

82 Highgate West Hill

London N6 6LU

Historic building appraisal and justification of proposals

April 2010

Consultancy for the
Historic Built Environment

KMIHeritage

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1.0 Summary

82 Highgate West Hill is located on the southern side of Highgate West Hill, at its northern end, in the section that runs southwest from South Grove. It forms part of a group of adjacent buildings with an interlinked history, and is listed with 81 and 83 Highgate West Hill at Grade II. It is in the Highgate Conservation Area, and there are a number of listed buildings nearby.

The scheme involves the creation of new accommodation beneath the existing ground floor, a small new projection to the rear of the house to provide a new terrace and additional basement accommodation below, and new steps to the garden from the ground floor.

The scheme has been in development since 2006, and a number of listed building consent and planning applications have been made. The proposed scheme has been substantially revised since last year, and these revisions were discussed with the London Borough of Camden's Conservation & Design Team during February and March of this year.

The proposed scheme creates new accommodation in the building and links it to existing accommodation in a careful and sensitive fashion. It does this in a manner that works with the listed building and preserves its special architectural and historic interest. It represents a further phase in the evolution of 82 Highgate West Hill, a building whose special interest is defined by continuing change to accommodate changing domestic needs.

The special architectural and historic interest of the listed building is clearly affected by the proposed scheme, but is not harmed. It is, rather, preserved and enhanced by the works. Similarly, the setting of adjacent listed buildings and the character and appearance of the Highgate Conservation Area is preserved.

In doing these things the proposed development is consistent with national and local policy for the historic built environment

2.0 Introduction

2.1 This report has been prepared by KMHeritage on the instruction of the Mr and Mrs Duncan Gee in order to support applications for listed building consent and planning permission. It relates to 82 Highgate West Hill, London N6 6LU.

Purpose

2.2 The purpose of the report is to assess the proposed development against national and local policies relating to the historic built environment.

2.3 This report should be read in conjunction with the Design and Access Statement, Planning Statement and drawings prepared by Gregori Chiarotti Architects, the structural report and other supporting information.

Organisation

2.4 This introduction is followed in the next section by a brief description of the building, its significance and that of its context, and an outline in Section 4 of the proposed scheme and its effects. Section 5 sets out the national and local policy and guidance relating to the historic built environment that is relevant to this matter. Section 7 assesses the proposed development against that policy and guidance. Appendices contain a location map, historic maps and the list description for the property.

Author

2.5 The author of this report is Kevin Murphy B.Arch MUBC RIBA IHBC. He was an Inspector of Historic Buildings in the London Region of English Heritage and dealt with a range of major projects involving listed buildings and conservation areas in London. Prior to this, he had been a conservation officer with the London Borough of Southwark, and was Head of Conservation and Design at Hackney Council between 1997 and 1999. He trained and worked as an architect, and has a specialist qualification in

urban and building conservation. Kevin Murphy was included for a number of years on the Heritage Lottery Fund's Directory of Expert Advisers.

3.0 The building and its context

Location

- 3.1 82 Highgate West Hill is located on the southern side of Highgate West Hill, at its northern end, in the section that runs southwest from South Grove. The building is part of a group of buildings at 81-84 Highgate West Hill. The group, and adjacent buildings at 78-80 Highgate West Hill to the northeast and Holly Terrace to the south west, are at the edge of the plateau on which Highgate Village sits. Opposite 81-84 Highgate West Hill is the large mansion of Witanhurst, its lodges and a small group of buildings at 37-40 Highgate West Hill.

The building

- 3.2 82 Highgate West Hill forms part of a group of adjacent buildings with an interlinked history. 81 to 83 Highgate West Hill are a short terrace, and Nos. 81 and 82 were originally one house, built on the site of a previous 16th century house. This house had been separated by the end of the 18th century, and No 83 Highgate West Hill was added then or some time afterwards.
- 3.3 Upon the issue of a new lease for the property in 1821, there appears to have been substantial rebuilding and by 1823, No. 82 seems to have been merged with No. 83. Nos. 82 and 83 remained one house until 1946 when they were re-divided in an ad-hoc manner. A single storey extension was added to the front of 82 in the late 19th century, connected to the main ground floor rooms behind, and a kitchen was created in the southern of the two spaces either side of the main entrance after World War II.
- 3.4 The terrace is now in stucco and three storeys high with parapets and large chimneys to Nos. 81 and 82 that may be from the earlier house. No. 81 projects forward towards Highgate West Hill to the northeast of No. 82. No. 82 has three bays, each in the form of an arched

recess containing windows and extending through 1st and 2nd floor.

- 3.5 There is a central entrance, with a fluted Doric portico, a reeded door surround with a patterned fanlight, central lantern and panelled door. This leads to a central entrance hall. To the left, a principal ground floor room runs from the original front wall to the rear wall of the building. To the right, the matching room is shortened by the presence of a rear hall, in which the main stairs is located; this reflects the former layout when No. 82 and No. 83 were linked. The rear elevation has four tall windows at ground floor giving on to a terrace. Above there is a continuous cast-iron balcony at first floor, supported on cast iron columns and arches.
- 3.6 The existing basement beneath No. 82 is confined to two small spaces against the boundary with No. 83 Highgate West Hill.
- 3.7 81-83 Highgate West Hill were listed Grade II in May 1974.

The context

Listed buildings

- 3.8 The following listed buildings are in the immediate vicinity of 81-83 Highgate West Hill:
- 78 and 79 Highgate West Hill (Grade II);
 - 80 Highgate West Hill (Grade II);
 - 84 Highgate West Hill (Grade II);
 - ‘Witanhurst’, 41 Highgate West Hill (Grade II*);
 - North And South Lodges to ‘Witanhurst’, 41 Highgate West Hill (Grade II).

Highgate Conservation Area

- 3.9 The site and its surroundings are located in the Highgate Conservation Area, designated as a Conservation Area in

1968 and extended in 1978 and 1992. The 1978 extension included Highgate West Hill and the eastern part of Highgate Cemetery.

