

**PLANNING, HERITAGE AND  
DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT**

Witanhurst House  
41 Highgate West Hill  
London

Application for Planning and Listed  
Building Consent to reface the existing  
Grove boundary wall within the  
grounds of Witanhurst House

On behalf of Safran Holdings Ltd

December 2011

## CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. PLANNING HISTORY	3
3. APPLICATION PROPOSALS	4
4. PLANNING POLICY	6
5. PLANNING AND HERITAGE ASSESSMENT	9
6. DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT	12
7. CONCLUSION	15

---

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This statement is submitted in support of an application for Planning and Listed Building consent to reface the existing Listed boundary wall to No. 1 The Grove within the grounds of Witanhurst House. The wall is proposed to be preserved in situ and refaced in order to provide the necessary structural support and aesthetical and visual improvements. The construction of a retaining wall in front of the existing wall is proposed, allowing the existing wall to be retained and designed to withstand the surcharge loadings from the neighbouring land. The proposed retaining wall will enable the appearance of the wall to be improved to match the remainder of the boundary wall and the other structures within the Witanhurst grounds. Additionally, it is proposed to reduce the ground level adjacent to the wall in order to facilitate appropriate planting.
- 1.2 The section of the Grove wall to which this application relates is not consistent with the original buttressed boundary wall. This section of the wall was previously internal at the end of the former garage structure and had been adapted to suit the details of the end of the garage. The garage has now been removed as part of the improvement works to Witanhurst House to create a family dwelling house under permissions 2009/3171/P and 2009/3174/L. Subsequently, the Listed Grove wall now requires treatment to improve the structure visually and to allow it to continue to support the higher level garden and tree in the neighbouring property. The effect of the previous adaption of this section of the wall requires the refacing works proposed in order to support the wall structure, as well as to allow the appearance of the wall to be improved in association with the significance of the heritage asset.
- 1.3 This report provides an overview of the application proposals and the background to the Witanhurst House and grounds, followed by

consideration of the relevant planning policy and an assessment of the application scheme in this context.

1.4 The drawings submitted with this application detailing the proposals are as follows:

- 601-OS-001\_000 Site Location Plan
- 601-E-001\_000 Existing Site Plan
- 601-P-907\_000 Existing Grove Boundary Wall Elevation
- 601-P-908\_000 Proposed Boundary Wall Elevation & Plan
- 601-P-910\_000 Proposed Boundary Wall Elevation & Plan.

## **2 PLANNING HISTORY**

- 2.1 Witanhurst House itself has been the subject of a number of planning applications over recent years since the House was purchased by the current owners. In relation to this section of the Grove boundary wall, the removal of the adjoining garage and service will was permitted under Appeals APP/X5210/E/09/2119331 and APP/X5210/A/09/2119332. However, we are not aware of any specific proposals relating to the listed Grove boundary wall.
- 2.2 Recent consents on the property as a whole have been focused on improving and restoring it for on-going use as a single family home, to the standard expected of contemporary living in a house of the grandeur and status of Witanhurst.
- 2.3 There are no tree works associated with this application.

### **3 APPLICATION PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 The purpose of this application is to gain Planning and Listed Building consent to reface the existing Listed boundary wall to No. 1 The Grove. The refacing of the wall will allow the existing wall to be preserved in situ and is to be designed to withstand the surcharge loadings from the neighbouring land (see Structural Report 17/11/2011). The wall is proposed to be refaced through the construction of a retaining wall in front of the existing wall. This retaining wall is to be faced in brickwork to match the existing wall, with original materials from the wall reused wherever possible. The proposed retaining wall is to be constructed of reinforced concrete, with the appearance of the wall then to be enhanced and restored to match the original boundary wall and other structures within the Witanhurst grounds.
- 3.2 Additionally, it is proposed to reduce the ground level adjacent to the wall in order to facilitate appropriate planting. Existing block repair to the boundary wall is also proposed to be repaired and replaced with brickwork, mortar and pointing to match the existing wall. The block repair was carried out before the present ownership of the site and is insensitive to and detracts from the character and significance of the heritage asset. This small section of the boundary wall is to be carefully repaired with materials to match the original.
- 3.3 The proposed retaining wall is 10m in length and 4.433m in height. The height of the proposed wall is 1.04m below that of the existing boundary wall, consistent with the level of the original frieze. The retaining wall is to be faced in bricks to match the existing brickwork, with a Portland stone plinth, frieze, capping and entablature to match the existing materials and detailing. Primarily, original materials will be saved and reused wherever possible. The retaining wall is proposed to have extruding piers with Portland stone cornicing in order to aesthetically match existing details from

the wall and Lodges. The existing pier at the north end of the wall is to be extended to cover the proposed retaining wall, the original stonework details are to be retained, with the existing Portland stone plinth and frieze to be re-used. The retaining wall is to be integrated with the remainder of the boundary wall to result in a considered aesthetical improvement to the heritage asset.

