

**Planning Appraisal Document for Re-model at 43-45 Fitzjohns Avenue, Hampstead,
London, NW3 5JU.**

December 2009

1.0 Introduction & Location

1.1 Introduction

This Planning Appraisal document accompanies an application for planning permission for Loham (UK) Ltd. for alterations to No.'s 43-45 Fitzjohns Avenue, Hampstead. No. 43-45 Fitzjohns Avenue is located within the Fitzjohns Netherhall Conservation Area within the London Borough of Camden.

This document outlines the architectural character of the building and the surrounding area. Allowing this to inform our design approach, we have developed a proposal which revitalises the current building, whilst respecting and enhancing the character of the Fitzjohn's and Netherhall Conservation Area.

This document should be read alongside the full set of application drawings. The assessment of this proposal is fully in accordance with the CABE guidance.

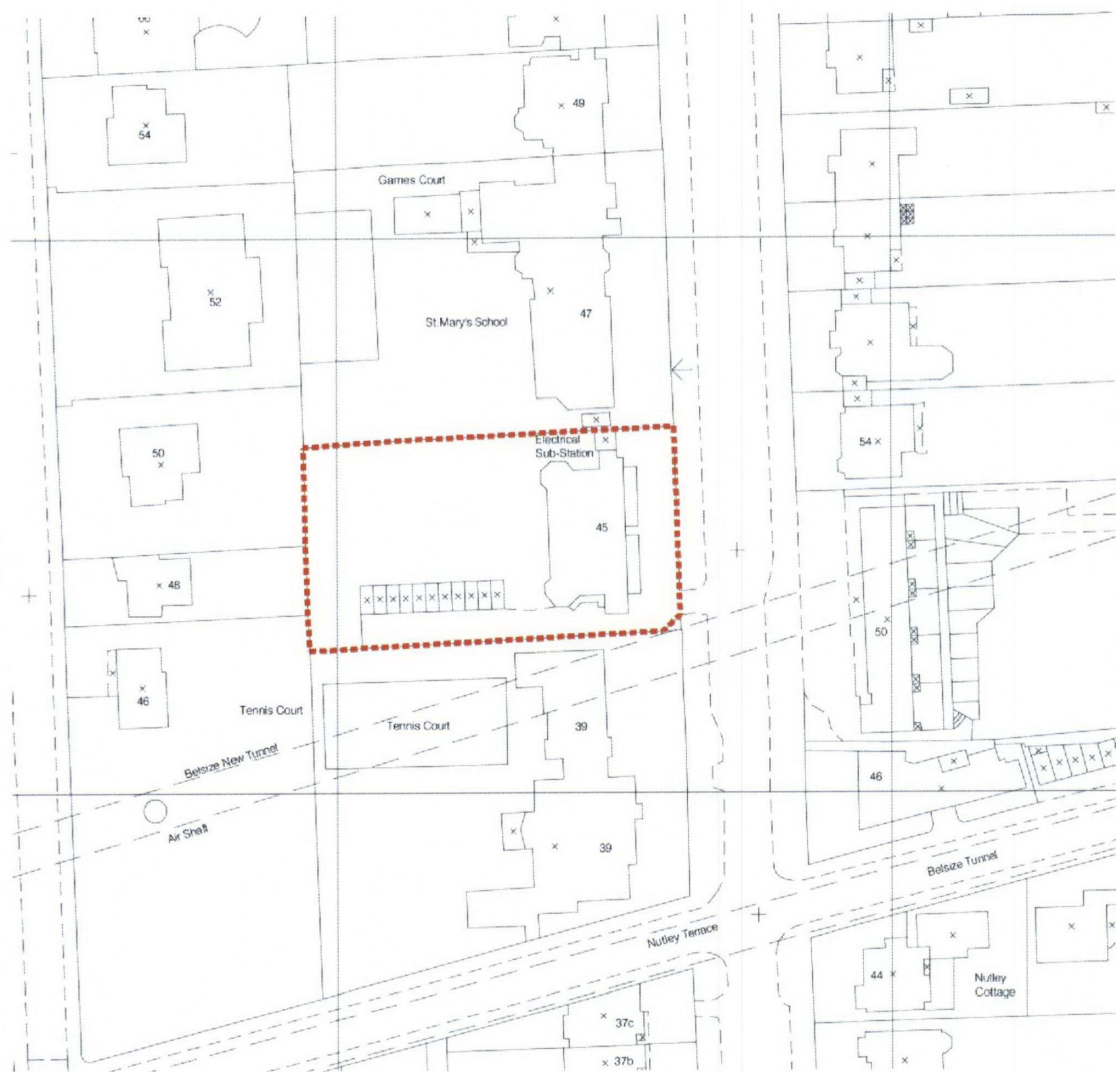
The application for this site should be read with the current approved application for this site for the erection of a new garden wall and gates to the front of the building. (Application number 2009/4332/P)

