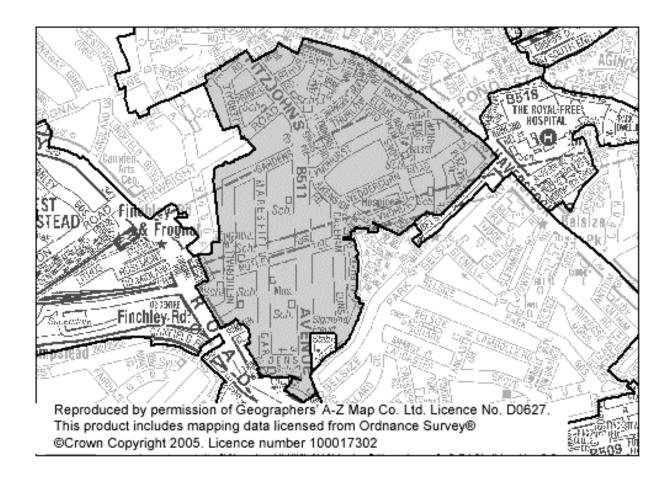




## PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT OF 16A LYNDHURST GARDENS CONSERVATION AREA HERITAGE STATEMENT

This Statement is part of the documentation for an application for Planning Permission and Conservation Area Consent for demolition of this existing bungalow and the construction of a new house in its stead.

This Statement assesses that the existing building makes no contribution to the character of the Fitzjohns/Netherhall Conservation Area, and that the proposed new building will enhance and improve the appearance of the conservation area.





1.0 THE FITZJOHNS / NETHERHALL CONSERVATION AREA: was designated by the London Borough of Camden in 1984, and extended in 1988, 1991 and 2001.

The features that make up the character and appearance of the conservation area are described in the Council's Conservation Area Statement No. 18 of March 2001. This has the status of a Supplementary Planning Document in the Borough's Local Development Framework.

Conservation Area Statement includes an audit of buildings that make a positive contribution, a streetscape audit that includes feature considered to be negative, and an assessment of the issues of importance in preventing the corrosion of the character and appearance of the conservation area. It includes guidelines related to policies in the Unitary Development Plan (now superseded by the Local Development framework), about new development, listed buildings, materials and maintenance, demolition, roofs, rear and side extensions, basements, trees and landscaping, front and rear gardens and backland. Several of these are relevant to this application and are assessed below.

The Conservation Area is principally of late 19thC residential development. It has two sub-areas, Fitzjohns and Rosslyn, characterised by difference of developed scale and road layout. The Fitzjohn's sub-area has a rectilinear grid and a greater degree of formality in the disposition of its buildings, the Rosslyn sub-area having a less formal road layout and placement of buildings to a closer grain.

2.0 LYNDHURST GARDENS is in the Rosslyn sub-area of the conservation area, close to its south eastern boundary, part of the area originally designated in 1984. The road runs downhill from its northern end to a right angle bend, where it continues west, parallel with the contour. Beyond, the land continues to fall to the south.

The street pattern responds to the hillside site, with roads gently curving to follow the fall-line or run along contours. This pattern generally contains views but is of sufficient scale not to feel cramped. The views along Lyndhurst Gardens are noted in the Conservation Area Statement as a positive aspect of the conservation area.

There are tall mature trees of varied species in many front gardens, so that the street scene is framed by them. Spaces between houses are defined by tall boundary walls, softened by mature planting and the glimpse of mature trees in rear gardens.

The prevailing architectural character is of large detached or semi-detached houses of rich red brick, with modelled terracotta enrichments, prominent gables and tiled roofs, having an architectural family resemblance without strict repetition.

Nos. 4 to 16 (even) and 22 to 26 (even) are listed G2, all designed in the 1890s by Harry Measures for William Willett and Son. The listings include their boundary walls. Opposite, No. 17, by architect Horace Field (1861–1948) is also listed G2.

Nos. 1, 3, 5, 7, 15, 18, 20 and 28 are assessed as making a positive contribution to the conservation area.

Three items are noted in the Conservation Area Statement as having a negative impact on the character of Lyndhurst Gardens, these being the painting of a brick and terracotta wall at No. 12, loss of boundary definition and unsympathetic design of garages at No. 15 and a badly rebuilt pier in inappropriate materials at No. 28.



3.0 16a LYNDHURST GARDENS: The site is occupied by a 20thC bungalow. within the land between Nos. 16 and 18, and set back from each. The site has only one access, from a narrow drive between those houses, close to the bend in the road. The site widens behind the flanks of the two houses, and its rear boundary abuts St Christopher's School.

