

PLANNING STATEMENT

Witanhurst House, Highgate West Hill,
London

Application for Listed Building Consent
and Planning Permission for removal of
service wing and consequential
remodelling of front façade (residential)
and forecourt reinstatement and
landscaping. Construction of 'Orangery'
building providing residential
accommodation as part of Witanhurst
House with linking building, terrace,
garden retaining walls and landscaping
of eastern garden plus permanent
vehicular access from Highgate West
Hill

On Behalf of Safran Holdings Ltd

July 2009

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APPENDICES

- (1) Application scheme drawings (Application references LEX0000129 and PEX0000128) - April 2001
 - (2) Make - Witanhurst Pre-planning meeting document – August 2008
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement explains the reasons for the proposed demolition of the service wing to Witanhurst House and the construction of a new structure to provide additional residential accommodation as part of the house. In association, this application proposes the remodelling of the front façade, the creation of a new vehicular access and redesigned forecourt, as will be discussed in more detail in Section 3.
- 1.2 This application forms one part of the comprehensive regeneration programme for Witanhurst House, for which a number of applications have already been made to the Local Planning Authority and further applications will follow.
- 1.3 The proposed new Orangery-style building provides ancillary residential accommodation in a design which is subordinate to Witanhurst House.
- 1.4 As will be discussed in the accompanying Design and Access and Heritage Statements, the Orangery building is of a much reduced scale in comparison to the service wing and represents a sensitive addition to the listed building as part of a wider scheme to allow the house to be brought back into use as a single family home.
- 1.5 These development proposals are concurrent with an application seeking permission for basement development and each should be considered in association in order to appreciate the full extent of the comprehensive restoration proposals for the house and gardens.
- 1.6 This report provides an overview of the application proposals, the background to Witanhurst House, followed by consideration of the

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

2 BACKGROUND AND VISION

- 2.1 Witanhurst is Grade II* Listed house within the grounds of which are structures listed as Grade II. The property has a lengthy history, dating from probable origins in the late 17th Century/early 18th Century and with extensions and changes implemented at different stages; with the most recent dating from the early 20th Century. The current form of the house is largely a product of these later works.
- 2.2 The property has been used residentially for most of its life, but has not been occupied as such since the mid 1970's. Since that time there has been incidental use for commercial purposes, albeit without planning consents, and proposals for alteration and change of use for non residential use. The erratic nature of the uses of the last 30 years, coupled with the failure to find a commercially viable and planning acceptable development option, has resulted in neglect which has caused the building and its grounds to deteriorate. Where repairs have been effected, these have often been poorly carried out, with unsympathetic materials.
- 2.3 Consequent upon the property's circumstances, Witanhurst was placed on the English Heritage Buildings at Risk Register.
- 2.4 In 2008, the property was acquired by new owners with a more positive approach to the building. The owners wish to continue to use the site as a family home, in line with its original use, and to restore the house and remaining grounds. This restoration will be fully sympathetic to the property and will also introduce additional accommodation and features necessary to create a contemporary home.
- 2.5 This application, alongside other planning and Listed Building Consent applications represents an initial phase of facilitating works
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to enable the comprehensive restoration of Witanhurst House and gardens to allow the building to be used as a single family dwelling as it was originally intended. These facilitating applications are essential to the entirety of the future restoration of Witanhurst House, which would not be possible should permission for these initial applications be withheld.

- 2.6 The full extent of the proposed restoration works have been developed as a result of discussion with both Camden Planning Officer's and English Heritage to ensure the best possible outcome for Witanhurst House, its landscape and Highgate Conservation Area.
- 2.7 The remaining applications seeking consent for the comprehensive works are currently being refined and the submission of these applications to Camden Council will be phased over the next few months. Together the applications that will be submitted represent a dedicated commitment by the owner to achieve the best possible restoration of Witanhurst House and grounds.
- 2.7 As mentioned above, Witanhurst House is listed on the Heritage at Risk Register. The building is considered to be in poor condition as a consequence of rainwater ingress due to localised roof failures due to poor quality repairs throughout the life of the property. The current owner of Witanhurst has already heavily invested in securing the future of Witanhurst House and has commenced the extensive works required to repair the roof and building to prevent further deterioration.
- 2.9 The proposals seek to restore Witanhurst House in its current context. Parts of the original grounds to the house were sold for development many years ago and the property now requires reintegrating with its remaining land and gardens. Landscaping proposals will sensitively respect and restore the listed garden

structures found at Witanhurst as well as visually connect the property back to the Heath as was originally intended.

- 2.10 The Council's Conservation Area Statement notes that Witanhurst House is at risk as no viable use had been found. However, the new ownership provides the clear opportunity for viable reuse in line with the building's original function and it is hoped that the Council and other interested parties will welcome the planning submissions.

3 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 The varied planning history of Witanhurst House clearly demonstrates attempts made by the previous owners of the property to find a viable use for the building.
- 3.2 Information available indicates the property ceased to be used as a single family dwelling prior to 1961 when permission was granted for the continued use of part of the building as a flat and two maisonettes (Application reference TP1333). This was followed in 1973 by an application to convert the house into a private hospital. This application was subsequently withdrawn (Application reference CTB/B10/5/A/17218).
- 3.3 More recently, in September 1999, an application seeking the change of use of the building to a conference centre was approved which included works to renovate the house (Application references LE9800453 and PE9800452). A s.106 agreement was completed to secure the restoration of the gardens and garden structures, in addition to a historical study, survey of the existing landscape, tree survey and programme of maintenance. The consent was not implemented and the requirements of the s.106 agreement were not met. The granting of the scheme, contrary to adopted policies in place at the time which required the retention of residential floorspace, was on the basis that the conference centre use could be implemented whilst retaining the building's interior intact and secure the renovation and maintenance of the building and gardens.
- 3.4 Ongoing interest in the change of use of the building for commercial purposes resulted in applications seeking permission for a hotel, conference centre, restaurant and associated leisure facilities, although these were refused by the Local Planning Authority in April 2001 (Application references LEX0000129 and PEX0000128). Application drawings of the scheme are included at Appendix One

indicating the need for a large extension to accommodate modern leisure facilities to support this use. Whilst a large building, Witanhurst was obviously unsuited to the housing of this necessary accommodation within the listed property and significant expansion was found necessary.