1.2 Location

No.'s 43-45 Fitzjohns Avenue is located within the Fitzjohns Netherhall Conservation Area within the London Borough of Camden. The site is situated to the southern area of Hampstead westerly of Fitzjohn's Avenue, with Nutley Terrace to the north of the site. The site is located within a residential area.

Transport to the site is quite accessible with Finchley Road and Swiss Cottage underground stations approximately 10 minutes walk. Finchley Road & Frognal rail station is approximately 12 minutes walk with a number of bus services running along Finchley Road and Fitzjohns Avenue.

1.3 Site Location Plan – 1:1250



1.4 Photographs



Photograph No.1 – view of building from street level



Photograph No.2 – view of building from rear of site



Photograph No.3 – view of building from the north west corner of the site



Photograph No.4 – view of building from the south east corner of the site

2.0 Appraisal No.'s 43-45 Fitzjohns Avenue & the surrounding area

2.1 Fitzjohns Avenue

With regard to character and appearance of the area Sub area: Fitzjohns, the Fitzjohns Netherhall Conservation Area statement states:

The design of Fitzjohns Avenue came from the grand vision of Spencer Wilson, with a 50ft wide road and 10ft pavement. Harpers magazine in 1883 called it "one of the noblest streets in the world". It was planted with alternate red and white chestnuts and the houses were set well back from the road with long front paths. Land agent, F.J.Clark advised the Maryon Wilsons to build the main roads and sewers and control the release of the land carefully. The north/south alignment of the roads was determined by building surveyor HR Newton's concern with convenient access between Swiss Cottage and Hampstead. The termination of the northern end of Fitzjohns Avenue raised problems where the impressive new road ended in a mass of alleys and courtyards. Town improvements were proposed to clear sums and rearrange roads and a public meeting was held in 1881 where traders on Hampstead High Street voiced concern about the new road causing loss of trade. A compromise was found and the north-west end of the High Street was demolished and widened, Heath Street was extended southwards and a new intersection created to make the link between Swiss Cottage and Hampstead.

Three railway tunnels lie under the area and also influenced the street lay out. The North London Railway (LNWR) made a tunnel between Hampstead Heath Station and Finchley Road and Frognal in 1860. East of Fitzjohns Avenue it runs under properties and their gardens but the northern end of Netherhall Gardens was designed to lie over the tunnel. The Midland Railway connection to St Pancras was opened in 1868, and the mile long Belsize Tunnel was created to link Haverstock Hill and Finchley Road. Nutley Terrace was required to run over the line of the tunnel, which explains its angle to Fitzjohns Avenue. The tunnel was not able to meet the railway's requirement and a second tunnel (known as the Belsize New Tunnel) was built in 1884. Airshafts to the tunnel are located at No.32 Belsize Lane, Copperbeach Close and the land adjacent to No.46 Maresfield Gardens.

The neighbourhood of Fitzjohns Avenue was built in ten years after 1876. The adjoining streets were slightly less spacious than Fitzjohns Avenue but all had large building plots with detached or semi-detached properties, and some had room for carriage drives. Netherhall

Gardens and Maresfield Gardens were named after a manor and parish of the Maryon Wilson estate in Sussex.