3.10 The conservation area appraisal for the Conservation Area summarises its special interest as follows:

The essential character of the Highgate Conservation Area is of a close-knit village crowning one of the twin hills to the north of London. Highgate's proximity to London, combined with the benefits of its elevated position, providing clean air, spring water and open spaces, has ensured that from its earliest beginnings in about the 14th century, it has been a very popular place to live or visit. The generally 18th and 19th century character of the present buildings may conceal the existence of earlier structures; for example, a late medieval jettied timber structure has been identified within one of the High Street buildings across the borough boundary in Haringey. The early village high street with its characterful small-scale houses and traditionally fronted shops and businesses and the open square, around the site of the original pond remain the heart of the village. Large and fashionable historic houses from the 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th centuries stand clustering around the historic core, and imposing properties set in landscaped gardens stand on the hill slopes below the village enjoying the southern aspect. From Highgate looking south there are wide-reaching views of London with Crystal Palace and the North Downs forming a distant backdrop.

The Highgate Conservation Area, in particular, enjoys a wealth of open spaces and green surroundings. Lanes and farm names live on alongside open areas of allotments and parks, Hampstead Heath, Highgate Cemetery, Waterlow Park, South Grove reservoir, Fitzroy Park allotments and the many large gardens contribute to the informal landscape setting and rural atmosphere which is an important part of the Conservation Area character. Highgate Cemetery, opened in 1839, forms a large and important part of this Conservation Area. Dating from the

19th century, many of the monuments and tombs within the East and West Cemeteries are individually protected by statutory listing, while in recognition of the importance of the landscaping the cemeteries are included in the List of Historic Parks and Gardens.

The character of the Highgate Conservation Area is formed by the relationship of topography, open spaces, urban form and architectural details.

The significance of 82 Highgate West Hill and its context

- 3.11 82 Highgate West Hill, the separate but jointly listed properties to which it is attached, the listed buildings in its vicinity and the Highgate Conservation Area are all ‘designated heritage assets’, as defined by Annex 2 of Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment. Buildings identified as ‘positive contributors’ in the Highgate Conservation Area conservation area appraisal can be considered as undesignated heritage assets, though none are situated close to 82 Highgate West Hill.
- 3.12 ‘Significance’ is defined in the PPS as ‘the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic’. The ‘Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide’ that accompanies and explains the PPS puts it slightly differently – as ‘the sum of its architectural, historic, artistic or archaeological interest’.
- 3.13 These assets and their significance are composed of clear *historical, aesthetic and communal value*¹. In terms of *historic value*, the buildings and their relationship to one another and the Highgate Conservation Area *illustrates* the development of Highgate and this part of north London, and tell a particular storey about the transformation of

¹ Reference is made here to the Heritage Values discussed in *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance*, English Heritage, April 2008

residential buildings in the area under the influence of changing fashions, evolving tenure and leaseholding arrangements, and various economic circumstances. The individual buildings have historical *associations*, such as those of No. 81 Highgate West Hill with the architect Lewis Vulliamy. Highgate has many buildings and spaces (such as Waterlow Park) with connections to notable people.

- 3.14 The buildings and the conservation area have obvious *aesthetic* value. While the underlying style in the area tends to be neo-classical, there is a pleasing variety generated by changing architectural fashions from the 18th century onwards. The formality of architectural style is softened by the ubiquity of change to buildings in the area: Nos. 81 to 83 are typical in having been altered many times. The listed and unlisted buildings and the conservation area in which they are found have *communal* value deriving from their role in the nature of Highgate as a settlement: the buildings and spaces of the conservation area help make the place that is Highgate.
- 3.15 The special architectural and historic interest of 82 Highgate West Hill derives specifically from its design and appearance both internally and externally, from its plan form and the volumetric character of its spaces, and from its history and associations.

Potential effects on the significance of heritage assets

- 3.16 The nature of the proposed development is described in the next section. It will directly affect 82 Highgate West Hill alone, and consists largely of internal works. The works will only be apparent on the exterior of the building on the garden (south eastern) side. In terms of potential effect of the works on heritage assets, the most immediate will be that upon the 82 Highgate West Hill itself. The rear parts of the listed buildings to either side may be affected by the proposals and how they affect the appearance of the terrace as it faces southeast. The

character and appearance of the Highgate Conservation Area may be affected by the proposal for the same reason.

- 3.17 The degree of these potential effects on significance is measured in the next section.

4.0 The proposed development and its effects

- 4.1 This section of the report describes the proposed development, the benefits it provides for the occupants of the house, and the effect of the works on the significance of the house and other heritage assets.

The scheme

- 4.2 This proposed development is described in the Design and Access Statement, Planning Statement and drawings prepared by Gregori Chiarotti Architects. A structural report provides detailed information regarding the design and methodology of structural intervention in the listed building associated with the proposed scheme.
- 4.3 The scheme involves the creation of new accommodation beneath the existing ground floor, a small new projection to the rear of the house to provide a new terrace and additional basement accommodation below, and new steps to the garden from the ground floor.

The evolution of the proposed scheme

- 4.4 The scheme has been in development since 2006, and a number of listed building consent and planning applications have been made. Listed building consent and planning permission were refused for the latest version of the scheme in May 2009. The full planning history is set out in the architects' report.
- 4.5 The last submitted scheme (2009) proposed the full excavation of the space beneath the house, including the complete removal of the existing two spaces at basement level, as well as the creation of a connection with the car garage between 82 Highgate West Hill and its neighbour to the southwest. This would have involved the making of a full basement area to the front of the house. Those parts of the proposed basement that remain in the present proposals were, in the previous scheme, more open and less reflective of the plan form of the house above.