- 3.5 Following this refusal a number of temporary permissions have been granted for the use of the building as a television studio. However, an application seeking permission to use the building for a private one day event was refused in June 2004 on two grounds of increased traffic generation and long term maintenance of the building as follows:

'In the light of the previous history of events on the premises, the use of the building to hold a private event, without a concurrent benefit to the building's fabric, interior or setting, has both short term and long term implications for securing the permanent use and future of the building, particularly with reference to whether it is likely that the residential use will ever be recommenced. The proposal is therefore considered to have an adverse impact on the repair, maintenance and character of the Grade 2 listed building and its structures contrary to policies EN1 (General environmental protection and improvement) and EN39 (Use of listed buildings) of the London Borough of Camden Unitary Development Plan 2000.'* (Decision Notice, Reason for Refusal One – Application Reference 2004/2716/P).

- 3.6 It would appear clear from the above reason for refusal that the Council had, by 2004, determined that temporary uses for the building did not offer an adequate solution for the restoration and security of the future of the house and gardens.
- 3.7 Finally, applications for the renewal of the consent for the change of use of the building to a conference centre were submitted in June 2004, including works to renovate the grounds (Application references – 2004/2364/L and 2004/2360/P). Additional,

information was sought by the Council which was not forthcoming and the application remains undetermined.

- 3.8 Of the varied planning history, as detailed above, a number of the applications were refused and, whilst some of the applications were permitted, they were not implemented. Despite a long and varied history of planning applications no scheme has been forthcoming which has restored and secured the future of Witanhurst House.
- 3.9 All of the applications seeking a permanent and ongoing solution for the property have proposed some degree of new build development. Consistent throughout the proposals for the property is the need for certain works in order to ensure the structure operates successfully as a building and within its grounds. In the past, proposals have incorporated, to varying degrees, new floorspace at basement level to provide required accommodation, leisure facilities and to introduce open space/terracing around the property to link the house to the garden and to allow users of the building an immediate external space.
- 3.10 To this end, as most recently as August 2008, proposals were developed by the last owners and their comprehensive professional team to restore the property and its grounds and as the basis for pre-application discussions with the Council. Relevant extracts of the document are provided at Appendix 2. It is clear from the finding of this feasibility study that, in order for the house to be able to function, new facilities would be needed and Witanhurst House requires more than just restoration for it to become acceptable living or commercial accommodation.
- 3.11 Two options were considered by the previous owner, a single family dwelling or hotel use. However, fundamental to both of these proposals was the incorporation of enabling development to fund the restoration of the building and its grounds, in the form of a

number of 'holiday villas'. The option to restore the house for use as a single family dwelling required the construction of seven villas in the lower garden to subsidise the restoration. In order to provide funding to facilitate the reuse of the house as a hotel five villas would be required to be constructed in the grounds.

- 3.12 It is very clear from the professional team advising the last owner that they did not expect to find a viable or realistic option which allowed restoration of the house, nor its use as a single family dwelling, without the need for substantial development in the grounds to provide cross-funding.

4 APPLICATION PROPOSALS

4.1 These application proposals seek listed building consent and planning permission for the removal of the later addition service wing to allow the building of ancillary residential accommodation in order to facilitate the use of the building as a single family home.

4.2 This application comprises the following elements:

- Demolition of the service wing and forecourt wall
- Remodelling of the front façade following demolition of the service wing
- Construction of a new Orangery-style building to provide residential accommodation, with linking building to the main house and associated garden.
- Reinstatement of part of the forecourt following removal of the service wing and comprehensive landscaping including forecourt pavilions and associated wall structures
- Permanent vehicular access from Highgate West Hill

4.3 Advice was sought at an early stage from both English Heritage and Camden Council Conservation and Planning Officers and guidance received has been incorporated into the finalised proposals.

4.4 Witanhurst House cannot be considered in the same manner as other application proposals to extend residential properties but should be approached as an individual case given its size and format.

4.5 As a result of its design and grandeur the House does not provide suitable family accommodation in its present form. Whilst the new owners of the property intend to retain the house as it was

originally designed and restore the building to the highest standard, the format and scale of the property are not conducive to everyday living. The Orangery building is needed to provide additional residential accommodation more capable of meeting contemporary domestic needs.

- 4.6 The removal of the service wing in order to allow the construction of the Orangery building results in the need to reconstruct part of the front elevation of the house. Consideration of the fenestration sequencing and format of the frontage has been discussed with English Heritage and Camden Council. The application submission seeks to balance the design of the front façade as a whole and follows the consideration of a number of possible solutions.
- 4.7 The remaining elements of the application comprise works in order to complete the setting of the Orangery building and ensure its successful connection with the listed building and surrounding grounds. Restoration of the area of the forecourt revealed following the demolition of the service wing is also proposed and incorporated in wider plans for the redesign and landscaping of the forecourt. In addition, the forecourt will benefit from a new permanent vehicular access from Highgate West Hill.
- 4.8 This statement is accompanied by the following supporting documents to provide a full and informed assessment to the design and construction of the application scheme:
- Full scheme drawings
 - Landscape context plan
 - Forecourt landscape proposals
 - Schedule of works
 - Construction management statement
 - Design and Access and Heritage Statement
 - Tree survey, plan and statement

- Building history background document
- Structural Stability Report
- Hydrology Report
- Sustainability Statement
- Archaeological Report

5 PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy

PPG15 – Planning and the Historic Environment

- 5.1 Planning Policy Guidance 15 sets out national policy guidance for the protection of historic buildings and conservation areas. Whilst the accompanying Heritage Statement addresses PPG15 in detail in respect of design, demolition and historic environment considerations, this report takes account of relevant PPG15 development control policies and the role of the planning system in protecting buildings of historic importance.
- 5.2 The key sentiment throughout PPG15 is the requirement for local planning authorities when exercising conservation area and listed building controls to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area and building in question.
- 5.3 Paragraph 2.11 provides clear guidance on the importance of seeking early consultation with the local planning authority on development proposals affecting listed buildings and their setting and that this consultation should extend to English Heritage.
- 5.4 Guidance at Paragraph 2.12 goes on to state that it is preferable for applications for planning permission and listed building consent to be considered concurrently wherever possible.
- 5.5 PPG15 sets out the following issues as being relevant to the consideration of all listed building consent applications:

- (i) the importance of the building, its intrinsic architectural and historic interest and rarity, in both national and local terms
- (ii) the particular physical features of the building which justify its inclusion in the list
- (iii) the building's setting and its contribution to the local scene
- (iv) the extent to which the proposed works would bring substantial benefits for the community, in particular by contributing to..... the enhancement of its environment.