Architectural interest was increased as private individuals bought freeholds and commissioned architects, creating good quality one-off buildings. The area became popular with a community of artists, writers, social reformers and the medical profession. In the 1870's and 1880's the architecture that was popular included a variety of styles; Queen Anne revival, Arts and Crafts influenced by Norman Shaw, and Gothic. The freestyle of Victorian influences comes together in the Conservation Area.

The houses were of such a large size that letting became difficult and towards the end of the 1890's a number of girls schools opened, a trend that continues today, in properties that were originally designed as houses. Since the initial development there has been small-scale development in back-land sites in the 1920's and 1930's. A number of local authority housing schemes were built in the 1970's by the London Borough of Camden, on the sites of the demolished houses.

'The Hampstead:Frognaal and the Central Demense',A History of the County of Middlesex: Volume 9: Hampstead, Paddinton' states the following:

As early as 1871 F. J. Clark had suggested a new road direct to Hampstead and in 1872 Spencer Maryon Wilson was hoping to create a 'truly imposing road'. In 1875 he contracted with John Culverhouse, who since 1871 had been the tenant at will of the two main demesne farms, to make Fitzjohn's Avenue, from College Crescent off Finchley Road to Greenhill Road, and to plant ornamental trees. Most of the building land on either side was let under a single agreement to Herbert and Edward Kelly, speculative builders, although some plots were sold to individuals who commissioned architects. (fn. 60) Applications to build 70 houses in Fitzjohn's Avenue were made between 1877 and 1879; nos. 45 and 61 were built in 1878, the latter a low building with Dutch gables, designed by Richard Norman Shaw for the fashionable painter Edwin Long (1829-91). No. 47, designed by George Lethbridge, dated from 1880, as did nos. 53 and 55 (the Tower), which had 25 rooms; no. 6 (Three Gables) was built in 1881 by Shaw for the portrait painter Frank Holl (1845-88). In 1883 no. 1 (Oakwood Hall) was designed by J. J. Stevenson in red brick in a neo Dutch style and a drill hall was built for the Hampstead Volunteers near the junction with College Crescent.

Fitzjohn's Avenue was compared with Paris , its early inhabitants included Lloyds underwriters, ship-owners, auctioneers, silk manufacturers, a wine merchant, a director of Hull Docks, an

Arctic explorer, and an Islamic scholar. It was particularly popular with successful artists, who included John Pettie (1839-93) at the Lothians and Paul Falconer Poole (1807-79) at Uplands (no.75), built by T.K Green and described as 'elephantine Gothic with barge boarded gables'. The artists' houses were opened on Show Sunday, attracting, according to the novelist Sir Max Pemberton (1863-1950), who lived at no.56, those who 'should have been a source of inspiration....to the makers of fashion plates'. Another resident was the author James Cotter Morison (1832-88), who entertained Henry James and George Meredith at no.30.

2.2 Historical background to 43-45 Fitzjohns Avenue

No.'s 43-45 Fitzjohns Avenue date from the late 1890's. The houses appear to have been originally designed as a pair of red brick Gothic villas that in plan and elevation mirror each other. Taken individually, each property appears to have been designed as a self contained dwelling of approximately half the size of many of the more substantial houses on the street. The mirrored nature of the design, mean that when seen from a slightly oblique angle, the two individual houses would have appeared to be one much larger and more substantial dwelling. This arrangement might suggest the creation of an illusion of grandeur – perhaps a sort of compensation for being amongst the smaller houses on the stately Fitzjohn's Avenue.

2.3 Appearance and Character Appraisal of surrounding buildings

The architecture of the surrounding buildings includes a wide range of styles which comprise of Arts and Crafts, Classical Italianate, Domestic Revival, Jacobean, Modern, Neo-Gothic and Queen Anne. The buildings are highly detailed and elaborate which reflect the wealthy owners who lived on this affluent avenue. The buildings have been designed individually by various architects, however each retains the predominately used material of brick, and the roofscapes relay a similar height and roof pitch. With this in mind the avenue has a pleasant analogous feel.

