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Planning. Design. Economics.

**51 to 53 Agar Grove, London NW1**

**Planning and Heritage Statement**

For Majesty Developments Ltd

22 April 2014

13545/IR/FY

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# Contents

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1.0	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
	Background to the Planning Application .....	1
	Supporting Documents.....	1
	Structure of the Planning Statement.....	1
2.0	<b>The Site and Surrounding Area</b>	<b>4</b>
	51-53 Agar Grove .....	4
	The Surrounding Context .....	5
3.0	<b>Planning History</b>	<b>6</b>
	51 and 53 Agar Grove.....	6
	Surrounding Context .....	7
4.0	<b>Planning Policy Context</b>	<b>8</b>
	Introduction .....	8
	National Planning Policy Framework.....	8
	Statutory Development Plan.....	9
	Local Plan .....	11
5.0	<b>Proposed Development</b>	<b>16</b>
	Introduction .....	16
	Design Approach .....	16
	Dwelling Mix.....	17
	Access and Landscaping .....	17
	Construction.....	17
6.0	<b>Summary of Technical Assessments</b>	<b>18</b>
	Introduction .....	18
	Design and Access Statement .....	18
	Daylight and Sunlight Assessment .....	18
	Arboricultural Assessment.....	19
	Code for Sustainable Homes Pre-Assessment.....	19
	Basement Impact Assessment.....	19
	Statement of Community Involvement.....	20
	Construction Management Plan .....	20
7.0	<b>Heritage Impact Assessment</b>	<b>21</b>
	Introduction .....	21
	The Character of the Camden Square Conservation Area .....	21
	Planning Policy Context .....	21
	Assessment .....	22

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8.0	<b>Assessment of the Scheme</b>	<b>25</b>
	Introduction .....	25
	Land Use .....	25
	Scale, layout and Design.....	25
	Dwelling Mix.....	25
	Affordable Housing.....	25
	Impact on the Conservation Area.....	26
	Access and Parking .....	26
	Sustainability .....	26
	The Case for Demolition and Replacement.....	26
9.0	<b>Summary and Conclusion</b>	<b>27</b>

## 1.0 Introduction

### Background to the Planning Application

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners on behalf of Majesty Development Ltd., to accompany the planning application for nos. 51 and 53 Agar Grove, London NW1 for the demolition of the remaining parts of the former pair of residential villas and the erection of a new four storey building, plus basement, fronting onto Agar Grove, comprising seven apartments and a new three storey mews house, with basement, to the rear, with access from St. Paul's Crescent. The new villa on Agar Grove will broadly occupy the footprint of the demolished properties, and includes a lower three storey projecting annexe and a single story infill development to either side of the annexe.
- 1.2 The application site comprises the former site of two semi-detached Victorian villas which were substantially demolished following structural problems and which were subsequently taken into the ownership of Camden Council. The site was purchased by the applicant in May 2013. The location of the site is shown on drawing no. A05 and the existing site plan on drawing no. A10.

### Supporting Documents

- 1.3 This planning application is accompanied by the following supporting documents:
- A Design and Access Statement, prepared by dMFK;
  - A Daylight and Sunlight Assessment, prepared by NLP;
  - An Arboricultural Assessment prepared by ACD Arboriculturist;
  - A Code for Sustainable Homes Pre-Assessment Report prepared by Hurley Palmer Flatt;
  - A Basement Impact Assessment prepared by Webb Yates;
  - A Statement of Community Involvement prepared by Four Communications; and
  - A Construction Management Plan prepared by 3PM.
- 1.4 A Statement setting out how the proposals meet Lifetime Homes Standards is included at Section 7 of the Design and Access Statement. A Heritage Impact Assessment is included in this Planning Statement at Section 7.

### Structure of the Planning Statement

- 1.5 The following sections of this statement provide:
- A description of the site and surrounding area and the planning history relating to the site in Sections 2 and 3;

- The proposed development in Section 4;
- The planning policy context in Section 5;
- A summary of the technical assessments in Section 6;
- A Heritage Impact Assessment in Section 7;
- An assessment of the proposals in Section 8; and
- A summary and conclusion in Section 9.

