



**12 The Grove
Highgate
London N6 6LB**

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

1. This Design and Access Statement accompanies an application to demolish a block of 5 1970s flats and replace it with a new building containing four flats. The amount of additional area is 368 sq m (mostly at basement level).
2. Bound separately but forming part of the DAS is a Heritage Statement that identifies the significance of adjacent listed buildings and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as an input to the design of the proposal and considers the impact of the proposal on them.

Officer Advice

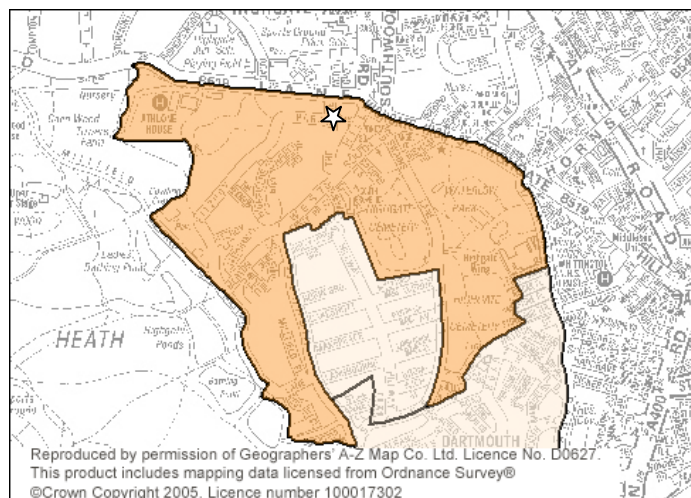
3. The conservation aspects of the scheme have been discussed with **Ms Pound** who commented favourably *that the scale, height and detailed design of your proposal, which takes a traditional architectural approach and stylistic cues from its neighbour to the south, in my view enhances the character of the CA and the appearance of the street scene.*
4. Following this, a pre-planning application meeting was held with **Ms Walsh**. The following changes have been made to the discussion version of the scheme to reflect her advice:
 - A full hydrological report has been prepared in line with the new LDF policy DP27 on basements;
 - A light report to ensure that sufficient light has been provided to units A and D has been prepared in accordance with the BRE guidelines;
 - Soft and hard landscaping layouts are shown;
 - Cycle storage (one Sheffield stand each for units A and D; two Sheffield stands each for units B and C);

- A section is provided through the light well at the front to the dormer at the rear;
 - 1.7m high obscured glass privacy screens have been provided between the two rear terraces and to prevent overlooking of No. 11's rear garden;
 - The dormers have been moved to provide a minimum of 0.5m between them and the chimney stack above the party wall;
 - A unilateral undertaking to provide a Construction Management Plan.
5. The appearance of the proposal has been further modified to reflect the more recent comments of **Mr Rose** on design integrity.

CONTEXT ASSESSMENT

Physical and Historical

6. PPS5 issues are considered in the accompanying Heritage Report. The following points are relevant for the planning aspects of the DAS.
7. The site is within the Highgate Conservation Area. The Council identifies The Grove as a character area within this Conservation Area.



8. The CAA for the Conservation Area describes its essential overall character as that of a close-knit village crowning one of the twin hills to the north of London where large and fashionable historic houses from the 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th centuries cluster around the historic core and imposing properties set in landscaped gardens stand on the hill slopes below the village.

9. It considers the present nature of The Grove mainly reflects the desirability of Highgate at the end of the 17th century, when it was said to have the grandest houses in London.

10. The first larger brick houses were built at Nos 1-6 by William Blake. The present houses are described by Pevsner and Cherry as *'the finest group in Highgate'* and include twelve listed buildings - Nos 1, 2 (grade 2), Nos 3, 4 (grade 2*), No 5 (grade 2), No 6 (grade 2*) Nos 7, 7a, 8, 9 (grade 2) no 9b (grade 2*) and Fitzroy Lodge (grade 2).