Each house is individually proportioned to the long wide avenue with each dwelling being sparsely screened with mature Chestnut trees providing a residential feel to the area. The set back position and the large open breaks between the houses provide expansive views to the large trees and gardens of each house.

Sir Nikolaus Pevsner (1902 – 1983) states notes from his Buildings of England that Fitzjohn's Avenue is 'lined by substantial but only occasionally distinguished houses'. He mentions number 73 with alterations by Voysey, number 69 for C.Kemp Wild and number 61 designed

by Norman Shaw as being the most notable designs. English Heritage interestingly has chosen to list numbers no.1 (c.1883 J.J Stevenson), no.47 (1880 by George Lethbridge) which adjacent to the proposed site, no.55 (1880 J.T Wimperis) and no.61 (1878 by Norman Shaw). Due to the large size of the houses on Fitzjohn's Avenue, many were too large for single family dwellings. Many houses have been converted to multiple family apartments, including extensions to various houses.

2.4 Planning background to 43-45 Fitzjohns Avenue

In 1958 Planning permission for No.43-45 Fitzjohns Avenue was granted for a lower ground and ground floor infill between the two Gothic villas with a stepped access entrance canopy. An access corridor was incorporated on the second floor accessing the two buildings.

The addition of the lower ground floor entrance canopy altered the residential access from the north and south ends of the front elevation to the central axis of the building. The houses were then separated into 24 studio units, and later alterations separated the units into 48 units.

The original windows to the front facade were altered to include projecting bays, with new windows which disturbed the fenestration rhythm of the original design. A cladding feature of concrete hanging tile was incorporated to these bays, the second floor access corridor, and the ground floor entrance canopy.

The pre-application proposal advice received in 2002 commenting on proposals similar to those proposed in this application refers to No.45 as a building that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. It also states that the alterations made in the 1950's detract from the architectural integrity of the buildings, destroying the design and proportions of the facades by re-orientation the window alignment and infilling the gap between the buildings at second floor level, although the gap afforded at first floor level does provide a glimpse of the open spaces and trees to the rear. Any alterations to the existing buildings must preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of the conservation area. The advice also affirms that there is merit in stripping the alterations and additions which were made during the 1950's, this would be an opportunity to restore some of the features that were lost, such as the original fenestration and brickwork on the front elevation, rather than to introduce yet another modern form which could be equally as incongruous in the long term.

3.0 Proposals

3.1 Current Use of the house

The existing property comprises of two adjoining Gothic villas with 4 stories, which is currently used for Houses of Multiple Occupancies and office space used by the management agent. The number of self contained units is 24, the number of shared facility units is 24. There are 5 employees in the management agent office. The use of the property will remain as present, whilst the configuration will also remain.

3.2 Details of Proposals

Our proposals include the removal of the additions made in the 1950's, with the building being renovated and restored to as near original as is possible. The 1950's modifications to the existing properties change the scale and rhythm of the avenue. Often the extensions can change the location and hierarchies of crucial features such as entrances and fenestration. Such modifications often render important architectural compositions and decorative motifs meaningless. The proposals include the extension of the footprint to the rear of the building on the lower ground and ground floor levels, a glazed infill extension to the axis of the two buildings, material and fenestration alterations to the front and rear facades. This includes the following features to be removed:

- Removal of the second floor access corridor
- Removal of the lower ground and ground floor infill
- Removal of the ground floor entrance canopy
- Removal of the hanging tiles to the bay windows and similarly on the front and rear elevation
- Removal of the concrete steps to the ground floor entrance level

The proposals are confined to the exterior of the front and rear of the building. The proposals refurbish, restore and enhance the existing properties whilst improving the existing units and provide additional area for the ancillary management office. The proposals to extend various units are confined to the Units 1,4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17 South and 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17 North. This does not affect the use and layout of the building. The proposals do not impact on the neighbouring properties.

The rear elevation will be redesigned incorporating details typical of the original design. The lower ground and ground floors will be extended in depth with the internal arrangement remaining as current.