- 1.6 An initial pre-application meeting was held on 20 November 2013, and an advice note was issued by LB Camden on 12 December 2013. This advised that although the principle of redevelopment of the site was generally welcomed and encouraged there were a number of issues, as follows:
- 1 The mix of units proposed resulted in an under provision of 2-bed units;
  - 2 Possible overlooking, outlook, daylight/sunlight and noise/disturbance implications for future occupiers and/or neighbouring occupiers;
  - 3 The proposed complete infilling of the rear garden would not appropriately respond to the established feature of openness in the area and would result in excessive built development on the site which is out of keeping with the density of development in this part of the area;
  - 4 Justification of the design approach is required;
  - 5 The proposal to remove all trees and not replace them on site would not be supported by officers; and
  - 6 The proposal to incorporate development (i.e. landscaping within the pedestrianised area by St Paul's crescent and Agar Grove) outside the applicant's ownership is unlikely to be considered appropriate.
- 1.7 Further to the meeting in November 2013, the scheme was reviewed and a number of changes made in order to respond to the concerns raised.
- 1.8 A second pre-application meeting was held on 20 March 2014. No formal feedback has been provided by LB Camden as yet, but at the meeting it was agreed that the revised housing mix was acceptable, but that some minor internal adjustments might be required to ensure that the scheme met Lifetime Homes standards (now incorporated). In addition, it was agreed that the design of the main building was broadly acceptable, subject to some minor design refinements to the side wing (now incorporated). However, the mews house to the rear was still considered too large, and this has since been reduced in size. Officers also confirmed at the meeting that they would support a contemporary design at the site and would not insist on a facsimile of the demolished buildings. The tree officer subsequently confirmed that the loss of the lime tree was acceptable if a good quality replacement was provided within an enlarged garden space between the main building and the mews house. This is now proposed.
- 1.9 A Public Exhibition of the Scheme was held on 6 March 2014. As detailed in the Statement of Community Involvement, the majority of people who attended

the exhibition supported the proposals for a contemporary replacement building on the site.

2.0

## **The Site and Surrounding Area**

### **51-53 Agar Grove**

2.1

The site of no. 51 and 53 Agar Grove is located on the north side of Agar Grove, near its junction with St. Paul's Crescent, within the London Borough of Camden. The site is within the Camden Square Conservation Area, but is not within an Archaeological Priority Area. The predominant character of the immediate surrounding area is residential. The Public Transport Accessibility of the site (PTAL) is 2. The nearest tube stations are Camden Town and Caledonian Road. The site is within a controlled parking zone.

2.2

No. 51 Agar Grove was demolished in 2010 after it was considered to be unsafe following excavation works beneath the building in 2009. A Dangerous Structure Notice was served on 2 September 2009. The works also resulted in the substantial demolition of no. 53 Agar Grove, which formed part of the former double fronted three storey property with basement, which comprised nos. 51 and 53 Agar Grove. In 2011 Camden Council compulsorily purchased number 51 Agar Grove. In May 2013 both properties were sold by the Council at auction, when they were purchased by the applicant.

2.3

The site currently comprises an overgrown vacant site with remnants of no. 53 Agar Grove (first floor and basement levels) behind hoardings. There are a number of mature trees in the garden. Three trees along the western boundary have tree preservation orders (TPO ref. S9), but are considered to be in a poor condition, as confirmed in the Arboricultural Report. The site is approximately 257.4 sqm. There is currently no parking within the site, although double gates provide access from St. Paul's Crescent into the rear garden. The site currently detracts from the surrounding townscape and character of the area. Photographs of the site as existing are included at Section 2.1 of the Design and Access Statement. Drawing no. A41 shows the existing ground floor layout of the properties, whilst drawing no. A43 shows the north elevation, A40 the south elevation and A41 a section through the site.

2.4

It is understood from plans available on the Council's website that the original form of the properties was a living room and bathroom in the basement; a kitchen/diner and lounge on the ground floor; two bedrooms on the first floor; and two bedrooms and a bathroom on the second floor. The total original floorspace of both properties is estimated to be 368 sqm (gia), of which approximately 82 sqm remains on site. Drawings of the pre-existing layout of the buildings are shown on drawing nos. A20 (lower ground floor), A21 (first floor), A22 (second floor) and A23 (third floor). Drawing nos. A30 (south elevation), A31 (west elevation) and A32 (north elevation) show the appearance of the former buildings.



## The Surrounding Context

2.5

Nos. 51 and 53 Agar Grove, were formerly part of a group of five pairs of semi-detached properties (from no. 51 to no. 69) on the north side of Agar Grove, of similar height (generally three storeys plus lower ground floor) and with stucco banded render to the entrance floor. These properties had similar features including:

- 1 Low brick boundary wall with taller piers;
- 2 Deep front gardens;
- 3 Long steps positioned on the front outer edge of the building, rising to a raised ground floor;
- 4 Stucco banded lower ground and ground floors with fluted band above the window heads and around the porch (where they exist);
- 5 Stock brick upper floors;
- 6 Red brick quoins;
- 7 Red brick external arches surrounding the windows;
- 8 Rubbed red brick arched window heads with stock brick key;
- 9 Double hung timber sash windows (four over four with slim side lights to the ground floor; two over two with slim side lights to the first floor; three over three on second and lower ground floor);
- 10 Painted stone cills, projecting eaves with decorative bracket;
- 11 Slate roof; and
- 12 Tall brick chimney stack.

2.6

To the west of the site, no. 49 Agar Grove is a nineteenth century property of three storeys plus basement, whilst further west, nos 33-47 comprises a twentieth century infill block of flats. Nos. 55-57 are ground plus three storeys. The south side of Agar Grove has retained its original form of paired houses of three storeys plus basement, with steps up to the raised ground floors.