- 4.6 The proposed scheme has been substantially revised since last year. Now, the wine cellar space at basement level is retained. The area of existing space beneath the house is constrained to the northeastern half of the basement plan, away from the wine cellar. The space that is created has more of the character of basement accommodation: there are more walls, making more rooms, and those walls are located beneath the main walls of the ground floor plan. The amount of basement area to the front of the house has been substantially reduced and no connection is made to the garage. The design of the terrace and steps to the garden has been revised.
- 4.7 The proposal to add a roof light to the area of flat roof above the Victorian front extension (the present kitchen) remains part of the scheme, as does the making of minor alterations in that kitchen space. Apart from these changes and the adjustment of the stairs to bring it to basement level, no other internal work is proposed at ground level.
- 4.8 These revisions were discussed with Edward Jarvis of the London Borough of Camden's Conservation & Design Team during February and March of this year.

The purpose and rationale of the scheme

- 4.9 The purpose of the proposed scheme is very simply to make of 82 Highgate West Hill a better place to live. There is nothing remarkable about this: it is, in fact, one of the things that has caused the listed building to change repeatedly over more than two centuries. Nor is the idea of making the house work better as a dwelling inherently inimical to the special architectural and historic interest – the house is certainly not (to use the phrase contained in Paragraph 3.11 of the old Planning Policy Guidance 15) 'so sensitive that it cannot sustain any alterations' – it is entirely susceptible to change that carefully balances its special interest against the benefits of alterations.
- 4.10 It is normal and reasonable to make changes to houses such as 82 Highgate West Hill. It is now, and very likely to remain, a dwelling: a place where families live their lives.

Life now is not as it was in the 19th century and one of the most common features of the historic residential building type in this country is alterations made to accommodate modern life: kitchens, bathrooms, and so on. More often than not, the changes made to 19th century houses accommodate these things are ad-hoc and undesigned.

- 4.11 Life now is not as even it was in 1946, when the house took its present form. The present domestic arrangements in 82 Highgate West Hill are less than satisfactory, both from the point of view as the house as a dwelling and as a listed building. The Victorian extension at the front provides a small and cramped kitchen space, incommensurate with the size of the property. The two rooms to either side of the main hallway on the ground floor are perfectly satisfactory as formal reception rooms, but the dining room is ‘landlocked’ within the plan by virtue of the position of the stairs, and is a dark and less than comfortable space for dining and entertaining. There is a shortage of storage and utility space.
- 4.12 The proposed scheme represents an approach to dealing with these issues in a manner that works with the listed building and preserves its special architectural and historic interest. It represents a further phase in the evolution of 82 Highgate West Hill. The house, and its special architectural and historic interest as a listed building, is defined by change – it would be a far less interesting building if its essential quality was not the constant alteration, addition, combination and separation that has characterised it throughout its history, and which has given us the thing that we now value.
- 4.13 It would clearly be illogical, and particularly in listed building terms, to draw a line now and say that no more change is acceptable – not least because so much of the change that occurred during the 20th century was harmful and insensitive. The opportunity exists to make further interventions in the building that take account of its complex evolution, that preserve its history and the layers

of fabric that illustrate it, but that allow the house to have a long, sustainable future as a dwelling.

- 4.14 That is what the present scheme does. It makes use of a part of the property that is underused without in any way harming its structural stability. The majority of the work involves creating new accommodation: those works that alter the existing fabric and appearance of the building serve to facilitate the creation of that new accommodation.

The works to the basement and the front part of the house

- 4.15 The design of the new lower ground floor has been revised in the course of negotiation and scheme development to specifically protect and preserve the fabric of the building at this level, and to intervene only in the most minimal way possible in order to create new family spaces. The extent of basement space proposed has been reduced. The main part of the space provided is for a new kitchen and dining area, an amount of space that is far more appropriate to the size and importance of the house than the cramped and inadequate kitchen at ground floor, and in a far more appropriate location – where the kitchen in many a large 18th century or 19th century would be found.
- 4.16 How does this proposal affect the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building? There is no inherent damage caused to the special architectural and historic interest by placing subterranean spaces outside the existing envelope of the building, provided that no harm is caused to the structure of the building itself and that associated alterations (connection to the ground floor and to the outside, for example) are sensitively handled. The idea that it is inherently harmful to alter a listed building adding by extra accommodation in this way is unsound – the measure of acceptability is the degree of the effect of the work on the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building. That special interest does not rely

on the listed building not having a basement. That it does not already have a larger basement than exists now is historic happenstance, not part of its design. There is no particular heritage value to be attached to that historic happenstance.

- 4.17 The structural design information accompanying this application makes it abundantly clear that it is possible to create the new lower ground floor accommodation without harming the listed building. The structural design is detailed and thorough, and the scheme will not result in any structural damage to the listed building.
- 4.18 The new basement area to the northeastern side of the house, and the new entrance from that area beneath the main ground floor entrance, will similarly not create any structural harm to or effect on the listed building. In visual terms, they will be barely perceptible.
- 4.19 The proposed roof light to the flat-roofed Victorian extension (itself altered during the 20th century) will be entirely invisible externally as it will be hidden behind a parapet, and the space internally is so small as to make it unapparent unless one stood directly beneath it. It will not be within a main room of the house, but a small later extension, and the roof light will echo the proportions of the room.

The works affecting the garden

- 4.20 The lowest level of the house when seen from the garden will change. However the depiction of the scheme in pure elevation is deceptive. There is very little visibility from other properties or elsewhere in the Conservation Area of this lower part of the façade: it is hidden by boundaries and the very extensive vegetation in the garden to 82 Highgate West Hill and adjacent properties. The topography and disposition of buildings in this part of Highgate reduces the possibility of the new lower ground floor elevation being seen.