There are mature trees within and adjacent to the site at front, sides and rear. Within the site, planting, mature to the point of being overgrown, conceals the existing building from the street.

By virtue of scale, materials, architectural character and placement to the road and other buildings, the existing building, No. 16a, is out of character with the conservation area. Were it more visually prominent it could be considered as making a negative contribution to the area. It was not included as such in the Conservation Area Statement, presumably because of its effective invisibility from the public realm. Its effect on the private realm of adjoining property would be considered negative

Views towards the corner site, from up the hill, or along the lower end of the road, give no clue as to what lies beyond the site entrance. Thus there is no strong conservation area imperative for demolition of the building, but equally no case for its retention on conservation area grounds.

Of greater importance for the conservation area is consideration of the impact of the proposed replacement building on the conservation area.



View from western branch of Lyndhurst Gardens. The site entrance is between Nos. 16 and 18.



## 4.0 IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED NEW BUILDING

4.1 IMPACT ON HERITAGE ASSETS: Planning Policy Statement 5 requires that development proposals affecting a heritage asset should be preceded by an evidence-based assessment of significance. PPS5 defines listed buildings and conservation areas as heritage assets. Since No. 18 is assessed as making a positive impact to a conservation area, it would be considered an undesignated heritage asset.

The Conservation Area Statement makes an effective assessment of the history, character and appearance of the conservation area, both overall and in its constituent parts, so no reiteration of those assessments are necessary.

Statutory list descriptions are not a statement of significance, merely a list of visual characteristics to assist the building's correct identification. However more recent list descriptions, such as that for No. 16, have started to correct this shortcoming. For No. 16 the description concludes *The Willett houses in Lyndhurst Gardens form a compact and powerful group.* 

Willett and Sons. aspired to and achieved a high reputation as developer/builders, both in quality of construction and high quality design, much as *Span* did during the 1960s. Willett's in-house architects, included Harry Bell Measures (1862–1940), architect of No. 16. Not only did Willett and Measures produce high quality housing for the well-heeled in London and South East England, Measures was subsequently architect for a number of *improved* housing developments for working men, such as the Rowton houses in London and Birmingham, for the original station buildings of the Central Line and then as Director of Barrack Construction for the War Office.

No. 16 has significance in contributing to group value. It is the work of a prominent and high quality house builder and by a very good (if not great) architect. It represents a good example of a popular and mature architectural style of its period and has historic significance in representing the expansion of Hampstead as a suburb for the late Victorian professional middle classes.

No. 18 has a similar historical context and has stylistic similarities to Measures' houses for Willett, but in a slightly heavier more urban style that could almost be *Pont Street Dutch*. Its location promotes it from the role of spear carrier to a speaking part, as the terminator of the view down Lyndhurst Gardens.

The architecture of each house, No. 16 and 18, is three dimensional, not mere façade, No. 18 particularly having a strongly modeled flank elevation. The integrity of each house therefore makes the space between them a sensitive element.

The single storey building is visually subordinate to the houses either side and its impact on these heritage assets is minimised by setting it behind and below them, so that their relationship to each other and to the street is unaltered.

- 4.2 THE SPD'S CURRENT CONCERNS: A number of relevant issues of concern for new development were noted as current concerns when the Conservation Area Statement was adopted in 2001 and would still be considered current:
- Front boundaries and landscape
- Backland development
- Forecourt parking
- Design: Appropriate materials
- Design: Inappropriate bulk, massing and height



Design: Impact on open views

Design: Possible impact on soil stability

Possible impact on soil stability is relevant for the deep excavation entailed in sinking the proposed new building below the level of general visibility. However, the ground engineering considerations are addressed in other content of the application and not therefore in this Statement.

4.2.1 FRONT BOUNDARIES AND LANDSCAPE: The Conservation Area Statement notes the importance of the existing brick and stone front boundary walls to the character of the conservation area. The driveway into the site runs between the octagonal piers of the former drive to No. 16 but now has an insubstantial pair of steel gates of mid 20thC style. These do not follow any pattern established within the conservation area and are without intrinsic merit.

The proposed front boundary treatment of the new development replaces the steel gates with timber. These have the improvement of opacity, reinforcing the boundary between the private and public realms and representing an enhancement to the conservation area.

The narrowness of the access precludes landscaping immediately behind the boundary but this is ameliorated by the height and maturity of planting on the boundaries running back from the pavement.

4.2.2 BACKLAND DEVELOPMENT: The Conservation Area Statement says that pressure for backland development can reduce the visual as well as the ecological environment. The proposed solution addresses both issues by the maintenance of existing established trees and by additional planting as well as the living roof, which presents a green, living view from above, rather than the sterility of a conventional flat roof. The green roof visually maintains the line of the garden-band that runs behind the originally built houses.

