevation reinforces the domestic scale of the building.
- 11.23 The surrounding wall also gives scale to the building by virtue of a visual outer plinth at a similar height to the lower ground floor containing the building and its garden within it.
- 11.24 The quality of the design of a building is undeniably a subjective matter. But the Design and Access Statement and this proof show how the design has been carefully conceived and thought out in all its arrangements and details to form a well designed coherent whole. This reasoning tries to bring consideration of objectivity to the process.
- 11.25 The “design” includes the arrangement of the plan on the site, the alignments with the street line, the entry sequence from street to porch to entrance hall to lift and stairs, the well planned rooms and circulation of the apartments, the well placed and sized windows and doors to rooms, the outlook of the apartments, the well placed living rooms to the south west, the good size and shaped balconies, terraces, patios and gardens.
- 11.26 The outward appearance of the building reflects the care which as been taken in the design of the elements within it and in achieving an understanding of and sensitivity to the context in which the building sits.
- 11.27 It presents an apartment building as a modern mannerist interpretation of the surrounding villas, celebrating an important corner of the conservation area and segueing comfortably into the street scene.
- 11.28 The rejection of the proposal by the committee on design grounds was not in

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my opinion an objective assessment of the design in the light of the policy, as is found in the officer's report to the committee. Instead it is a capricious dismissal of a well conceived and thoroughly worked out design.

11.29 Reasons for refusal 2-9 are a subject of Mr Cunnane's evidence.

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12.0 Conclusion and Summary of Proof

- 12.01 The site is on a prominent corner of the Camden Square Conservation Area. At the angled junction of St Augustine's Road and Murray Street with Agar Grove. The conservation area was constructed in a short period of the 1860-1880 Century as four storey houses in terraces or more commonly as villas of semi detached houses. It makes for a very coherent and consistent townscape although there are variations on the theme. The north side of St Augustine's Road opposite the site has a row of 5 unusual gable ended and pedimented villas completely rendered and painted, whereas the more ubiquitous villa is of brick under wide eaves over a stucco base with two pavement porticos up steep steps at upper ground level.
- 12.02 A railway tunnel runs under the narrower west end of the site restricting any building to the eastern three fifths of the land.
- 12.03 The site has been used as a builders yard or been vacant for a long period but was once occupied by a semi detached villa building at an angle to both street frontages with an entrance on each and a bay windowed garden frontage facing the corner.
- 12.04 There have been two recent previous planning applications for 9 apartments on the site. Both were refused by the LPA, primarily on design grounds and the first of these was also refused on appeal. The first proposal was a flamboyant modern design, the second was a restrained modern design. Both proposed two of the flats to be in a full basement with limited lightwells.
- 12.05 I personally designed the proposal which forms the subject of the present appeal with specific reference to the surrounding conservation area.
- 12.06 This design is also for 9 apartments and of similar overall area as the previous applications. However, it is organised over lower ground floor, upper ground floor, first, second and a third floor within the roof space.
- 12.07 The apartments are arranged to run east to west on the site with the circulation between them on the north east elevation near the boundary fence. This gives each living room a fine outlook west over the shared garden, for a distance down Agar Grove and beyond. The entrance is from

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the north east corner of the site on St Augustine's Road.

- 12.08 The accommodation and amenity of the proposal complies with the Mayor's Standards, Camden's UDP, Lifetime Homes, Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 and Secured by Design.
- 12.09 The nature of the conservation area has guided the design of the building which is intended to read as a legible continuation of the streetscape and a celebration of the corner.
- 12.10 The elevation to St Augustine's Road is a similar height to the four storey villas of the area with the same arrangement of three stories of London Stock Brick over a lower ground floor of stucco/render. The idiosyncratic portico/porch of the street is repeated on the building on its nearest corner. The windows are similarly set in stucco surrounds and spaced in a hierarchy on the façade. The roof pitch is the same as the neighbours. Modern features include the windows set forward in the surround, the set back roof detail in lieu of eaves and the concave curve of the façade to mark the termination of the street.
- 12.11 Agar Grove continues in both directions so the elevation of this aspect is straight on the existing building line of the adjacent buildings. It has a similar arrangement of brick over a stucco base and introduces an off centre recess with three windows to the left and two to the right to make elements of elevation similar to the unequal widths of the adjacent villas.
- 12.12 The north east elevation to the boundary is more prosaic and includes recessed windows to entrance hall and stairs. The brick lift shaft appears through the roof similar to a chimney stack.
- 12.13 The west elevation celebrates the corner with gabled end stucco elevations similar to the 5 villas opposite. This elevation carries the bow fronted balconies of the apartments giving it an appropriately outward looking appearance.

Balconies are a requirement of new housing which differs from the historic design of the houses of the area (although most are now converted to flats) so they are confined to the less conformist west elevation of the building.
- 21.14 The computer generated views of the building (Appendix 11) make plain that

Evidence of

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it has the correct scale and mass to sit comfortably in the streetscenes of St Augustine's Road and Agar Grove to which it clearly belongs and offers enhancement. The corner position is celebrated with an outward looking appearance based partly on precedent and partly on the requirement for balconies.

- 12.15 The design was recommended by the design officer and by other officers of the council to the planning committee and it meets all the statutory and other requirements of NPPF, The London Plan, Camden's UDP, Lifetime Homes, Secured by Design and Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4.