As we are removing the second floor corridor access we are proposing to include a communal lounge on the second floor which will retain the access across the two buildings and provide amenity space for the residents.

A glazed infill extension is proposed on the ground floor, first and second floor levels between the two main buildings to allow more space for the ancillary management office. This infill will replace the 1950's extension at lower ground and ground level and entrance canopy at ground floor level as well as the second floor bridge. This existing canopy appears incongruous to the building and is set too far forward of the existing building plane. The proposed infill will retain the existing lobby space and the residential access on the ground floor level will remain as the current layout.

The proposed glazed infill will be set back from the existing front and rear facades of the two main buildings and is positioned below the current eaves level and below the apex, allowing this addition to be subordinate to the main building and preserving the overall scale and rhythm of the current buildings. The proposals allow for access from the office to a terrace on the second floor. To prevent overlooking privacy screens will be included between the residential and office areas. The lightweight frameless glazing will allow views through the site retain the visual dominance of the garden. These elements were previously lost by the 1950's additions to the building. The glazed elements revitalise the architectural merit of these Gothic villas.

The scale and rhythm of the building is of utmost importance as well as retaining the views between the buildings. In our opinion it is important to delineate between the existing building and the proposed infill. This approach has been exemplified in the following images.

3.4 Examples of glazed infill's to existing buildings



By removing the 1950's additions the building will regain its architectural integrity and proportions returning the building to its original design. This includes replacing the hanging tile in the main bays sections on the front and rear elevation with brick in keeping with the original design. The windows in these bay areas will be replaced with windows which will match the original fenestration design, and returning the original window alignment to the building. In other areas where there is existing concrete hanging tile this will be replaced with clay hanging tile, similar to the existing roof tiles. This material will be more in keeping with the original architecture and help restore the architectural integrity of the buildings.

The existing heavy concrete staircase from the street level to the ground floor level will be replaced with a more traditional stone clad staircase with a masonry wall, with a lightweight glazed bridge and balustrade entering the building.

Replacing these additions with features which are comparable to the original design, it allows the building to regain the original design in keeping with the surrounding area, preserving and enhancing the special character and appearance of the conservation area. The proposals soften the existing altered situation, whilst restoring the features which were lost during the incongruous alterations and additions which were made during the 1950's. The re-modelling will restore many of the features lost during the work completed in the 1950's. The proposed changes will not affect the setting of this building.

3.4 **Amount**

The accommodation remains as current, with an increase in unit size totalling 169.2m² to the residential accommodation to the rear of the building on the lower ground and ground floor levels. An increase to the ancillary office accommodation of 83m² is proposed with an infill extension between the two Gothic villas on the ground, first and second floor.

3.5 **Scale:**

The proposals retain the height, and width of the existing building and the space between the existing buildings, without imposing in any way on the existing adjacent buildings. The proposals include the depth of the building being to be increased with 2 rear extensions. These will not be visible from the street view. There are no proposals to alter the scale of the existing buildings, and the relationship to the surrounding environment will not be affected.

3.6 **Access:**

There are two existing access locations to this site and these will remain as the current layout. The entrances will align with the locations of the new gates in the Approved Planning application (application number 2009/4332/P) for the erection of a new garden wall boundary treatment and gate to the front elevation fronting Fitzjohns Avenue.

3.7 **Landscaping:**

The proposals include the removal of 2 trees to the rear of the site. The proposals do not impact on the current landscaping; the current layout will be retained.

3.8 **Appearance:**

The overall main appearance of the building will remain as current, with the addition of a frameless glazing infill between the two Gothic villas. The proposals include a material change to the front and rear elevations from concrete hanging tile to brick, the existing windows to the bays on the front and rear elevations will be replaced with windows which are similar to the original fenestration design, the hanging tile will be replaced with a clay hanging tile which is more in keeping with the existing materials. Along with these proposals and the removal of the heavy additions from the 1950's additions, the appearance of the building will be allowed to return to its original manifestation.

3.9 **Refuse:**

The Refuse strategy will remain as current.