The proposals are not truly backland development but backland *re*development and as such represent a substantial improvement to the conservation area.

- 4.2.3 FORECOURT PARKING: This concern relates to the loss of front boundary walls and the intrusion of parking spaces into the garden spaces at the back of the pavement. That is not the case in this application, where the existing drive is maintained and no worsening is created.
- 4.2.4 DESIGN: APPROPRIATE MATERIALS: The prevailing architectural materials in the conservation area are red brick, terra cotta, stone and clay tile. Those latter three provide detail to the general background of the predominant red brick and it is appropriate that the proposed extension to site boundary walls and the new house walls are in red brick, including reclaimed facings, without the pretension of ornament.

This is contextual to the prevailing architecture of the conservation area, using the materials in a simple, logical manner, that counterpoints the prevailing architecture.

4.2.5 DESIGN: INAPPROPRIATE BULK, MASSING AND HEIGHT: As has been noted, part of the architectural integrity of both No. 16 and 18 depends on the space between. Inappropriate bulk and massing would have the same effect as inappropriate height. In this case the proposed building is hulled down into its site and is self effacing to the point where its impact on views from adjoining buildings and the prospect of overlooking to those existing buildings is expunged.



4.2.6 DESIGN: IMPACT ON OPEN VIEWS: As has been noted with reference to the existing building, it has no impact on open views in the public realm. Similarly, neither does the proposed replacement.

The proposed replacement does however improve the more contained views from Nos. 16 and 18 and from the rear of St Christopher's School and is careful to contain its own views out, so as not to have a view over those buildings. Whilst the original buildings of the conservation area have a convexity, to present themselves to the world and display the aspiration and values that come from that, the proposed new building exploits private concave space.

## 4.3 ARCHITECTURAL STYLE:

The prevailing architectural style of the conservation area is *Queen Anne revival*. To attempt a pastiche of this style would not catch the character of the conservation area for it is the patinated maturity of the late 19thC buildings that gives the area its character and historical context. A new building in that style, no matter how scrupulously and academically detailed, would be obtrusive by its newness.

The simple modern style of the building does not endeavour to match the architectural style of the existing buildings nor out-pomp them (Pevsner's phrase and very useful). Yet it is not self effacing, especially in the bold use of modern materials and simple geometry of the entrance to the house.

It is often acceptable for new buildings to contrast and counterpoint the historic environment rather than conform to it, providing they do not dominate the existing built scene. This new building is of high architectural quality, using appropriate materials and modern design solutions to provide an improved replacement of the existing bungalow that remains a substantially hidden building, but which represents improvement and enhancement of the more private parts of the conservation area.

5.0 CONCLUSION: The architect for this proposal could have concluded that the privacy of the site presented a *tabula rasa* to allow architectural expression without regard to the context of the conservation area. However the iteration of the design has been sensitive to the context whilst counterpointing the prevailing architectural style. Its design is particularly careful in the immediacy of its neighbouring buildings and does not merely sit quietly into the conservation area but enhances it.

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## **APPENDIX: AUTHOR**

Stephen Gray is a chartered architect in practice for almost 40 years.

Previously a Principal Architect with the Department of the Environment, he undertook projects for the Directorate of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings (the precursor to English Heritage).

For the last 18 years, as a director of *Weldon Walshe*, he has specialised in projects involving listed buildings and conservation areas, his particular expertise being with the domestic buildings of 17th, 18th, 19thC and early 20thC London. He undertook projects at Home House in Portman Square, and in Gloucester Place and Seymour Street for the Portman Estate between 1992 and 1998

Invited member of the Institute of Structural Engineers History Study Forum from 2000

Historic Buildings Consultant to the Costain/ O'Rourke Joint Venture in their successful tender to restore *St Pancras Station* 2000

Visiting lecturer Bournemouth University School of Conservation Science 2000 - 2004

Elected member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation 2001

Master of Science - Historic Building Conservation: Bournemouth University 2002

Consultant specification writer and trainer to professional staff of *The National Trust* 2003 – 2006

Peer review editor for *The Journal of Architectural Conservation* on conservation of buildings of the Modern Movement 2006-7

IHBC nominated board member of the Covent Garden Area Trust from 2009

CPD lecturer on conservation matters to the Pyramus and Phisbe Club (Party Wall Surveyors), RICS and RIBA branches and to multi-disciplinary professional practices

In addition to project work in his practice's own right, he acts as consultant on historic building and planning matters to a number of other architectural and planning practices and their clients, and as expert witness to tribunals and adjudications. He gives *pro bono* advice on conservation matters to a number of amenity groups and local planning authorities.