## **4 PLANNING POLICY**

### PPS5 – Planning and the Historic Environment (adopted March 2010)

- 4.1 PPS5 sets out the Government's policies on planning for the historic environment. Those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are defined as heritage assets. These include statutorily listed buildings, locally listed buildings and conservation areas.
- 4.2 Policy H6.1 requires applicants to identify the significance of a heritage asset, and to assess the impact proposals might have on the identified significance.
- 4.3 Significance is defined in Annex 2 of the guidance as 'the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest'. Essentially, it is a term to sum up the qualities that make an otherwise ordinary place or building a heritage asset.
- 4.4 There is a general presumption against development that would result in substantial harm or complete loss of significance (Policy HE9.2).
- 4.5 Where a development would have a harmful impact on the significance of a heritage asset which is less than substantial harm, Local Planning Authorities should weigh the public benefit of the proposal against the harm, and recognise that the greater the harm to the significance of the heritage asset, the greater the justification will be needed for any loss (Policy HE9.4).
- 4.6 Policy HE10.1 relates to setting and states that for development that would affect the setting of a heritage asset, Local Planning



Authorities should treat favourably applications that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance. When considering applications that do not do this, the harm should be weighed against the wider benefits of the application.

Core Strategy (adopted November 2010)

- 4.7 Camden's Core Strategy sets out the strategic policies for the Borough. Policy CS14 promotes high quality places and seeks to conserve Camden's heritage. Specifically the policy requires development of a high standard of design that respects local context and character and seeks to preserve and enhance Camden's heritage assets and their settings. In addition, this policy encourages high quality landscaping.
- 4.8 Also of relevance is Policy CS5 which seeks, among other objectives, to provide sustainable buildings and spaces of high quality which protect and enhance the local environment and heritage, without having a harmful impact on adjoining neighbours.

Camden Development Policies (adopted November 2010)

- 4.9 The Development Policies DPD sets out detailed planning policy for Camden. Policy DP24 of Camden's Development Policies promotes high quality places and the conservation of the Borough's heritage. The policy requires development to be of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character.
- 4.10 Policy DP25 promotes the maintenance of the character of Conservation Areas, recognising their special historic interest and character.

Camden Planning Guidance (adopted April 2011)

- 4.11 The recently adopted revised Camden Planning Guidance provides guidance on the design of new development and supplements the policies contained within the Core Strategy and Development Policies DPD, including those discussed above.
- 4.12 CPG1 Chapter 3 is concerned with development affecting any element of the Borough's historic environment and seeks to preserve, and where possible, enhance Camden's architectural heritage. The CPG states that in assessing applications for listed building consent, considerations include the original and historic materials and architectural features, structural integrity and character and appearance. Proposals are expected to retain original or historic features, repairs to be made in matching materials, and seek to respond to the special historic and architectural constraints of the heritage asset.

---

## **5 PLANNING AND HERITAGE ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 As has been outlined above, this application proposes to reface the existing Listed boundary wall to No. 1 The Grove.
- 5.2 Policy CS14 and CS5 of the Core Strategy and Policy DP24 of the Development Policies DPD promote good design which protects the character, setting and context of heritage assets. The proposed development is of a high design specification and standard. The materials to be used have been considered in relation to the character and setting of the existing boundary wall. The design and materials proposed continue the characteristics of the original wall and the rest of the site. The proposals address the visual aesthetics and stability of the structure through carefully considered development and treatment, in order to improve the Listed structure and within the associated setting of the Grade II\* listed House.
- 5.3 The proposals present no harm to the heritage asset, its significance or its setting. The development seeks to preserve and make sensitive improvements to the wall structure, the current condition of which is considered to be detrimental to the significance of this heritage asset. Through the proposed visual upgrading and providing greater stability to the structure, the character of the heritage asset will be improved and its long term future ensured. The proposals will also improve the setting of the House and the Listed garden structures, and the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 5.4 Policy DP25 of Camden's Development Control Policies seeks to ensure that development protects and enhances the special qualities of listed buildings and their settings. These policies are supplemented by Chapter 3 of the Camden Planning Guidance (2011).

- 5.5 The proposals have been conceived with full consideration of the impact on the heritage asset, the setting and the context of the Grade II\* Witanhurst House and the Grade II garden structures, as well as the Highgate Conservation Area.
- 5.6 The proposals are therefore in accordance with Policies CS5, CS14, DP24 and DP25 and the Camden Planning Guidance (2011).
- 5.7 As discussed in Section 4, PPS5 requires applicants to identify the significance of a heritage asset, and to assess the impact development proposals might have on the identified significance. In addition, it must be demonstrated that proposals will not have an impact on the setting of a heritage asset. Where applications preserve those elements that contribute to or better reveal the significance, applications should be treated favourably.
- 5.8 It is considered that the significance of Witanhurst House and the garden structures is mainly their original design by George Hubbard and Harold Peto. The previous deterioration of the House and grounds was to such an extent that they had been placed on the English Heritage Buildings at Risk Register. The property is now in the ownership of a family which wishes to occupy the House in line with its original function as a single family home. Their investment in the House and grounds, including this improvement of the Listed boundary wall, have brought them away from Risk and into positive active usage. The proposals are a continuation of that positive process.
- 5.9 The proposed development, which is aesthetically consistent with the heritage context, is not considered to have any impact on the setting of the main House. Furthermore, the improvement of the boundary wall in the grounds of Witanhurst presents a significant improvement to its condition, as well as contributing to promoting the future significance of the heritage asset.