11. The CAA identifies the following general components of its public character:
 - The setting of the houses well back behind front gardens and a wide gravelled area;
 - On the east side, the railings of the reservoir covered built in 1854 lined with mature trees set in soft grass verges;
 - On the west side the gravel surface creates an informal walkway, lined with trees but parking on the gravel detracts from character and appearance.

12. It also describes the eclectic nature of the houses - detached and semi-detached, 2- and 3-storey, some with mansards and dormers, some of brick of various colours and some of stucco; of various periods from the 18th to 20th centuries and often with the original building restored and extended. The common feature is that all are large residential buildings.

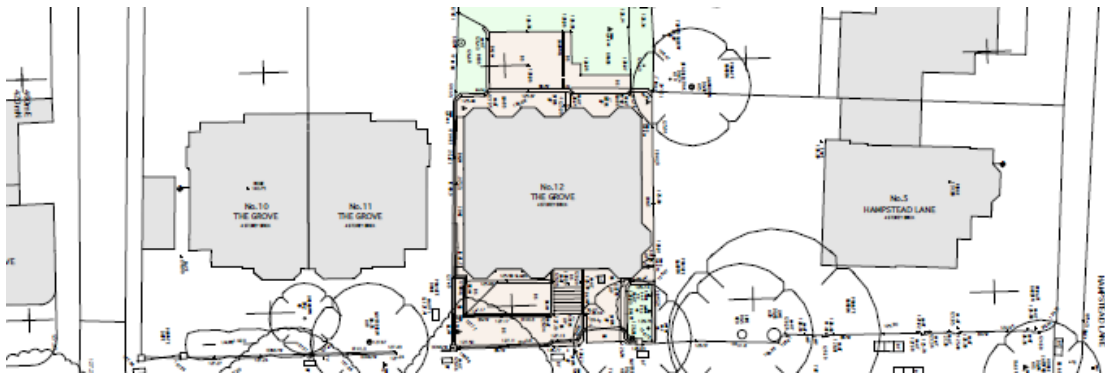
13. Despite this interesting history, the CAA only identifies Nos 1-5 and 9d as making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area, possibly relying upon their listing to preserve the other important buildings. The application property is not listed, not identified as making a positive contribution to the CA and does not adjoin listed buildings.

14. This is an area where there is a mix of apartments and houses. The Grove's dwellings are subdivided into 34 units as follows:
 - The End House house
 - No 1 house
 - No 2 house
 - No 3 house
 - No 4 house and annex
 - No 5 house
 - No 6 house
 - No 7 2 units
 - No 8 house
 - No 9 4 units
 - Fitzroy Lodge 5 units

- Park House house
- No 10 2 units
- No 11 house
- No 12 5 units
- The Old Well House 5 units

The Site

16. As far as the site itself is concerned, it is a deep plot at the opposite end of The Grove from the principal listed buildings. These are separated from it by the road Fitzroy Park and the large pair of Victorian developer semi-detached houses Nos 10 and 11.



17. It is a block of 5 flats built in the 1970s. As the survey elevations below show, it is an unequivocally modern building that does not reflect the general built form of the CA.



18. The photo below shows that, other than its ridge and eaves line, it sits discordantly with its neighbour Nos 10 and 11. Its scale, rhythm, materials and fenestration could hardly be more different. It is an angular, asymmetrical building in an area where there are many symmetrical ones and the architectural justification for this is not immediately apparent.



Policy

19. **UDP policy B7** provided an admirably succinct statement of the Council's approach to new development in Conservation Areas. It says the Council will *only grant consent for development that preserves or enhances its special character or appearance. It will not grant conservation area consent for the demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area, unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention.*
20. However on 10 November this policy was replaced by the LDF Core Strategy and Development policies. Policy never gets shorter. There are now two policies that control development in conservation area that reflect current national and regional policies with an appropriate local aspect.
21. **LDF policy CS14** now says the Council will ensure that Camden's *places and buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use by preserving and enhancing Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens.*