5.6 PPG15 also specifically deals with the most appropriate use of listed buildings and considers the best way of securing the upkeep of historic buildings is to retain them in active use (Paragraph 3.8). Following this, Paragraph 3.10 determines that the best use for a building is that for which it was originally designed and the continuation or reinstatement of that use should be the first option when considering the future of the structure. On this basis, it is recognised that many listed buildings can sustain some degree of sensitive alteration or extension to accommodate continuing uses (Paragraph 3.13).

5.7 It is also stated at Paragraph 3.13 that the merit of some new alterations or additions, especially where they are generated within a secure and committed long term ownership, should not be discounted.

Camden Replacement Unitary Development Plan

5.8 The amenity of occupiers and neighbours is protected through Policy SD6 of the UDP which requires the Local Planning Authority to have consideration of the following factors when assessing development proposals:

- (a) visual privacy and overlooking
- (b) sunlight and daylight levels
- (c) artificial light levels
- (d) noise and vibration levels
- (e) odour, fumes and dust
- (f) the adequacy of facilities for storage, recycling and disposal of waste
- (g) microclimate.

5.9 Policies specific to residential development are provided in Section 2 of the UDP. The loss of residential floorspace is resisted by Policy H3 as far as practicable and reasonable.

5.10 The main aims of the UDP in relation to the built environment are to enhance and protect the environment and encourage sensitive changes as well as promote the highest possible standards of design in the Borough (Paragraph 3.2). Policy B1 prescribes a number of general design principles to ensure a high standard of design is achieved. Each of these criterion are considered in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

5.11 Policy B3 provides specific guidance relating to alterations and extensions and details the considerations the Local Planning Authority will have when considering such applications, as follows:

- (a) the form, proportions and character of the building and its setting, including the garden and nearby trees, are respected
- (b) extensions are subordinate to the original building in terms of scale and situation
- (c) original features are retained or restored
- (d) high quality materials that match or complement existing materials are used

- (e) unsympathetic alterations or extension are removed or improved
- (f) the architectural integrity of the existing building is preserved
- (g) building services equipment is appropriately located

5.12 Also of relevance is Policy B6 relating to listed buildings in the Borough. Following the sentiments of PPG15, Policy B6 requires the preservation and enhancement of the character of listed buildings. It is stated that the Council will only grant listed building consent for alterations and extensions to listed buildings where it considers this would not cause harm to the special interest of the building.

5.13 Paragraph 3.59 goes on to echo the guidance in PPG15 recommending that wherever possible listed buildings should be used as originally intended and should be retained in active use.

5.14 The UDP also aims to protect the conservation areas located throughout the borough. As such, Policy seeks to resist development that would cause harm to the conservation area's character, appearance or setting.

5.15 Witanhurst House and its grounds are designated as an area of private open space, as allocated on the Proposals Map and Policy N2. Permission will not be granted for the development of private open space unless it is for development ancillary to a use taking place on the land for which there is a demonstrable need that cannot be reasonably satisfied elsewhere.

Camden Planning Guidance (2006)

5.16 Camden Supplementary Guidance provides advice on a number of considerations. Specifically, Section 10 sets out general guidance

relating to conservation areas and the Council's requirement to preserve and enhance their character and appearance and to control and manage change.

5.17 Section 11 of the guidance deals with development involving demolition and construction within the Borough. A Construction Management Statement submitted in support of this application takes account of this particular guidance.

5.18 Of particular relevance in this case is guidance relating to extensions and alterations in Section 19 of the document. The guidance relates directly to UDP policies B3 – alterations and extension, SD6 – amenity for occupiers and neighbours, B6 – listed buildings and B7- conservation areas, as set out above. General advice is provided in respect of residential extensions to the side and rear of residential properties.

5.19 Section 26 of the guidance goes on to provide general information on listed buildings relating directly to policy B6 of the adopted UDP and PPG15.

Highgate Conservation Area Appraisal (December 2007)

5.20 The Highgate Conservation Area Appraisal intends to set out a clear indication of the Council's approach to the preservation and enhancement of the area, to be used by the Council in the assessment of all development proposals.

5.21 The appraisal makes specific reference to Witanhurst House, considering the property to be at risk as no viable use had been found for it at the time the Appraisal was published in December 2007.

5.22 The property falls within Fitzroy Park sub area and the document provides a brief description of the house and its associated entrance lodges and gardens. It is noted that the house is fast deteriorating due to vacancy and has, consequently, been listed on the English Heritage Buildings at Risk Register for a number of years.

5.23 Arising from the lack of maintenance, Witanhurst's buildings and structures are recorded as detracting from the character of the Conservation Area.