## Planning History

### 51 and 53 Agar Grove

- 3.1 The following planning applications and permissions are of relevance to this current application:
- 3.2 51 and 53 Agar Grove (ref. 28360): Planning permission was granted on 18 May 1979 for the change of use of 51 and 53 Agar Grove, including works of conversion, to provide four self-contained maisonettes.
- 3.3 A condition of the planning permission stated that all new work should be carried out in materials that resemble, as closely as possible in colour and texture, those of the existing buildings (Reason: to ensure that the external appearance of the building will be satisfactory).
- 3.4 51 Agar Grove (ref. 2010/3326/P): Planning permission was refused on 9 November 2010 for the erection of a new four-storey (including basement) building comprising two no. two-bed maisonettes (Class C3) and associated landscaping works, including removal of trees (following the demolition of four storey building comprising 2 x 2 bed maisonettes).
- 3.5 In summary, the reasons for refusal were:
- 1 The proposed new building, by reason of inaccurate and lack of detailed drawings indicating inappropriate height and design would be detrimental to this part of the streetscene and the character and appearance of this part of Camden Square Conservation Area;
  - 2 The proposed development by reason of the removal of a protected lime tree would be detrimental to the character of the streetscene and the character and appearance of the Camden Square Conservation Area;
  - 3 The proposed development in the absence of a legal agreement to secure financial contributions towards highway works would be likely to result in an unacceptable impact on the public highway and pedestrian safety; and
  - 4 The proposed development in the absence of a legal agreement to secure the submission and implementation of a Construction Management Plan would be likely to give rise to conflicts with other road users and be detrimental to the amenities of the area generally.
- 3.6 51 Agar Grove (ref. 2011/2865/C): Conservation area consent was granted on 27 September 2011 for the demolition of the existing four storey building (retrospective application).
- 3.7 51 Agar Grove (ref. 2011/2752/P): An application was submitted on 27 May 2011 for a four storey development comprising two maisonettes with a similar footprint to the original houses. This has not been determined.

## Surrounding Context

- 3.8 The following planning applications and decisions are of relevance:
- 3.9 57 Agar Grove (ref. 19895): planning permission was granted on 4 March 1975 for change of use to two self-contained maisonettes, including works of conversion.
- 3.10 55 Agar Grove (ref. 28109): planning permission was granted on 25 April 1979 for change of use including works of conversion to provide two self-contained maisonettes.
- 3.11 55-57 Agar Grove (ref. PL/9300245): planning permission was granted on 16 June 1993 for the erection of a two storey rear extension in connection with the conversion of the buildings into two maisonettes and four flats.
- 3.12 55-57 Agar Grove (ref. PL/9300896): planning permission was refused on 7 December 1993 for the erection of a three storey extension in connection with the conversion of two houses into eight flats (due to lack of family accommodation and excessive number of small non family sized swellings; and the fact that the rear extension would harm the character and appearance of the conservation area by virtue of its bulk and detailed design).
- 3.13 Land to the rear of 49 Agar Grove (ref. 2008/4760/P): planning permission was granted for the erection of a two storey single dwelling house plus basement (class C3) following the demolition of the existing garage. Access to the house was from St. Paul's Crescent. The Camden Square CAAC supported the proposal, which was considered appropriate in terms of height and volume and the design was considered to enhance St. Paul's Crescent by reinforcing the street line, whilst appearing sub-ordinate to the surrounding buildings. The delegated Report noted at paragraph 2.3 that *"the principle of limited low rise development on this site is considered acceptable given recent approvals at land to the rear of 6-7 Cantelowes Road (2007/4085/P) and land to the rear of 102 Agar Grove (2007/3898/P), which has established the principle of an appropriately scaled development to the rear of these corner sites in this locality. However, the design of any new building needs to be carefully considered and must demonstrate that it preserves or enhances the special character or appearance of the area"*.
- 3.14 There is therefore a precedent for development in the rear gardens of corner sites, although there is a requirement for any such building to be subordinate to those existing on the main frontage (in this case Agar Grove).

4.0

## Planning Policy Context

### Introduction

4.1

The national and regional planning context for the site is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) and the London Plan (2011). The local plan comprises the Camden Core Strategy (2010) and Camden Development Management Policies (2010). Further guidance is provided by Camden Planning Guidance.

### National Planning Policy Framework

4.2

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published on 27 March 2012, sets out the Government's planning policies for England and replaces all previous PPGs/PPSs. It states that the purpose of the planning system is *'to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development'* (paragraph 6). Paragraph 7 sets out the three dimensions of sustainable development; 'economic' in contributing to a strong and competitive economy; 'social' in supporting strong communities and providing the supply of housing required for present and future generations; and 'environmental' in protecting and enhancing the environment. Paragraph 7 supports strong communities and the provision of a supply of housing required for present and future generations. Paragraph 47 requires local planning authorities to *"use their evidence base to ensure that their local plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area.."*

4.3

Under the NPPF, it is incumbent upon decision-making authorities to support applications for sustainable development wherever possible and without delay, particularly where that development will help meet the challenge of housing need.