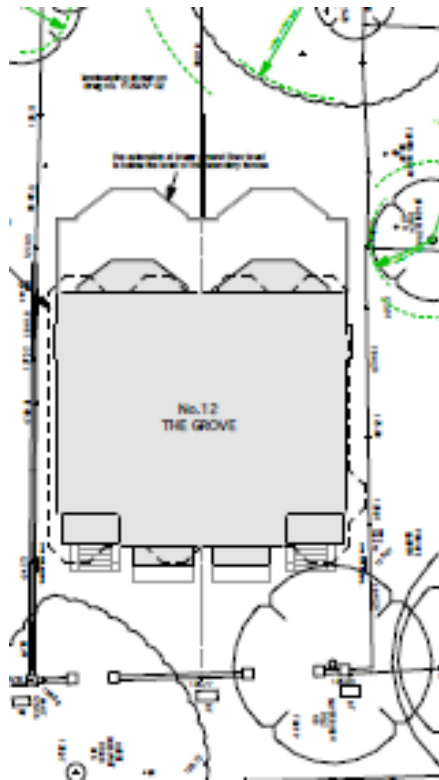
22. **LDF policy DP25** indicates that to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the Council will:
- a) *take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans when assessing applications within conservation areas;*
 - b) *only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area;*
 - c) *prevent the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area where this harms the character or appearance of the conservation area, unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention;*
 - d) *not permit development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character and appearance of that conservation area; and*
 - e) *preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character of a conservation area and which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage.*
23. While the proposal involves demolition of the existing building, there is no special policy protection for it. The primary consideration is the statutory test that requires (after South Lakeland) that new development does not harm the character of the Conservation Area.

EVALUATION

24. The Heritage Statement concurs with the CAA that the design of the existing block of flats does not make a positive contribution to the CA. The CAA and the LDF policies have informed the Heritage Statement, which in turn has been a key input into the design of the proposal.
25. As the building is not identified in the CAA as making a positive contribution to the Conservation area there is no presumption in favour of retaining it. It is incongruous in the local context and in principle there is no objection to its removal because its materials and built form are unrelated to the surrounding area. A well designed replacement will enhance the CA if its form and materials reflect its character.
26. As far as use is concerned, anything other than a residential building of considerable scale would be inappropriate in this area. To reflect the present use of the building, the pattern of use in the area and the desire not to lose units expressed in the LDF it would be inappropriate not to subdivide the proposal.

DESIGN, MATERIALS, SCALE, LANDSCAPING, APPEARANCE and LAYOUT

27. Following the Conservation Officer's advice and taking account of the Heritage Statement the proposal reflects the design of the 1860s building previously on the site identified in the Heritage Statement. This was a large detached house built about the same time as the adjoining pair of houses Nos10 and 11 but with much simpler detailing.
28. The proposal will be built in pale stock brick with painted mouldings. The detailing is derived from the 1860s building.
29. The proposed footprint and building lines of the proposal are virtually identical to those of the existing house.



30. A garden floor projection into the rear garden is proposed that will be below the level of the adjoining boundary fences.



31. The proposal has been designed to resemble a pair of semi-detached houses, making a symmetrical building consistent with the adjoining building. However the plot width is much smaller than that of Nos 10 and 11 and the design has square rather than canted bays and a vertical rather than the horizontal emphasis. Its appearance is entirely distinct from Nos 10 and 11, although more consistent in scale, materials and symmetry than the present building.



32. The elevations also show that ample space is left between the proposal and No 5 Hampstead Lane for that property not to be oppressively over-dominated by the proposal – the relationship is similar to that which exists at present.
33. Even though the proposal is laid out to appear to be a pair of semi-detached houses, each is actually subdivided into two apartments – one in the lower ground floor and one occupying the remainder of the building.

34. The principle of apartment development is established by the present building and is consistent with the general character of the Conservation Area. The apartments satisfy the Council's space standards.
35. The loss of one unit from the existing provision is required to preserve symmetry and is consistent with local policy.

ACCESS

36. This area has good public transport accessibility with Highgate tube station about 15 minutes walk away and 6 frequent bus routes running through Highgate village.
37. The development is designed to Lifetime Homes accessibility standards.