- 4.21 In any event, the design of this external new feature of the house is sympathetic and muted. It ‘knows its place’ in terms of the listed building: it isn’t ostentatious or overtly ‘designed’ so as to draw attention to itself. The new terrace and the accommodation beneath will be in keeping with a house such as 82 Highgate West Hill. It is entirely appropriate that one would step from the rear of this kind of house onto a generous terrace – this house and its neighbours have one of finest, if not the best, views in North London.
- 4.22 The terrace will replace the rather ad-hoc arrangement with a modest and well-proportioned external space from which to enjoy this view, which will not be over-sized in relation to the house, which will preserve the cast iron columns and first floor balcony, and which will lead, in a suitably formal manner, to symmetrical curved steps that lead down to the garden. The flat glazing in the terrace surface that give light to the proposed kitchen area below will be invisible.
- 4.23 A particularly positive aspect of the design is the balanced dialogue between symmetry and asymmetry in the proposed rear elevation. The existing elevation is not, in any case actually symmetrical: there are subtle variations in proportions and detail across the façade. This is not the principal façade of the house, nor is the house rigidly formal and reliant for its special interest on the precision and regularity of its external appearance.
- 4.24 The new lower ground floor will be either hidden behind a gently sloping, green bank on the right of the new symmetrical steps as one looks from the garden, or a new hedge balustrade screening the private lower terrace area on the left. The steps will be largely covered in planting. Behind the hedges and the planting, the masonry of the steps and the wall to the new lower ground floor will be in a lime-based rusticated render finish. The proposed painted timber french doors giving access to the hidden terrace from the basement sitting area will match the existing windows.

4.25 Taken as a whole, the proposed scheme as it affects the rear of 82 Highgate West Hill will very clearly improve the appearance of the garden, the exterior of the listed building, the setting of neighbouring listed buildings and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It will replace the shabby late 20th century ‘crazy paving’ laid in an awkward slope away from the house. It will create precisely the right kind of interface between a house of this age, formality and type, and the informality of the garden below. The present situation does not provide that – it lets the house and its surroundings down, and the proposal will remedy that state of affairs. It negotiates the change of level between ground floor and garden in a suitably elegant way, and in a fashion that has everything to do with the ground floor-to-garden relationship, and very little to do with the new basement-to-garden relationship.

The effect of the proposed scheme on the listed building

4.26 The special architectural and historic interest of the listed building is clearly affected by the proposed scheme, but - crucially - it is not harmed. The scheme takes nothing away from that special interest. The existing structure and quality of its historic fabric is preserved in the project. The interventions in the existing spaces of the house are modest. The adjustment to the stairs, the new rooflight to the Victorian extension, the creation of a new opening between dining room and kitchen, and so on – all are the minimum necessary to facilitate the opening up of the basement and to help make the house a better place to live.

The effect on other heritage assets

4.27 For the reasons given in this section, no harm is caused to the character and appearance of the Highgate Conservation Area or the setting of adjacent listed

buildings – indeed these things are preserved and enhanced by the proposed development.

- 4.28 When considered carefully, it is clear that there will be no effect on the setting of 78 and 79 Highgate West Hill (Grade II), on 80 Highgate West Hill (Grade II), or on Witanhurst (Grade II*) or its associated lodges (Grade II) – quite simply because none of the proposed works will affect these listed buildings in any way.
- 4.29 The effect on the setting of 81 and 84 Highgate West Hill will be minimal – high boundaries exist with these properties, and there will be very little visibility of the scheme in the context of those properties (i.e. with those properties in the backdrop of a direct view of the rear of 82 Highgate West Hill). Even where tangentially perceived together, the nature of the design for the rear parts of 82 Highgate West Hill as described earlier in this section avoids any notable or striking visual impact.
- 4.30 For the same reason, the effect on the character and appearance of the Highgate Conservation Area is negligible. Views across the conservation area from the south of the new lower ground floor – as opposed to the house as a whole – are very difficult to obtain, due to intervening trees and buildings. And again, even when glimpsed, the sensitive design of the works will not be such as to harm views and character.

5.0 The policy context

5.1 This section of the report briefly sets out the range of national and local policy relevant to the consideration of change in the historic built environment

National policy: Planning Policy Statement 5

5.2 The legislation governing listed buildings and conservation areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

5.3 On Tuesday 23 March 2010, the Government published the new Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, which replaces Planning Policy Guidance 15 (Planning and the Historic Environment, 1995) and Planning Policy Guidance 16 (Archaeology and Planning) with immediate effect.

5.4 The PPS sets out planning policies on the conservation of the historic environment. It is accompanied by a 'Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide', published by English Heritage 'to help practitioners implement the policy, including the legislative requirements that underpin it'. The PPS consists of an introductory section called 'Planning for the Historic Environment' and a 'Policies' section. The 'Policies' section is divided into 'Plan-making policies' and 'Development Management'.

5.5 The 'Government's Objectives' in respect of the historic built environment are defined as

- To deliver sustainable development by ensuring that policies and decisions concerning the historic environment:
- To conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance; and
- To contribute to our knowledge and understanding of our past by ensuring that opportunities are taken to capture evidence from the historic environment

and to make this publicly available, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

5.6 The 'Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide' urges local planning authorities and applicants to consider 'the embodied energy within existing buildings and the whole-life costs of any new scheme or proposed alterations'.

5.7 Paragraph 10 of the 'Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide' says:

A key feature of the PPS is its holistic approach to the historic environment. The elements of the historic environment that are worthy of consideration in planning matters are called 'heritage assets'. This term embraces all manner of features, including: buildings, parks and gardens, standing, buried and submerged remains, areas, sites and landscapes, whether designated or not and whether or not capable of designation.

5.8 Annex 2 of the PPS provides a formal definition of the term 'heritage asset':

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. Heritage assets are the valued components of the historic environment. They include designated heritage assets (as defined in this PPS) and assets identified by the local planning authority during the process of decision-making or through the plan-making process (including local listing).