4.4

Paragraph 14 of the NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It states:

*'At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.*

*For decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*

- Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
- Specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.'*

4.5

The Core Planning Principles as set out at paragraph 17 include:

*'Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth.'*

- 4.6 The presumption in favour of sustainable development is linked directly to housing in paragraph 49, as follows:

*Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.'*

- 4.7 In terms of heritage, the NPPF requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting, in a proportionate amount of detail (paragraph 128). Local authorities should take significance into account in order to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal (paragraph 129).

- 4.8 The NPPF states that local planning authorities should, in determining planning applications, take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; the positive contribution assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (paragraph 131).

- 4.9 Local authorities are required to look for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets which will enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably (paragraph 137).

## **Statutory Development Plan**

- 4.10 The London Plan (2011) provides the spatial development strategy for Greater London up until 2031. The Vision for the London Plan states that London should "*excel among global cities- expanding opportunities for all its people and enterprises, achieving the highest environmental standards and quality of life and leading the world in its approach to tackling the urban challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, particularly that of climate change*". The Vision is supported by six detailed objectives which seek to ensure that London is a city that meets the challenges of economic and population growth; an internationally competitive and successful city; a city of diverse, strong, secure and accessible neighbourhoods; a city that delights the senses; a city that becomes a world leader in improving the environment; and a city where it is easy, safe and convenient for everyone to access jobs, opportunities and facilities.
- 4.11 In terms of housing provision, Policy 3.3 of the London Plan recognises the need to increase the housing supply, whilst Policy 3.4 states that, taking

account of local context and character, the Plan's design principles and public transport capacity, development should optimise housing output. Within Camden there is a ten year target for 5,650 new residential units during the period 2011 to 2021 (Table 3.1). Policies 3.8, 3.9 and 3.11 respectively promote housing choice in new developments, in terms of size and type; promote communities mixed by tenure and household income; and seek to maximise affordable housing provision. Policies 5.2 and 5.3 seek to minimise carbon dioxide emissions and promote the highest standards of sustainable design and construction. Policy 6.13 seeks an appropriate provision of car parking.

- 4.12 The Mayor's Dwelling space standards are set out in Table 3.3 and require 50 sqm for a 1b2p unit; 70 sqm for a 2b4p unit; and 86 sqm for a 3b5p unit. Three storey houses require a minimum of between 103 and 113 sqm, depending on the number of bedrooms.
- 4.13 The London Plan Density Matrix (Table 3.2) states that for an urban site with a PTAL of 2, the appropriate density range would be 200 to 450 hr/ha.
- 4.14 Policy 3.5 of the London Plan requires that housing developments should be of the highest quality internally, externally and in relation to their context and to the wider environment, and in this respect, Table 3.3 sets out the minimum space standards for new development. Policy 3.6 requires provision for children's play areas in accord with the Mayor's Supplementary Planning Guidance, i.e. 10 sqm per child.
- 4.15 The London Plan provides a number of policies in response to climate change, including Policy 5.2, which seeks to minimise carbon dioxide emissions (with targets of 25% for 2010-2013 and 40% for 2013-2016, over existing target emission rates and zero carbon for 2016-2031 for residential buildings); Policy 5.3, which promotes the highest standards of sustainable design and construction to improve the environmental performance of new developments and to adapt to the effects of climate change over their lifetime; Policy 5.7, which seeks to increase the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources; Policy 5.11, which promotes green roofs, sustainable urban drainage and the enhancement of biodiversity; Policy 5.12, in relation to Flood Risk Management; and Policy 5.13 which promotes Sustainable Drainage.
- 4.16 In relation to transport and parking, Policy 6.1 (a) encourages patterns and nodes of development that reduce the need to travel, especially by car. Policy 6.3 requires that development proposals do not impact on transport capacity; whilst Policy 6.10 promotes increased walking by emphasising the quality of pedestrian and street environments.
- 4.17 Policy 6.13 in relation to parking states that the Mayor wishes to see "an appropriate balance struck between promoting new development and preventing excessive car parking provision that can undermine cycling, walking and public transport use". All developments in areas of good public transport accessibility should aim for significantly less than 1 space per unit and car free

developments are supported. Cycle parking should be provided at a standard of 1 space per 1 or 2 bed units; and 2 per 3 or more bed unit.