6 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 Witanhurst House is now in new ownership and the owner proposes to restore the house and grounds in full and to the highest standards. The building has been empty for a number of years and has, for some time, been showing very clear signs of deterioration.
- 6.2 Taking account of the location of the application site within Highgate Village conservation area as well as being a Grade II* listed building in its own right, the impact of the application proposals against pertinent planning policies is considered below.
- 6.3 In pre-application discussions, Planning Officers from Camden Council and English Heritage have supported the reuse of the building as a single family dwelling in line with the recommendations set out in PPG15. Specifically, advice from Camden considered the 'scale and position of the proposed Orangery in relation to the main house.....to be appropriate.' In addition, the classical design approach which does not necessarily replicate the features of the existing building is also considered to be appropriate.
- 6.4 Without improvements to the accommodation via the works contained within this and other applications, the house will not provide living accommodation suitable for modern family life and its ongoing use as such will be jeopardised. While Witanhurst is a large house, many of its principle rooms are unsuitable for day-to-day domestic use. Given their value as part of the building's character and quality, it is not proposed to adapt these for residential purposes but, rather, to restore them but also add further accommodation to meet the owner's needs. This comprises an extension in an Orangery-style building and a larger basement under the forecourt; the latter being the subject of a separate application.
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- 6.5 By everyday standards, Witanhurst is a large house but the modern day domestic needs of the family which is able to fund its restoration and future maintenance are not 'everyday' and are not already provided for or capable of being incorporated within the building in its current form. Investment in the listed building and grounds is an integral part of the package of works to create the home required by the owners but the whole package is needed for any part of the works to proceed. The series of applications proposing the package of works are all required by the owner for major investment to take place.
- 6.6 The house will be comprehensively restored to its original standard following approval of listed building consent for internal alterations, an application for which has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority. The Orangery building offers accommodation that cannot feasibly be provided in the original building whilst allowing the main rooms and their architectural features to be retained intact. The proposed new build residential accommodation provides contemporary living accommodation whilst negating the need to install the required services and infrastructure to the fabric of the original house to its detriment.
- 6.7 The application proposals represent a clear opportunity to bring the property back into use as it was originally intended as advocated in PPG15. Not only do the proposals facilitate the best possible use for the building to be reinstated but also represent the highest quality of design and construction methods for carrying out the works. Considering the lack of viable alternatives and the level of disrepair the building has fallen into, this opportunity cannot be overlooked.
- 6.8 The application proposals are clear in their intention to protect and enhance the setting of Witanhurst House as a listed building and the surrounding conservation area. In this respect the scheme is consistent with the overarching intentions of PPG15 and the
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strategic objectives relating to the built environment set out in the adopted UDP.

- 6.9 Taking into account the relevant planning policy set out above, the various elements of the application are considered in turn and demonstrated as acceptable.

Demolition of Service Wing

- 6.10 Whilst the service wing forms part of the listed structure it is of little value to the main body of the listed building, its setting or the wider conservation area and its removal has been accepted as appropriate during consultation with English Heritage and Camden Council.
- 6.11 During pre-application discussions with both English Heritage and Camden Council it has been confirmed that the removal of the service wing does not constitute substantial demolition (as per paragraphs 3.16 to 3.19 of PPG15) but, rather, an alteration (as per paragraphs 3.12 to 3.15 of PPG15).
- 6.12 Further advice provided by Camden in May 2009 established that 'the removal of the later annex is not considered to be contentious in principle and there is ample scope for the provision of the proposed Orangery without this compromising the setting of the main building.'
- 6.13 PPG15 requires proposals for alterations to be gauged against the special interest of the building. An assessment of the building's special qualities is contained in the Heritage Statement of Robert Adam Architects, as a review of the implications of the removal of the service wing. This concludes that the wing is not critical to the value of the building as a whole and that its removal will have the positive effect of re-establishing a complete façade and forecourt design.

- 6.14 Policy guidance in PPG15 does not rule out alterations to listed buildings and finds that some alternatives may have merit in their own right. We would argue that the opening up of a complete and balanced frontage to Witanhurst is such a positive product of the proposed alteration.
- 6.15 PPG15 rightly recommends that achieving a 'proper balance' between change and the special interest of a listed building must be based on specialist expertise and the application has followed this requirement by the instruction of Robert Adam Architects which is extremely experienced in such projects. RAA has advised not only on the removal of the service wing but also on the replacement façade, the new Orangery and forecourt pavilions which are also contained within this application – showing an integrity of design approach respecting the listed status of Witanhurst.
- 6.16 A full construction management statement is provided as well as a structural report to demonstrate that the demolition of this part of the building can be carried out with no harm to the remaining listed building. Together the construction management plan and schedule of works detail the sustainable and sensitive manner in which the works will be carried out.
- 6.17 In addition, the heritage and conservation considerations are addressed in the accompanying supporting statements by Robert Adam Architects.

Orangery

- 6.18 As discussed above the Orangery building allows the property to be used as a family home, which would not be possible without the additional accommodation. In line with the recommendations of PPG15 the adaptation of the building in this manner will secure the

upkeep of the house and keep it in its intended use as a single residence. To ensure that this can happen and to facilitate the continued use of the building, PPG15 recognises that some degree of adaptation may be necessary and can be acceptable.

- 6.19 In comparison to the service wing the Orangery building offers a reduced mass and footprint of development in this particular area of the site, as demonstrated by the accompanying application scheme drawings.
- 6.20 The benefits of the Orangery building in terms of design, impact on the conservation area and the amenity of neighbours is considered in detail in the accompanying Design and Access and Heritage Statements.
- 6.21 In this respect, taking account of each of the specific requirements of Policy SD6 of the UDP the application proposals represent no harm to the amenity of neighbours but instead the Orangery development provides an improvement to the existing situation.
- 6.22 Whilst not all of the requirements of Policy SD6 are relevant in this particular case, each has been considered in detail in the accompanying Design and Access Statement by Robert Adam Architects as well as the proposed scheme drawings. Specifically, the Orangery building is greatly reduced in height compared to the existing service wing benefitting neighbours by reducing opportunities for overlooking and improving privacy.
- 6.22 It is noted that Witanhurst House is located within an area of private open space, the loss of which is protected by Policy N2. The size of the replacement building sits in a reduced footprint compared to that of the Service Wing and, therefore, in fact results in the creation of open space around the proposed Orangery building. In any event, the building is ancillary to the main house

and cannot be accommodated off site. The proposal is, therefore, compliant with the policy.

6.23 Further, the Orangery building does not detract from the openness of the open space. Instead, the reduced height of the Orangery building in comparison to the existing service wing will allow enhanced views through the site, particularly so from the forecourt area.

6.24 The Orangery proposals also include the landscaping of the East Garden immediately adjacent to the Orangery building. The Landscape Design Statement and accompanying proposed landscape drawings provided by Michael Balston Company provide details of the design principles for this element of the application proposals.