5.9 Policy HE3 'Regional and local planning approaches' indicates how regional spatial strategies and local development frameworks 'should set out a positive, proactive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment in their area'. It describes the contribution of the historic environment 'by virtue of':

(i) its influence on the character of the environment and an area's sense of place;

(ii) its potential to be a catalyst for regeneration in an area, in particular through leisure, tourism and economic development;

(iii) the stimulus it can provide to inspire new development of imaginative and high quality design;

(iv) the re-use of existing fabric, minimising waste; and;

(v) its mixed and flexible patterns of land use that are likely to be, and remain, sustainable.

5.10 Policy HE6 of the PPS, 'Information requirements for applications for consent affecting heritage assets', requires applicants 'to provide a description of the significance of the heritage assets affected and the contribution of their setting to that significance' so as 'to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the significance of the heritage asset'. This information 'together with an assessment of the impact of the proposal' should be incorporated in applications.

5.11 Policy HE7 is entitled 'Policy principles guiding the determination of applications for consent relating to all heritage assets'. Paragraph HE7.2 says:

In considering the impact of a proposal on any heritage asset, local planning authorities should take into account the particular nature of the significance of the heritage asset and the value that it holds for this and future generations. This understanding should be used by the local planning authority to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposals.

5.12 Paragraph HE7.4 says:

Local planning authorities should take into account:

– the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and of utilising their positive role in place-shaping; and

– the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets and the historic environment generally can make to the establishment and maintenance of sustainable

communities and economic vitality by virtue of the factors set out in HE3.1

5.13 Paragraph HE7.5 says:

Local planning authorities should take into account the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment. The consideration of design should include scale, height, massing, alignment, materials and use.

5.14 The 'Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide' gives, at Paragraph 79, a number of 'potential heritage benefits that could weigh in favour of a proposed scheme' in addition to guidance on 'weighing-up' [sic] proposals in Paragraphs 76 to 78. These are that:

- It sustains or enhances the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting;
- It reduces or removes risks to a heritage asset;
- It secures the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation;
- It makes a positive contribution to economic vitality and sustainable communities;
- It is an appropriate design for its context and makes a positive contribution to the appearance, character, quality and local distinctiveness of the historic environment;
- It better reveals the significance of a heritage asset and therefore enhances our enjoyment of it and the sense of place.

5.15 Policy HE9 provides 'Additional policy principles guiding the consideration of applications for consent relating to designated heritage assets'. It sets out a basic presumption in favour of the conservation of designated assets, and says that 'the more significant the designated heritage asset, the greater the presumption in favour of its

conservation should be'. Significance can be 'harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Loss affecting any designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.

- 5.16 Paragraph HE9.2 provides guidance for local planning authorities in instances where 'the application will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance' of a heritage asset or assets. It says that:

Where the application will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance local planning authorities should refuse consent unless it can be demonstrated that:

(i) the substantial harm to or loss of significance is necessary in order to deliver substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss; or

(ii) (a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and

(b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term that will enable its conservation; and

(c) conservation through grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is not possible; and

(d) the harm to or loss of the heritage asset is outweighed by the benefits of bringing the site back into use.

- 5.17 HE9.4 deals with 'a harmful impact on the significance of a designated heritage asset which is less than substantial harm', and says that local planning authorities should:

(i) weigh the public benefit of the proposal (for example, that it helps to secure the optimum viable use of the heritage asset in the interests of its long-term conservation) against the harm; and

(ii) recognise that the greater the harm to the significance of the heritage asset the greater the justification will be needed for any loss.

- 5.18 Paragraph 111 of the Guide sets out the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 that local planning authorities when making

decisions must 'have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses' and 'pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance' of a conservation area.

- 5.19 Policy HE10, 'Additional policy principles guiding the consideration of applications for development affecting the setting of a designated heritage asset' deals with the setting of the heritage assets and urges local planning authorities to not just protect the setting of heritage assets, but to use the opportunity to cause development 'to better reveal the significance of the asset'.

Camden Council's Unitary Development Plan

- 5.20 Policy B6 of the UDP deals with listed buildings, and says:
- To preserve or enhance the character of listed buildings as buildings of special architectural or historic interest, the Council will only grant listed building consent for:*
- a) the total or substantial demolition of a listed building where exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention; and for*
 - b) alterations and extensions to a listed building where it considers this would not cause harm to the special interest of the building.*
- 5.21 The commentary says:
- 'The Council will only grant planning permission for the change of use of a listed building where it considers this would not cause harm to its special architectural or historic interest. The Council will not grant planning permission for development that it considers would cause harm to the setting of a listed building.*
- Proposals that would cause harm to the special interests of a building, for example through the loss of important architectural features, changes to the original plan form, layout or structural integrity of the building will be resisted, unless there are other overriding considerations.*

Proposals that reduce the energy consumption of listed buildings will be welcomed provided that they do not cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest and character of the building or group of buildings concerned’.

5.22 Policy B7 of the UDP deals with conservation areas, and says:

A - Character and appearance

The Council will only grant consent for development in a conservation area that preserves or enhances the special character or appearance of the area. The Council will not grant planning permission for development outside of a conservation area that it considers would cause harm to the conservation area’s character, appearance or setting.

B - Demolition of unlisted buildings

The Council will not grant conservation area consent for the total or substantial 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.

5.23 The commentary says that ‘It is important that new buildings are designed taking into account the character and appearance of the conservation area they are in’, and:

When a building is considered to make little or no contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area, the Council will assess the contribution made by any replacement building. The replacement building should enhance the conservation area to an appreciably greater extent than the existing building.

5.24 It also says that:

The architectural characteristics of a conservation area derive from, among other things, the detailing of existing buildings and the particular materials used in their construction. The Council will encourage the use of high

quality and sustainable materials that complement and enhance the conservation area.