- 4.18 Policies within the London Plan encourage good design in order to create a city of diverse, strong, secure and accessible neighbourhoods; and in addition, seek to promote development that reinforces or enhances the character, legibility, permeability and accessibility of neighbourhoods. Policy 7.5 of the London Plan encourages good quality public realm “*comprehensible at a human scale, using gateways, focal points and landmarks*”. Policy 7.6 states that architecture should make a positive contribution to a coherent public realm, streetscape and wider city scene.
- 4.19 Paragraph 7.8 in relation to Heritage Assessments states that the positive role of London’s heritage assets and historic environment in place shaping should be taken into account and that development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.
- 4.20 The London Plan requires development to be informed by the surrounding historic environment (Policy 7.4) and to complement but not replicate local architectural character (Policy 7.6). Development should identify, value, conserve, restore, re-use and incorporate heritage assets where appropriate; and development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail (Policy 7.8).

## Local Plan

### Camden Core Strategy (2010)

- 4.21 Policy CS6 of the Core Strategy seeks to maximise the supply of additional housing to meet or exceed Camden’s target of 8,925 homes for the period 2010-2025; and also confirms that housing is the priority land use within the Borough. Part (f) of Policy CS6 states that the Council will aim to secure high quality affordable housing by seeking to ensure that 50% of the borough-wide target for additional self-contained housing is provided as affordable housing. There is no requirement for affordable housing on schemes of less than 10 additional units.
- 4.22 Paragraph 6.39 of the Core Strategy states that the Council’s dwelling size priorities for market housing are 2-bedrooms (highest priority), followed by 3 and 4-bedrooms (medium priority).
- 4.23 As noted at paragraph 6.41 of the Core Strategy, the Council requires that 10% of homes should either be designed to be wheelchair accessible, or easily adaptable (i.e. compliant with Lifetime Homes standards) if there are more than ten units.

- 4.24 Other policies of relevance are CS13: Tackling climate change promoting higher environmental standards; and CS14: Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage, which states that:

*The Council will ensure that Camden's places and buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use by:*  
*(a) requiring development of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character;*  
*(b) preserving and enhancing Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings...;*  
*(c) promoting high quality landscaping and works to streets and public spaces;*  
*(d) seeking the highest standards of access in all buildings and places and requiring schemes to be designed to be inclusive and accessible*  
*(e) protecting important views.."*

- 4.25 The supporting text at paragraph 14.1 of the Core Strategy acknowledges that Camden does not have a single built character but is made up of many diverse areas. Paragraph 14.2 notes that Policy CS14 sets out the Borough's approach to ensuring that development is of the highest standard and reflects the local area. Paragraph 14.3 acknowledges that as well as preserving the Borough's rich quality, new development should also be contributing to it by making sure that buildings of equally high quality are created that can be appreciated by future generations. Paragraph 14.4 notes that development schemes should improve the quality of buildings, landscaping and the street environment; whilst paragraph 1.6 states that "*good design is safe and accessible and responds flexibly to the needs of its users. It creates buildings that have minimal negative impact on the environment, during construction and beyond*". Paragraph 14.7 requires that high quality design takes account of its surroundings and what is distinctive and valued about the local area and goes on to state "*The Council will therefore expect the design of buildings and places to respond to the local area and its defining characteristics and reinforce or, if appropriate, create local distinctiveness*" (paragraph 14.7).

### **Camden Development Management Policies (2010)**

- 4.26 The following development management policies are of relevance to the development of 51/53 Agar Grove.
- 4.27 *DP3: Contribution to the supply of affordable housing* requires all residential development with a capacity of 10 or more additional dwellings to make a contribution to the supply of affordable homes.
- 4.28 *DP5: Homes of Different Sizes* states that the Council will seek to ensure that all residential development contributes to meeting the priorities set out in the dwelling mix priority table and expects a mix of large and small homes. However, regard will be had to the character of the site, any site constraints and the economic and financial viability of the site, including the demand for homes of different sizes.



- 4.29 *DP6: Lifetime homes and wheelchair homes* requires all housing development to meet wheelchair home standards. 10% of housing developments should either meet wheelchair housing standards or be easily adaptable to meet these.
- 4.30 *DP16: The Transport implications of development* requires that development is properly integrated with the transport network and that appropriate measures are incorporated for safe pick-up and drop off.
- 4.31 *DP17: Walking, cycling and public transport* promotes walking, cycling and public transport uses promotes walking, cycling and public transport.
- 4.32 *DP18: Parking standards and limiting the availability of car parking* seeks to ensure that development provides the minimum necessary car parking provision.
- 4.33 *D19: Managing the impact of parking* states that the Council will resist development that would add to on-street parking demand where on-street parking spaces cannot meet existing demand.
- 4.34 *DP21: Development connecting to the highway network* requires that works affecting highways avoid disruption to the highway network and its function and requires the repair of any construction damage to transport infrastructure.
- 4.35 *DP22: Promoting sustainable design and construction* encourages the incorporation of green or brown roofs and green walls and requires new housing to meet Code level 4 by 2013 and code level 6 (zero carbon) by 2016.
- 4.36 *DP24: Securing high quality design* states:
- The Council will require all developments, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, to be of the highest standard of design and will expect developments to consider:*
- a) character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings;*
  - b) the character and proportions of the existing building, where alterations and extensions are proposed;*
  - c) the quality of materials to be used;*
  - d) the provision of visually interesting frontages at street level;*
  - e) the appropriate location for building services equipment;*
  - f) existing natural features such as topography and trees;*
  - g) the provision of appropriate hard and soft landscaping including boundary treatments;*
  - h) the provision of appropriate amenity space; and*
  - i) accessibility.*
- 4.37 Paragraph 24.5 of the supporting text states that “*design should respond creatively to its site and its context*”. Paragraph 24.6 notes that “*innovative design can greatly enhance the built environment and, unless a scheme is*

*within an area of homogenous architectural style that it is important to retain, high quality contemporary design will be welcomed* (our emphasis).