6.25 The Council's requirements to ensure alterations and extensions to properties do not cause harm to the architectural quality of the existing building or the surrounding area, as set out in Policy B3, have been taken into account in the development of the application proposals. The accompanying Design and Access and Heritage Statements deal with each of the considerations in detail, although the following summarises how the proposed development meets each of the requirements of Policy B3:

- (a) the form, proportions and character of the building and its setting, including the garden and nearby trees, are respected – the proposed Orangery building will sit within an established and restored garden with the associated terrace providing a successful connection between the building and garden. Full account has been taken of the setting of the listed building and conservation area when developing the proposals to ensure the character of each is preserved.

- (b) extensions are subordinate to the original building in terms of scale and situation – the supporting context drawings and perspective images clearly indicate the subordinate and ancillary nature of the Orangery building in the context of Witanhurst House. As discussed above the Orangery is also of a reduced scale in comparison to the service wing, particularly in terms of height.
- (c) original features are retained or restored – the proposed construction of the Orangery does not require intrusive works to the listed building and as such all original features are, therefore, maintained.
- (d) high quality materials that match or complement existing materials are used – the demolition of the service wing will be completed in such a way to enable the bricks to be reused for the construction of the Orangery. Whilst a time consuming approach this will ensure the building blends with the existing house and also represents the most sustainable construction technique.
- (e) unsympathetic alterations or extensions are removed or improved – as discussed above and confirmed in the Heritage and Design and Access Statements the removal of the service wing will allow the realignment of the front façade of the original house and the construction of a more in keeping and sensitive ancillary residential accommodation.
- (f) the architectural integrity of the existing building is preserved – a full design justification has been provided by Robert Adam Architects in support of the application in order to demonstrate the preservation and enhancement

of the character and setting of the house. The Orangery structure is intended to complement the house and is to be read as an integral part of the building.

- (g) building services equipment is appropriately located – where it has been considered there is an overriding need for service equipment, the infrastructure has been incorporated as an integral and concealed feature of the building.