- 5.10 The improvement works will enhance the value and secure the future of the heritage asset as well as its setting. Furthermore, the design of the development has been conceived so as to reflect the original design features, structures and materials of Witanhurst.
- 5.11 The proposals will also enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. The improvement of the boundary wall will secure the structure for the future, as well as repair the aesthetic damage caused by the previous garage building to visually match this section of the wall to the original.
- 5.12 It has been demonstrated that the proposals will not have any harmful impact on the identified significance or setting of the Listed House and structures. Indeed, it has been demonstrated that the proposals will improve the setting and function of the Listed structures and not only preserve, but enhance the character of the heritage asset. The proposals are therefore entirely in accordance with PPS5, Policy DP25 of Camden's Development Policies DPD, and the Camden Planning Guidance (2011).

## **6 DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

- 6.1 The following outlines the specific design and access considerations associated with the refacing of the Listed Grove boundary wall. It demonstrates that the proposals have been sensitively designed, having regard to the heritage asset itself, and the setting of the heritage asset.

### Use

- 6.2 The proposal to reface the Grove boundary wall, including both structural and aesthetical improvements, will return the wall to its original design and function. The improvements will secure the boundary wall, in the historic context of the House and grounds, repairing the loss of character and significance caused by the previous garage development.

### Amount and Scale

- 6.3 As previously stated, the height of the proposed retaining wall is consistent with the design of the existing boundary wall. The design of the refacing has been considered to match the existing features of the site. The height of the wall is in line with the existing feature height and is designed as a continuation of the original wall aspect. The proposals are considered to have no impact, through scale, height or design, upon the adjoining property. The proposed refacing is at a lower height than the adjoining property, with the original wall to be retained, so as to have no harmful effect upon the amenity of neighbouring properties.

### Layout

- 6.4 The proposed retaining wall is situated in front of the existing boundary wall, with the existing boundary wall to remain in situ.

The retaining wall will add structural support to the existing boundary wall along the section of the wall which had been previously attached to the garage structure. The facing brickwork will cover the retaining wall structure and aesthetically improve the boundary wall to match existing details. The brickwork piers are designed in consistence with the original pier design and detailing, and are positioned to both cover the retaining wall structure and reflect the profile of the boundary wall. The design and layout of the proposed wall will have no impact upon views into or out of the site, or any adverse impacts outside of the site.

#### Appearance

- 6.5 The proposal will retain the existing boundary wall in situ. The retaining wall is to be constructed of concrete to provide structural support and a good substrate to work on for the aesthetic improvements proposed. The existing appearance of the boundary wall is detrimental to the character and significance of the heritage asset. The proposals will aesthetically improve this section of boundary wall, to match the remainder of the boundary wall along the rear of No. 1 The Grove. The facing brickwork has been designed in accordance with the existing structure within the grounds of Witanhurst House. The use of Portland stone reflects the materials used in the existing House and gardens, in relation to the character and setting of the heritage asset. The design of the boundary wall has full respect to the original features of the wall and grounds.

#### Landscaping

- 6.6 It is proposed to reduce the ground level adjacent to the wall in order to facilitate appropriate planting. In this way this section of the boundary wall may be fully integrated with the rest of the garden and grounds. The proposed planting will reflect the existing

gardens and landscaping and will ensure the development is consistent with its setting. The planting will also provide screening between Witanhurst and the property at The Grove.

#### Access

- 6.7 The proposed boundary wall is considered to have no harmful impact upon access within the grounds of the House, or the adjoining property at No. 1 The Grove. The development has been designed to respect the existing layout and function of the boundary wall. The structural support provided by the proposed wall will ensure the future stability of the boundary wall. The proposals will improve the condition of the wall in relation to both the property at No. 1 The Grove and the context of Witanhurst House and grounds as a family dwelling.



## **7 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 This statement has demonstrated that the proposed refacing of the Listed boundary wall to No. 1 The Grove within the grounds of Witanhurst House, to ensure its stability and improve its appearance, will not have any harmful impact upon the significance of the boundary wall itself, the setting of Witanhurst House and garden structures, or the context of the conservation area.
- 7.2 The proposals are considered to not only preserve, but enhance the appearance of the boundary wall, and the setting of Witanhurst House and grounds. The proposals will have no effect upon views within, into or out of the conservation area.
- 7.3 The proposals are therefore in accordance with local planning policies and national policies on the historic environment contained within PPS5.