4.38 Paragraph 24.7 then states that “*development should consider:*

- *the character and constraints of its site;*
- *the prevailing pattern, density and scale of surrounding development;*
- *the impact on existing rhythms, symmetries and uniformities in the townscape;*
- *The compatibility of materials, their quality, texture, tone and colour;*
- *the composition of elevations;*
- *the suitability of the proposed design to its intended use;*
- *its contribution to public realm, and its impact on views and vistas;*  
*and*
- *the wider historic environment and buildings, spaces and features of local historic value.”*

4.39 In addition, paragraph 24.8 requires that buildings should be designed to be as sustainable as possible.

4.40 *DP25: Conserving Camden’s heritage* states that the Council will (a) take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans when assessing applications within conservation areas; (b) only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area; and (e) preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character of a conservation area and which provide a setting for Camden’s architectural heritage.

4.41 *DP26: Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours* requires development to take into account such matters as privacy, overlooking, overshadowing, outlook, daylight and sunlight, noise and vibration.

4.42 *DP27: Basement and lightwells* states that in determining proposals for basement and other underground developments, the Council will require an assessment of the scheme’s impact on drainage, flooding, groundwater conditions and structural stability, where appropriate. Developers will be required to demonstrate that schemes maintain the structural stability of the building and neighbouring properties, avoid adversely affecting drainage and run-off or causing other damage to the water environment, and avoid cumulative impacts upon structural stability or the water environment in the local area. Consideration will also be given to any potential impact on residential amenity, open space and landscaping and the appearance or setting of the property or established character of the surrounding area.

## **Other material planning guidance**

4.43 Further guidance is provided by Camden Planning Guidance published in 2011. Of particular relevance are CPG1: Design; CPG2: Housing; CPG3: Sustainability; CPG4: Basement and lightwells; and CP8: Planning Obligations.

### **CP8: Planning Obligations**

- 4.44 Paragraph 4.5 notes that all residential development which results in a net increase of 5 or more dwellings will normally be expected to contribute towards education provision, based on anticipated child yield. Estimated costs would be £2,213 for a 2-bed unit; and £6,322 for a 3-bed unit. There is no requirement for 1-bed units.
- 4.45 In regard to community use, obligations will be sought for any development of 10 residential units or more, at a rate of £980 per bedroom.
- 4.46 Contributions for healthcare will only be required for residential schemes over 50 units, and the required contribution will be identified by the NHS Healthy Urban Development Unit.
- 4.47 Where the scheme cannot provide sufficient open space to meet the needs of their occupants, a contribution will be required based on the capital cost of providing new public open space, maintenance for 5 years, and design costs.

5.0

## **Proposed Development**

### **Introduction**

5.1

The proposed development comprises a four storey residential block fronting onto Agar Grove and a three storey mews house to the rear, both with basements. The new villa on Agar Grove will broadly occupy the footprint of the demolished properties, and includes a lower three storey projecting annexe and a single story infill development to either side of the annexe. Eight residential units are provided. The overall aim of the project is to provide a contemporary development that includes a mix of residential units in terms of type and size, and which architecturally and visually relates to the vernacular of the adjacent streetscape and respects the local scale, form, design and materials. The scheme will provide sustainable dwellings within a landscaped setting. The proposed site plan is shown on drawing no. A90.

### **Design Approach**

5.2

The main part of the scheme adopts a similar footprint, height and typology to other properties on Agar Grove, and utilises paired entrances into the Villa, to reflect the adjoining properties, whilst making use of a contemporary interpretation of the traditional bay windows. The side and rear extensions of the proposed development are lower and subordinate to the main villa, and reflect the form of other properties in the locality. The proposed roof has an identical shallow pitch and slate tile detail, with a modified eaves detail.

5.3

The design retains the hierarchy of the former buildings through the fenestration detailing, whilst the width of the proposed windows replicates that of the Victorian villas, as detailed in the Design and Access Statement. The predominant mass of the building will be high quality stock facing brick in keeping with the other villas on Agar Grove. The side extensions will be in contrasting painted brass coloured metal.

5.4

The design of the proposed mews house to the rear reflects the precedent of an infill mews type property to the rear of the main property seen elsewhere in the locality. The proposed three storey mews house has a parapet similar to other properties on St Paul's Crescent, behind which is a mansard roof with dormer window. The building will be of high quality stock facing brick in keeping with other villas on St Paul's Crescent. Windows will be painted thin framed aluminium. The roof will be a metal standing seam.