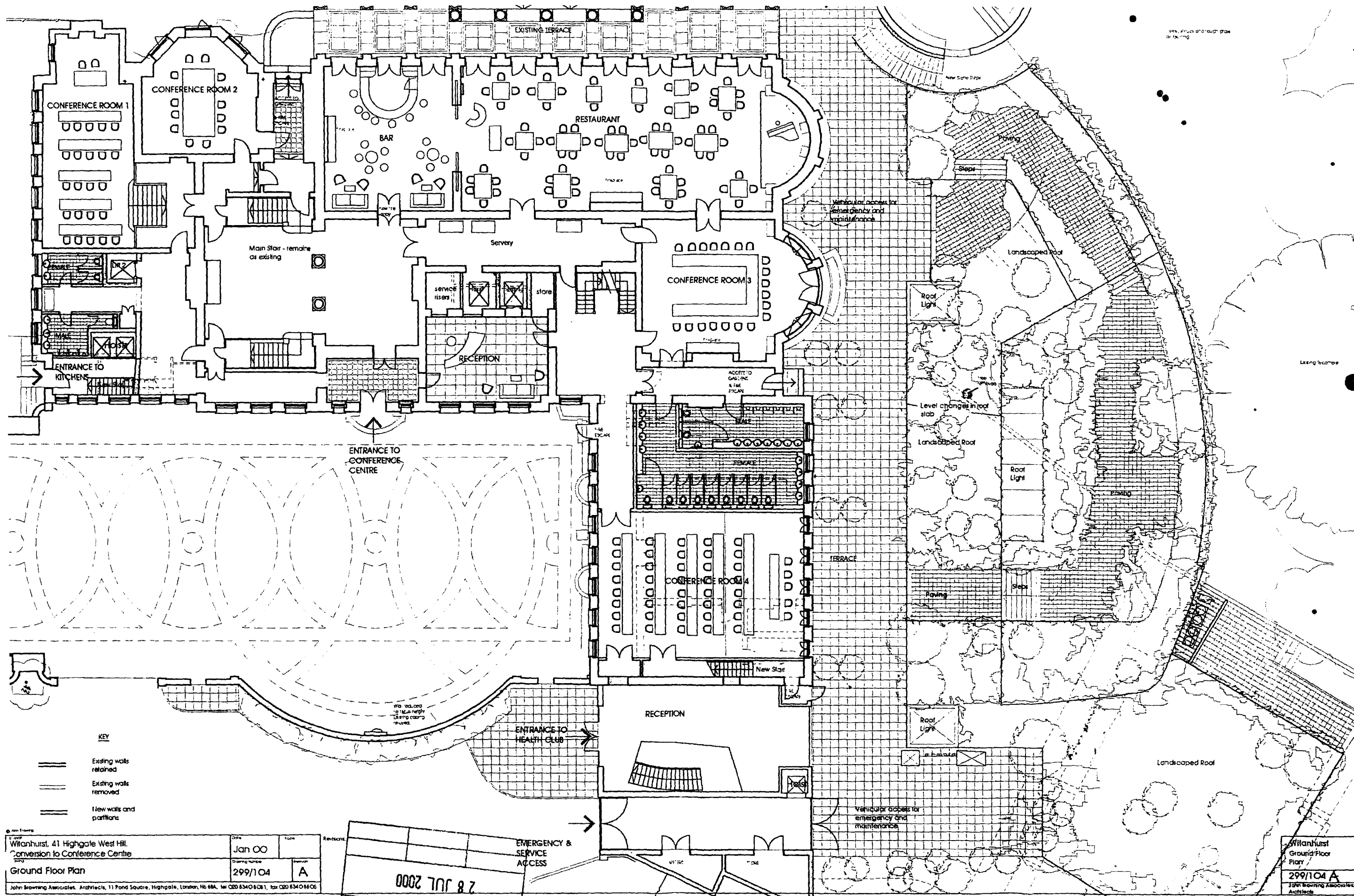
Works to the Front Façade of the House

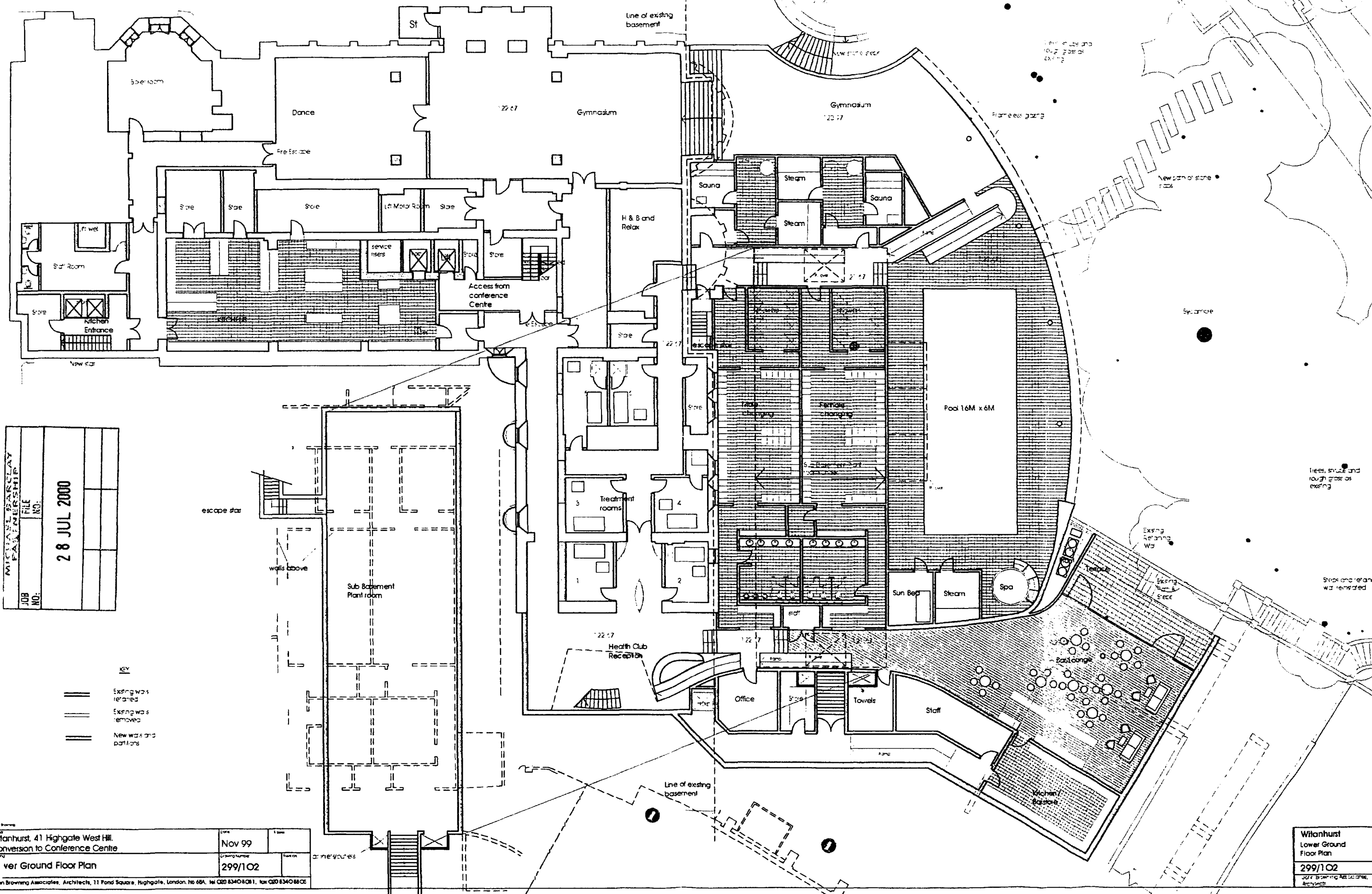
- 6.26 Following the removal of the service wing the front façade of the house is to be rebalanced. Full consideration of the various alternative options for the front facade have been discussed with English Heritage and Camden Planning Officers. Providing a largely symmetrical and balanced front façade emerged as the preferred design solution early on in pre-application discussions. The Design and Access and Heritage Statements set out the details of these pre-application discussions and advice relating to the reinstatement of the front façade.
- 6.27 In addition, the historic evolution of the building has been considered in order to inform various options for the front façade as well as detail aspects of the design. The supporting Historic Background documents considered the original sequencing and structure that might have been in place prior to the construction of the service wing.
- 6.28 The internal fabric of the building will not be materially harmed as a result of the works. Details of the required works to the building are provided in the supporting Construction Management Statement and Structural Engineer's Report.

Front Forecourt Landscaping and Permanent Access

- 6.29 The entrance setting of the house is at present uninviting and does not respect the grandeur of the building. The proposed forecourt lodge structure seek to provide a sense of enclose and arrival when entering from the gatehouse.
- 6.30 Following the removal of the service wing repair and reconstruction of the forecourt area will be required. In addition, the need for a permanent access from Highgate West Hill for emergency vehicles has been incorporated as an intrinsic part of the forecourt so as not to detract from the comprehensive intentions for both the forecourt area and the property as a whole.
- 6.31 The forecourt replacement following the demolition of the service wing alongside the associated lodge structures, wider landscaping and permanent access route from Highgate West Hill have been conceived as part of a holistic approach in order to establish the Orangery building and integrate all elements of the work proposed within the grounds of Witanhurst house.
- 6.32 The works to the forecourt surface will provide a continuation of the current treatment to the rest of the forecourt in order to complete and rebalance this area of the grounds.
- 6.33 The forecourt lodges provide important functions, screening the Orangery from view on entrance to the property as well as from Highgate Hill West. In addition, the lodges provide ambient access to the basement area and house as well as a route of escape in the event of an emergency and venting to and from the proposed basement area.
- 6.34 The rationale behind the design approach adopted in the forecourt area is detailed the Design and Access Statement provided by

Robert Adam Architects and the Landscape Design Statement and drawings by Michael Balston Company. Although, to summarise, there is a considerable reduction in hardstanding in order to create a new more sensitive arrangement parking and access arrangement in a landscaped setting. The landscape proposals, including the lodge structures, also act to provide an appropriate setting to the entrance of the building which has been lacking following the construction of the service wing.