6.0 Compliance with policy and guidance

National policy

- 6.1 The proposed development is an example of what the new PPS seeks in terms of sustainability alone – by retaining and continuing to use the structure and fabric of the existing building the scheme is inherently sustainable and less demanding of resources than a new building. The scheme is thus consistent with broad scope and intention of Policy HE1 of the PPS.
- 6.2 The scheme reuses the existing building and makes alterations and interventions in it while preserving and enhancing its special interest as a listed building. To the extent that an individual listed building proposal can be related to ‘regional and local planning’, the proposed scheme helps to achieve those things that Policy HE3 seeks: it helps 82 Highgate West Hill to continue to have an ‘influence on the character of the environment and an area’s sense of place’, it has provided a ‘stimulus’ to ‘inspire new development of imaginative and high quality design’, and involves ‘the re-use of existing fabric, minimising waste’. It assists in maintaining ‘mixed and flexible patterns of land use that are likely to be, and remain, sustainable’.
- 6.3 The proposed development is consistent with Policy HE7 of the PPS. It ‘take[s] into account the particular nature of the significance of the heritage asset[s, in its surroundings] and the value that [they] hold for this and future generations’. This is demonstrated by the careful and detailed examination of the architectural qualities of the listed building (both by the architects in their design and in this report) which it is proposed to alter. In doing this, the scheme undoubtedly succeeds in ‘sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets’, and utilises ‘their positive role in place-shaping’. It also clearly makes a ‘positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment’

- 6.4 The scheme also does the things that the ‘Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide’ urges in its Paragraph 79. For the reasons explained earlier, the proposed development ‘sustains or enhances the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting’ by giving the site a new lease of life and by ensuring the preservation of those parts of the building of discernible significance.
- 6.5 The proposal clearly ‘reduces or removes risks to [the] heritage asset’. It helps sustain 82 Highgate West Hill as a highly desirable and extremely useful (and user-friendly) dwelling which, quite apart from its attractiveness and quality as a listed building, will ensure that it will always be perceived as a good place to live.
- 6.6 Granting permission now for these proposals would prevent the building would undoubtedly ‘secure the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation’. In straightforward listed building terms, the building should remain as a house, and the proposed scheme will help it do so.
- 6.7 The proposed scheme will make ‘a positive contribution to economic vitality and sustainable communities’ by maintaining housing in what is a broadly residential area, and is ‘an appropriate design for its context and makes a positive contribution to the appearance, character, quality and local distinctiveness of the historic environment’ for the reasons given earlier. The scheme will help ‘better reveal the significance of a heritage asset and therefore enhances our enjoyment of it and the sense of place’ by sustaining the building’s use.
- 6.8 In terms of Policy HE9, the proposed development very definitely conserves the heritage assets in its context. It certainly does not involve harm to those heritage assets of any kind. It is thus also entirely consistent with Policy HE10 regarding the effect of development on the setting of designated heritage assets.

- 6.9 Given that the proposed development does not ‘lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance’, Policy HE9.2 of the PPS does not apply to the proposal. The proposed scheme ‘deliver[s] substantial public benefits’ by altering and improving the house without damaging its key significance. The nature of the heritage asset does not ‘prevent all reasonable uses of the site’ – the original use is continued in the building. The proposed use is indeed a ‘viable use of the heritage asset... that will enable its conservation’, and will do so in the long term, not ‘medium term’. The idea of the ‘conservation [of 82 Highgate West Hill] through grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership’ is extremely unlikely and irrelevant. Finally, and for the multiple reasons provided here, earlier and in the Design & Access Statement, the relative - and negligible - ‘harm to or loss of the heritage asset’ that may be perceived is indeed ‘outweighed by the benefits of bringing the site back into use’.
- 6.10 By far the better measure of the proposed development is Policy HE9.4. the scheme clearly involves extremely little ‘harm’ to heritage assets, and it helps to ‘secure the optimum viable use of the heritage asset in the interests of its long-term conservation’.

Camden’s UDP

- 6.11 In positively addressing the requirements of PPS5, the proposal also meet the policy requirements of the UDP in relation to listed buildings. It would certainly *not* ‘cause harm to its special architectural or historic interest’ of 82 Highgate West Hill, nor does the scheme involve ‘the loss of important architectural features’ or significant ‘changes to the original plan form, layout or structural integrity of the building’. The scheme is consistent with policy B6.
- 6.12 Similarly, and for the reasons given earlier, the scheme as a whole ‘preserves or enhances the special character or appearance of the [Highgate Conservation Area]’ (Policy B7) and does not ‘cause harm to the setting of a listed

building' (Policy B6). The scheme does not involve demolition and rebuilding of the overall house in any real sense, but rather extensive intervention beneath the building.