5.5

Drawing nos. A100, A101, A102, A103, A104 and A105 show the proposed basement, ground, first, second, third floor and roof plans respectively. The design approach is set out at Section 4 of the Design and Access Statement.

5.6

The proposed elevations of the new buildings are shown on drawing nos. A300 to A306. Drawing nos. A200, A201 and A202 show sections through the

proposed development. Details of the proposed materials are set out in Section 5 of the Design and Access Statement.

## **Dwelling Mix**

- 5.7 The scheme provides one 2-bed and two 1-bed units at ground floor; one 1-bed and one 2-bed units at first floor; one 2-bed duplex and one 3-bed duplex at second and third floor; and a three bed house to the rear of the site, accessed from St. Paul's Crescent. The building fronting Agar Grove comprises 501 sqm (nia)/ 655 sqm (gia) and the mews house off St. Paul's Crescent is 116 sqm (nia) and 146 sqm (gia). The overall density of the scheme is 297 hr/ha.
- 5.8 The three 1-bed units are 50 sqm (unit 2) or 52 sqm (units 3 and 5) in size; the two bed units are 66 sqm (unit 1) and 70 sqm (unit 4). The two bed duplex unit (unit 7) is 96 sqm, whilst the 3-bed duplex is 115 sqm (unit 6). The mews house is 160 sqm. Details are provided in the Design and Access Statement.
- 5.9 A Lifetime Homes Assessment of the scheme is provided at section 7 of the Design and Access Statement.

## **Access and Landscaping**

- 5.10 There is no vehicular access and no parking within the scheme. The main entrance to the villa and for the mews house is from St. Paul's Crescent, but the scheme replicates the front door positioning on Agar Grove to reflect the adjoining properties. Twelve cycle storage spaces are proposed at ground floor level. Refuse areas are provided at the front of the property.
- 5.11 The scheme replaces the existing damaged trees with new mature specimens, as shown on drawing no. A101. Private roof terraces are provided, with perimeter planting, in order to reduce noise and any overlooking.

## **Construction**

- 5.12 Details of the proposed construction methodology and programme are set out in the Construction Management Plan. It is currently anticipated that construction will start in November 2014.

6.0

## **Summary of Technical Assessments**

### **Introduction**

6.1

This section of the Statement provides a summary of the Assessments prepared to support the planning application.

### **Design and Access Statement**

6.2

The Design and Access Statement reviews the existing site and context and sets out details of the public consultation process. It then goes on to look in detail at the principles of design for the main apartment building on Agar Grove and the mews building off St Paul's Crescent and to provide details of design and materials precedents in the local area. The statement then describes the proposed building and landscaping and sets out the Lifetime Homes Assessment and Energy Statement. Existing and proposed floorspace areas are set out at Section 8 of the Statement.

### **Daylight and Sunlight Assessment**

6.3

This assessment considered the effects of the proposed redevelopment of the site at Nos. 51-53 Agar Grove on the levels of daylight and sunlight received by nearby residential properties and their gardens. It also considered the levels of natural light that will be experienced within the proposed residential units and amenity space in the development. The assessment was carried out in accordance with BRE guidelines relating to the analysis of daylight and sunlight.

6.4

In terms of daylight, overall, the proposed development will not result in any unacceptable effects on the daylight levels experienced by neighbouring properties in the context of the BRE guidance. The proposed development will also provide a good quality residential environment in terms of interior daylighting.

6.5

The sunlight analysis demonstrated that the development will not result in any unacceptable effects on neighbouring residential accommodation in terms of sunlighting and that good levels of sunlight will be experienced by the proposed residential units.

6.6

In terms of overshadowing, the analysis demonstrated that the gardens and amenity spaces serving neighbouring properties will comply with the BRE guide levels with the development in place.

6.7

The assessment concluded that the proposed development will not result in any materially unacceptable daylight, sunlight or overshadowing effects in relation to neighbouring residential properties, the proposed accommodation and existing/proposed areas of amenity space. The development is, therefore,

consistent with the objectives and requirements of the BRE guidance and relevant planning policy.

## **Arboricultural Assessment**

- 6.8 An Arboricultural Assessment was carried out to evaluate the direct and indirect effects of the proposed development on trees on the site and to recommend mitigation where appropriate. The assessment notes that T1-4 would be removed as part of the development proposals. These are two U category trees, one C category tree and one B category tree. None of the trees are suitable for retention as part of the new development. One of the B category trees has some current visual amenity, but has structural problems due to pollarding in the past and it would not be suitable for retention within a residential development. The propose mitigation is the provision of three good quality trees as part of the landscape proposals. This approach was agreed with Camden's tree officer in March 2014.
- 6.9 The Assessment is accompanied by a Tree Reference Plan (drawing no. PRI18839-01) and a Tree Report which provides information about the trees on the site.