MICHAEL BARCLAY
PARTNERSHIP
JOB NO. FILE NO.
28 JUL 2000

KEY
 == Existing was retained
 == Existing was removed
 == New walls and partitions

© John Browning
 Wilanthurst, 41 Highgate West Hill,
 Conversion to Conference Centre
 Nov 99
 Drawing Number 299/102
 John Browning Associates, Architects, 11 Pond Square, Highgate, London, N6 6BA. Tel 020 83408081, fax 020 83408082

Wilanthurst
 Lower Ground
 Floor Plan
 299/102
 John Browning Associates,
 Architects



Witanhurst
Pre-planning meeting

August 2008

DRAFT

MARCUS
COOPER
GROUP

MONTAGU
EVANS

Geraldine

MOXLEY
ARCHITECTS

make

Foreword

by Chris Miele from Montagu Evans

Our client, Marcus Cooper Group, has assembled a very experienced team of professionals to undertake a feasibility study which looks at how this very fine listed house, with its beautiful grounds, could be re-used, finding a sustainable solution for a building at risk in an important location.

This team includes advice on architecture and masterplanning, town planning, heritage, surveying and valuation.

This report sets out that team's initial findings. Our conclusions are, quite simply, that there is no realistic prospect of a use or user coming forward to save the building and the grounds, and that, consequently, some form of cross-subsidy is required through new development in the grounds of the estate.

At the very beginning of this process, leading historic buildings experts were instructed to prepare a historical analysis of the site, a detailed report and analysis which has been prepared as

a separate volume and can be provided to the planning authority and English Heritage in due course.

Advice on heritage matters has informed this feasibility study, and has been provided to design team members through discussions, meetings and site visits.

The report – extracts from which are included in this document – have identified the special interest of the property, both in relation to its total 'heritage asset value' and in relation to particular elements within the main house itself. This analysis of relative sensitivities stands behind the outline design work done to date.

The purpose of this document, then, is to summarise these findings and the options that have developed from the heritage analysis, and to provide a background briefing report for an anticipated meeting with officers from the planning authority and English Heritage.

Key Issues facing the site

Buildings at Risk

The outstanding architectural and historic interest of Witanhurst is recognised in its grade II* listed status. The majority of structures within the grounds are grade II listed. All are included on English Heritage's national register of buildings at risk. The garden structures are all classed as category A (immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric, no solution agreed) and Witanhurst itself is currently classed as category C (slow decay, no solution agreed).

Works have been carried out by the current owner, at the request of the Council, to make sure that the tennis pavilion is weather-tight and that there is no further deterioration of the building's fabric.

It is clear to anyone visiting today that a lot of work needs doing to the building and the site as a whole, and in particular

the gardens and landscape more generally.

We understand that the problem faced by the property is, simply, that it is too grand for its location, and yet not well located enough to attract institutional or business users who would have the means to repair, restore and care for it as a whole. In any event, the highly cellularised nature of the building is not appropriate to many businesses, and it is hard to see most such users having the commitment and funds needed to restore the garden and grounds which are really as important as the house itself.

Vacancy

The property has been vacant for some time and has been the subject of marketing campaigns over many years. Indeed, the property has continued to be marketed and interest in the building and grounds in their current condition has been low.