Appendix A: Location

Not to scale



Current Ordnance Survey



Aerial photograph

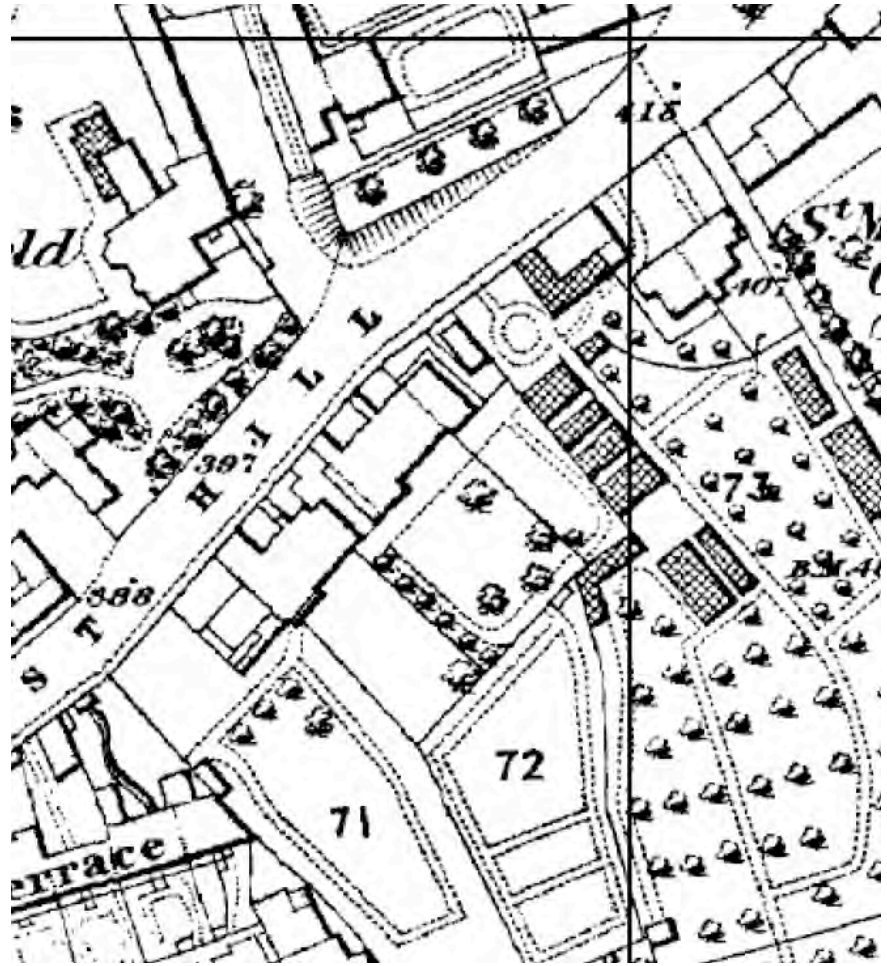








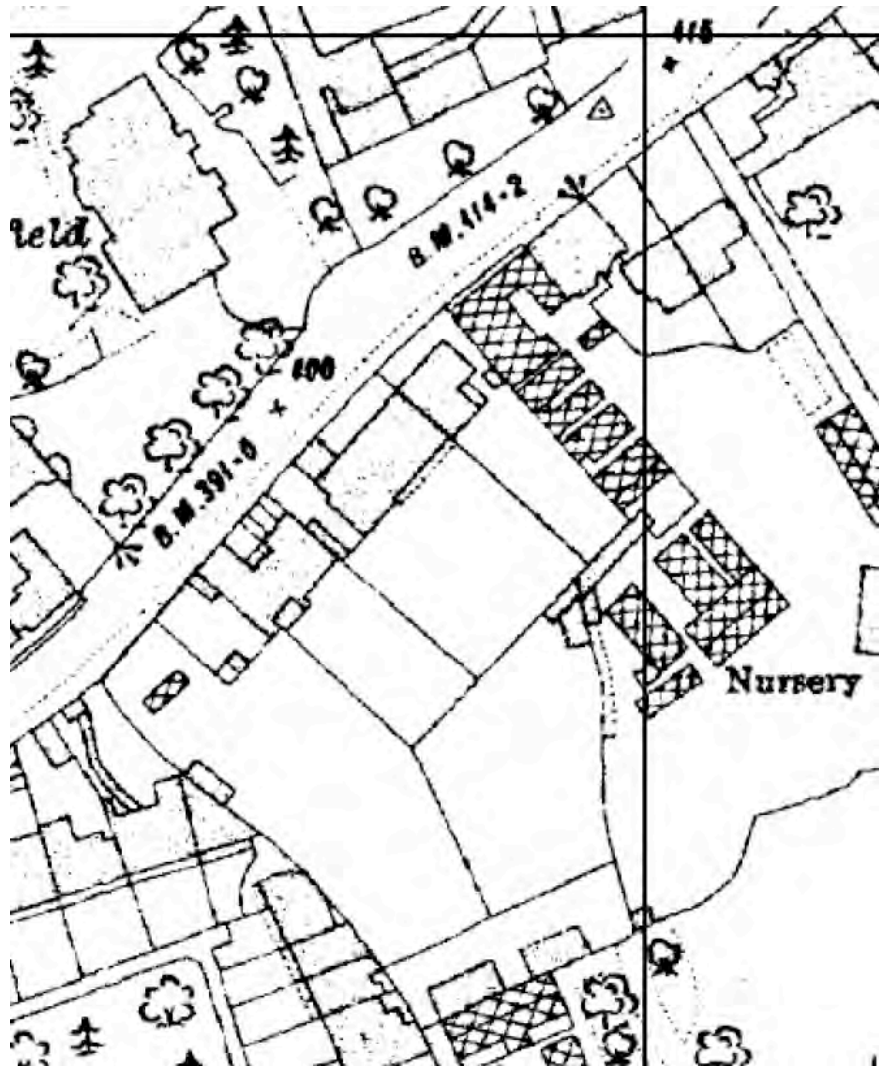
Appendix B: Historical maps



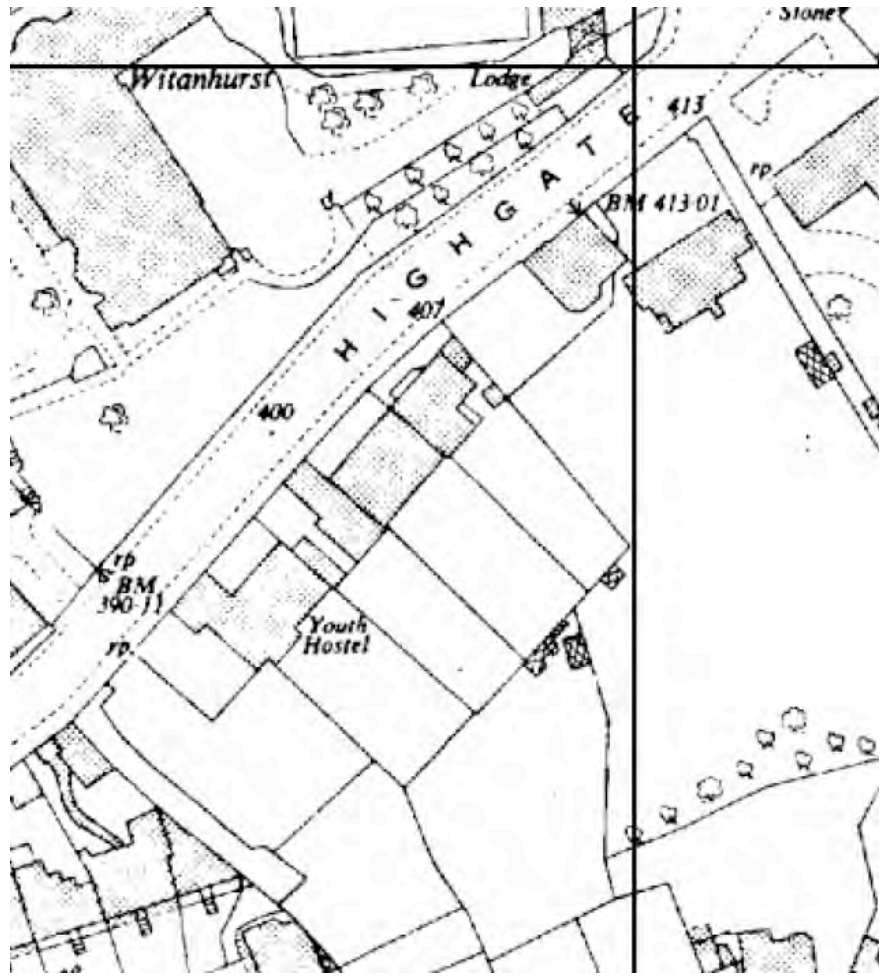
1873



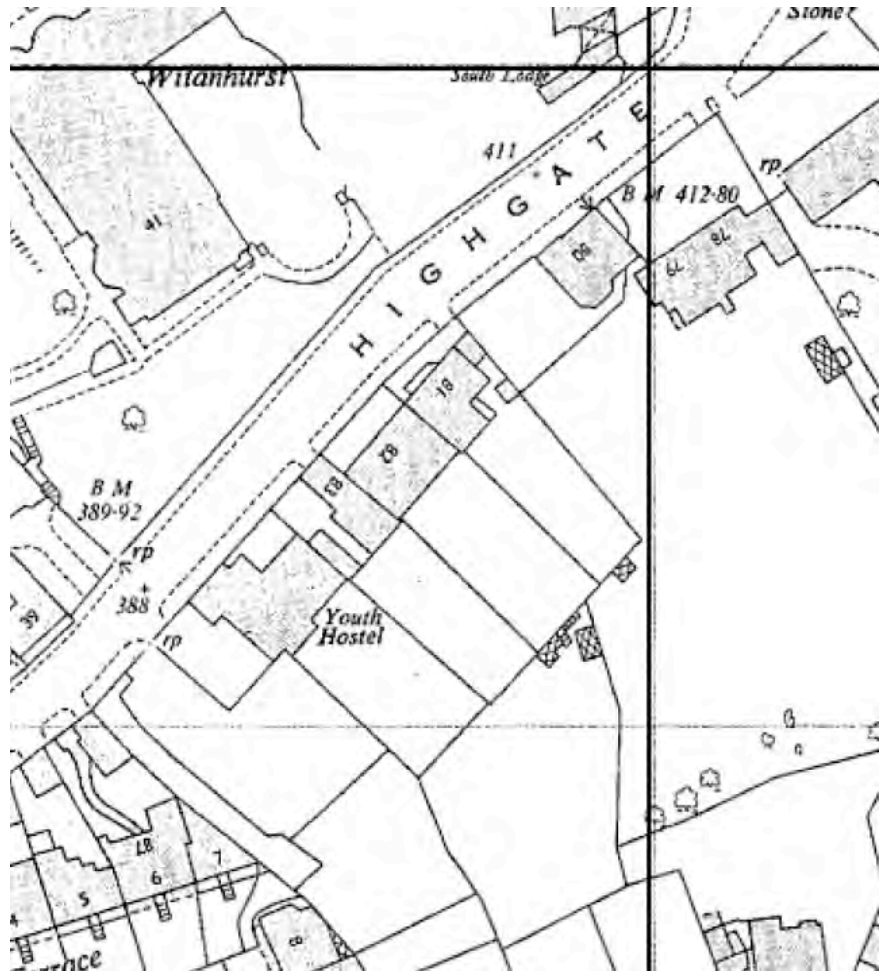
1896



1915



1953



1974

Appendix C: List description

TQ2887SW HIGHGATE WEST HILL

798-1/5/882 (East side)

14/05/74 Nos.81, 82 AND 83

(Formerly Listed as:

HIGHGATE WEST HILL

Nos.81-84 (Consecutive))

GV II

3 terraced houses. Nos 81 & 82 mid C18, originally one house on the site of a C16 house. By end of C18, it was 2 residences and No.83 added. 1823, Nos 82 & 83 became one house. Stucco. 3 storeys. 3 windows centre (No.82), each in arched recess extending through 1st and 2nd floor. 3 window projecting wing on north side (No.81). 1 window projecting wings on south side (No.83). No.82 with fluted Doric portico, reeded door surround, patterned fanlight with central lantern and panelled door. Garden front of 7 windows with continuous cast-iron balcony at 1st floor across 3 window centre on iron arched supports. Nos 81 & 82 have 2 very large chimneys, possibly from earlier house.

INTERIORS: No. 81 retains two early C19 rooms with cornices and fireplaces; later C19 room to side similarly complete. Rear wing of No. 81 c.1960 for C S Rothery, RAF pilot, a modern but not inappropriate addition. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached brick forecourt wall with entrances of coupled square columns and wrought-iron gates. HISTORICAL NOTE: No.81 was the home of Lewis Vulliamy, architect; the back garden believed to contain a probable ice well. (Survey of London: Vol. XVII, The Village of Highgate (Parish of St Pancras part I): London: -1936: 68).

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