

Extension to Existing Coach House at 26 Lyndhurst Gardens NW3 5NW

Significance of Heritage Assets 11 June 2013

The principal heritage assets relating to this proposal are as follows:

26 Lyndhurst Gardens Listed grade II Entry List no 1379399

The Coach House, although not listed separately, lies in the rear garden of, and therefore within the site curtilage of, number **26 Lyndhurst Gardens**. This is a red brick Grade II listed mansion designed by the architect Harry Measures for the developer William Willett and Son, c.1886. It is one of a number of houses designed by him for the same developer in Lyndhurst Gardens.

Nos. 22, 24 and 26 form a recognizable group of three adjacent asymmetric gabled properties stepping down the hill, all designed in a similar "spirited Queen Anne" revival style, all similar in scale and using similar materials. ("three storeys, red brick on the ground floor, yellow brick upper floors with much rubbed brick and terracotta enrichment.") **See photograph "Street view of 22, 24, and 26 Lyndhurst gardens"**

The octagonal gate posts and street boundary walls to these properties are also separately listed. Entry List no **1379400**.

The listing description for no 26 (as with nos 22 and 24) refers solely to the street elevation of the house. **See photograph "Street elevation 26 Lyndhurst Gardens"**

Since the proposed works cannot be seen from the street there can be no impact upon either the gateposts or the main house elevation described in the listing.

The relevance to this application is therefore principally concerned with its effect upon the setting of the main house as seen from the gardens to the rear of the property.

There is a significant Lime Tree in the rear garden adjacent to the Coach House which it is not proposed to alter.

The **Coach House** itself is not without charm and its almost doll's house scale inside works well as a classroom for young children. The existing extension was conceived as a small addition for WCs with its own lead hipped roof separated from the original Coach House by a small flat roofed rendered link. A glazed bay with bi-fold doors and a lead covered hipped roof was also added to the south side of the Coach House effectively re-orientating it to address the garden. This is now the principal access to the building from a raised timber balustraded deck. **See photographs "Coach House" and "Coach House Oblique view"**

Fitzjohns and Netherhall Conservation Area

The property lies within the Fitzjohns and Netherhall Conservation Area. The Conservation Area Statement describes the character of the area, a significant part of which is formed by substantial late Victorian detached houses with large private rear gardens. These large gardens and the mature trees planted within them and also along the streets are considered to have an important influence upon the overall character of the area.

"Trees are an inherent and characteristic part of the Conservation Area"

"The gaps between the buildings therefore provide views to the rear gardens and a rhythm to the frontage."

"Although not always visible from the street the rear gardens form large blocks of open land making a significant contribution to the character of the area"

The proposed design

The applicant recognizes the special contribution made by the rear gardens of nos 26, 24, and 22 both to the character of the Conservation Area and also to the setting of the Listed buildings. The scale of these houses at the rear (being four full storeys plus attic) requires a significant open space in front to be fully appreciated.

No 26 in particular, having a pair of large bay windows rising through all floors to roof level (and, unlike no 24, having no rear extension), creates an imposing vertical emphasis which needs space to breathe and to be seen from a distance. **See photograph “main house garden elevation”**

The view of the main house from the rear garden will be only peripherally affected by the proposed extension, edged as it is by the presence of the large Lime tree in front of the Coach House.

The proposals do not involve any loss of trees and will not affect any views into the garden either from neighbouring properties or from the gaps between buildings. In particular views across the garden from Rosslyn Park Mews will be unaffected as the extension is single storey and largely below the height of the existing boundary wall.

The siting of the proposed extension to the rear of the Coach House, being hard against the northern boundary wall, will have only a minimal effect upon the scale and character of this “large block of open land” and is small enough to present barely any loss of garden amenity to the school. Indeed the new planting on the flat roof should more than compensate for any possible effects that might result from the loss of such a small area of garden covered by the footprint of the new construction.

The garden is something which the school cherishes and is seen as an important asset for the use of both teachers and young children alike. Adding to the Coach House accommodation will allow more pupils to have a direct experience of the garden.

The proposed extension also presents the opportunity to mask an otherwise unfinished appearance to the northern boundary flanked by the building at no 4 Rosslyn Park Mews. see photograph “Gap between buildings”

In order to make a satisfactory elevational composition with the original Coach House it is necessary to demolish part of the previous extension. The rendered link part would be retained and be used to articulate the junction between the original and the new construction. The new construction itself would be further broken down in scale to reflect the step in the building necessitated by the height of the existing garden wall. The resultant tripartite elevation avoids the possibility of any potentially conflicting duality being set up with the original building. The new parts will be clearly distinct from, yet subservient to, the original Coach House building, whilst the choice of form and materials for the new building (timber boards and glass) have been guided largely by the garden setting.

The extension of the decking in front of the Coach House should help to unify the old and new constructions and the removal of the existing timber balustrading, to be replaced by continuous steps, will remove a major visual obstruction and greatly enhance the setting of the Coach House and its relationship to the garden.