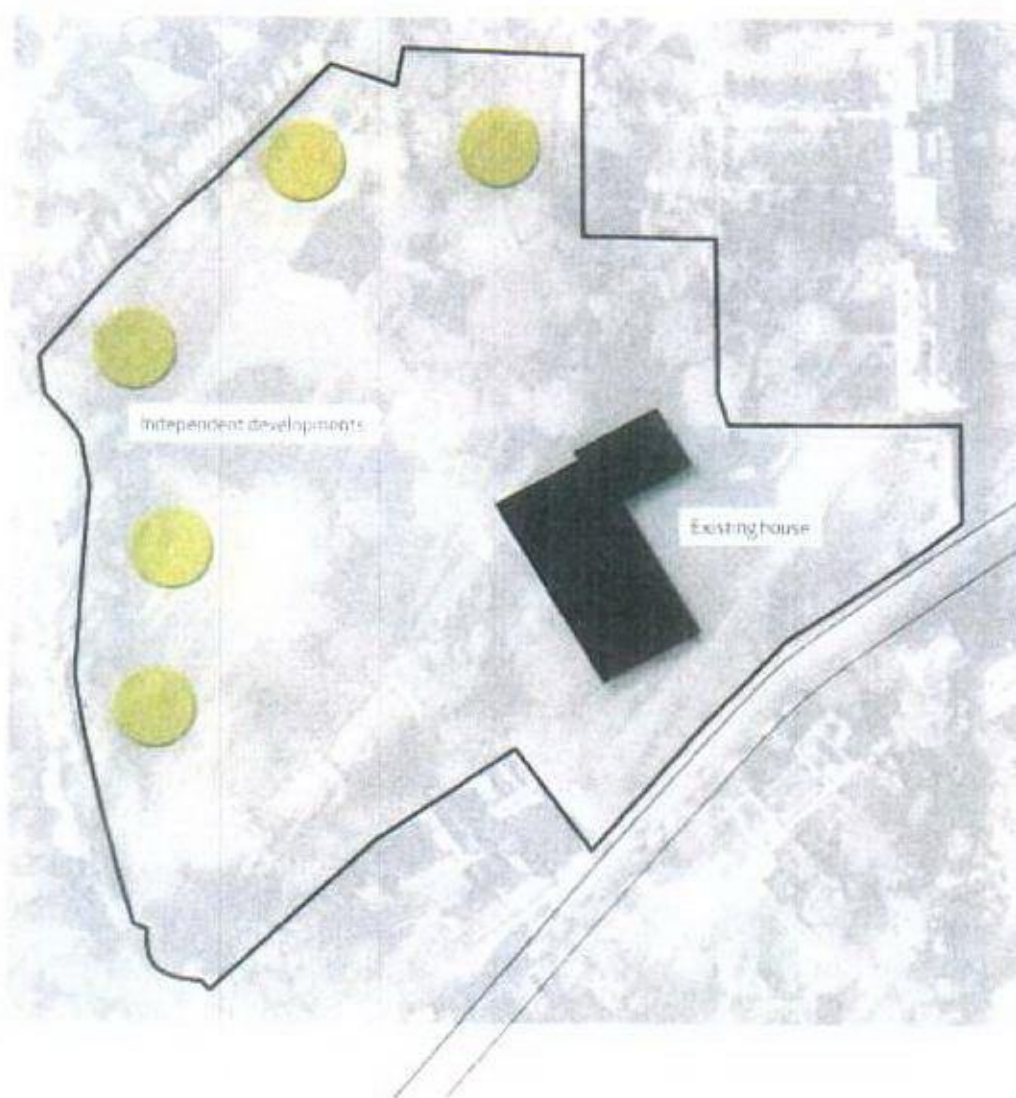


Fig. 9



Fig. 10

Cross-subsidy



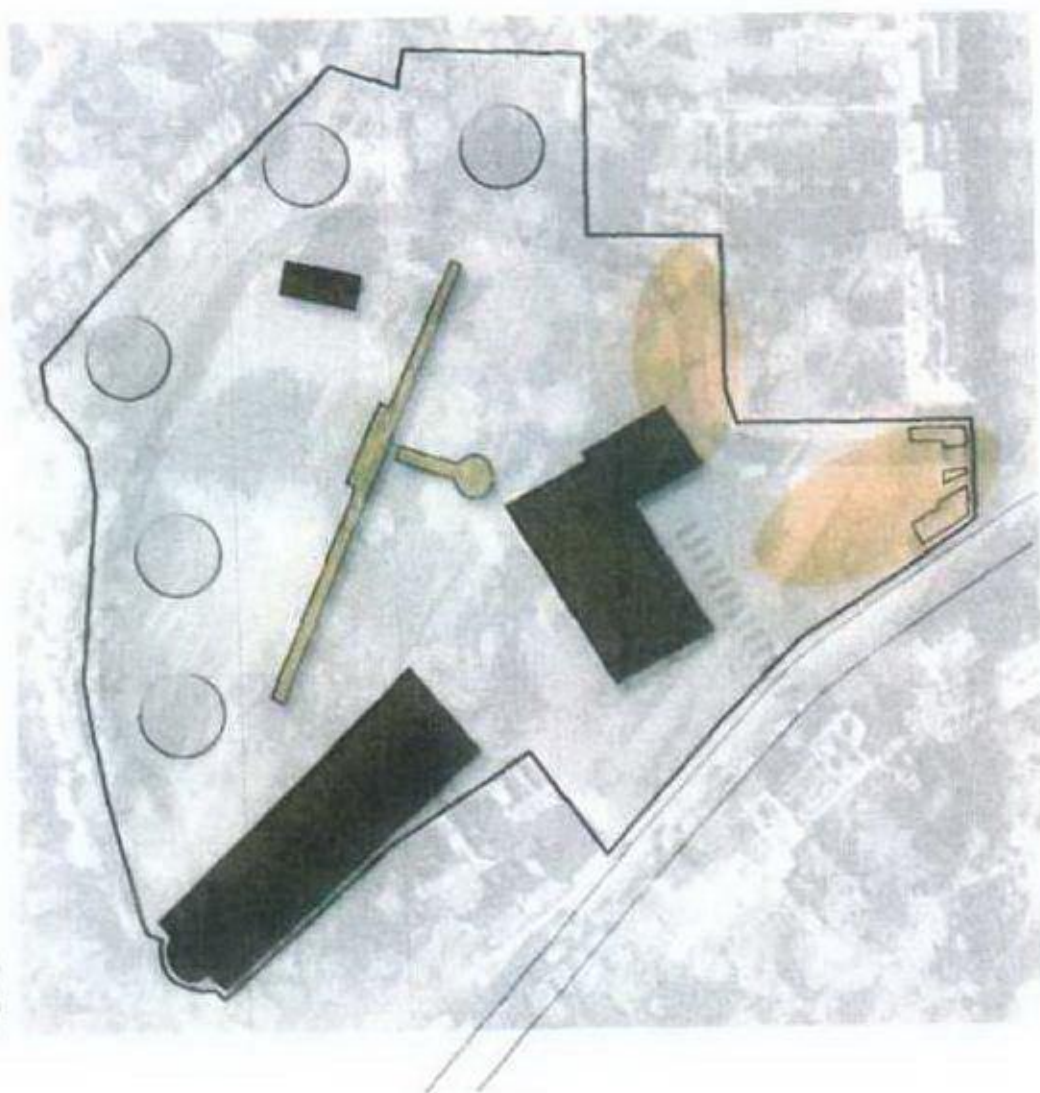
A proper and careful restoration of the buildings and garden will necessarily require substantial financial input.

As part of the work and extension to the main house, smaller independent pavilions are being considered for location within the grounds.

They would be designed to sit within the landscape such that there would be no apparent increase in built form in views from the house and gardens, nor from longer views to Hampstead Heath.

This would be relevant to either a residential or hotel use.

Reinstatement of existing structures and new development



As set out above, a successful and ongoing financially viable reinstatement of Witanhurst can only be realised when;

- The house can fulfill an extended brief appropriate to its size and use
- Cross-subsidiary development can take place in the grounds
- A dual application is made for a house and a hotel in order to respond to the market and minimise the period in which the building will lie empty

Montagu Evans's comments II

Cross-subsidising Development

The clear conclusion emerging from our studies is that some form of cross-subsidy is required to achieve a viable new use, and this can only come from new development.

A comprehensive estate plan would then also be required for the ongoing maintenance of the historic asset as a whole, and in particular for the gardens.

Development Proposal Options

Two development options have been formulated for Witanhurst and its grounds.

One is based on a residential use and the other is for a hotel. Both rely on new development within the grounds. Proposed new development is residential villas which are located in areas of lowest sensitivity with regard to both visual prominence and the building's setting. For the most part, this subsidizing development will not be visible from the house itself.

The options have been designed by Moxley and Make Architects working in collaboration.

The hotel option entails the conversion of Witanhurst to a high quality hotel with an extended basement containing leisure facilities and a new 2-3 storey wing containing additional accommodation. Five holiday villas will

also be provided within the grounds as part of this option.

The residential option entails the conversion of Witanhurst to a single house. The provision of additional leisure facilities in an extended basement is also proposed for this option. Seven villas are proposed within the grounds.