## **Code for Sustainable Homes Pre-Assessment**

- 6.10 A Code for Sustainable Homes pre-assessment was carried out for the proposed development at 51-53 Agar Grove. The assessment concluded that Code Level 4 was achievable, with a potential score of 72.54%. A minimum of 50% can be achieved in the categories energy, water and materials. In addition, the assessment confirmed that a total of 4 out of 6 water credits available (66%) can be achieved in line with current LB Camden requirements/.

## **Basement Impact Assessment**

- 6.11 A partial basement is proposed under the apartment block for plan and cycle storage. The mews house also has a lower ground floor as part of its living accommodation. The Basement Impact Assessment provided a screening checklist for the proposed development in terms of surface flow and flooding; subterranean groundwater flow; and slope stability in order to identify the potential impacts. The Assessment then identified the key issues to be addressed: whether surface water flows would be materially changed; whether the proposed basement would result in a change in the proportion of impermeable surfaces; and whether there would be any impacts on slope stability. A site investigation and impact assessment were then carried out. These confirmed that the proposed basement construction would have no adverse effect on the surface and subterranean water regimes and no impact on slope stability.

## **Statement of Community Involvement**

- 6.12 The Report sets out details of the activities carried out as part of the consultation process. Briefings were offered to all three Cantelowes ward councillors, the Camden Square Area Tenants and Residents Association, the Agar Grove Tenants Management Co-op Limited, the Camden Square Conservation Area Advisory Committee and the Camden Square Area Neighbourhood Association. A meeting was held with the Camden Square Area Tenants and Residents Association on 4 March 2014 and a public consultation exhibition held on 6 March 2014.
- 6.13 Overall the feedback received was positive and demonstrated in many cases strong support for the proposals to redevelop 51-53 Agar Grove. Local residents and stakeholders were pleased to see the site was being redeveloped, particularly given the history and very poor condition of the site. The design of the scheme was also welcomed and was generally felt to complement the local streetscape and area well. Residents supported the proposals for contemporary architecture and were also keen to see improvements to the pedestrian part of St Paul's Crescent adjoining the site.

## **Construction Management Plan**

- 6.14 The Construction Management Plan identifies a potential start date of November 2014 and a construction programme of 11 months. The work will be carried out in three phases. Hoarding will be erected where necessary and the hours of construction will be limited to 0800 to 1700 Monday to Friday and 0800 to 1300 on Saturday in order to limit any potential impact on neighbouring properties. Most deliveries will be made from Agar Grove and the necessary suspensions will be applied for.



7.0

## Heritage Impact Assessment

### Introduction

7.1

This section examines the existing heritage character of the area and assesses the impact of the proposed scheme on the conservation area.

### The Character of the Camden Square Conservation Area

7.2

The Camden Square Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy was adopted on 11 March 2011.

7.3

Paragraph 4.4 of the Appraisal notes that the history and pattern of development in the Camden Square Conservation Area is part of the massive expansion of suburbs in the nineteenth century into the rural estates and surviving field patterns in north London. The area is planned on a gridded street layout running parallel and perpendicular from Camden Road, with the layout focused around Camden Square. A number of character areas exist within the conservation area. Nos. 51 and 53 Agar Grove are within Area 3B: Agar Grove. This is described in the Conservation Area Appraisal as follows:

#### *3B Agar Grove*

*Agar Grove is the southernmost street in the Camden Estate development. It links the ancient streets of York Way (Maiden Lane) to St Pancras Way, and continues to Royal College Street. The street also physically runs along the lower edge of the sloping area. This was originally lined with semi-detached houses, with the gradation from larger houses to the west leading to terraces at the York Way end.*

*This pattern is still legible; however the character of the street has been eroded progressively, particularly on the north side. It is a busy thoroughfare; the pattern of buildings was divided by the gap caused by the insertion of the railway, bomb damage and the replacement of houses with flats on the corner of York Way, 33-47 Agar Grove and Gairloch House and the surrounding Council estates. The condition of many properties is also poor - in need of investment and reinstatement of detail. There is a key development site on the corner of Agar Grove and St Augustine's Road.*

7.4

The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies numbers 9 to 11 Agar Grove as providing a neutral contribution; and nos. 33-47 Agar Grove as providing a negative contribution.

### Planning Policy Context

7.5

The NPPF requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting, in a proportionate amount of detail (paragraph 128). Local authorities should take

significance into account in order to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal (paragraph 129).

- 7.6 The NPPF states that local planning authorities should, in determining planning applications, take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; the positive contribution assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (paragraph 131).
- 7.7 Policy CS14: *Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage* of Camden's Core Strategy states that: The Council will ensure that Camden's places and buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use by:
- (a) requiring development of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character;*
  - (b) preserving and enhancing Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings...;*
  - (c) promoting high quality landscaping and works to streets and public spaces;*
  - (d) seeking the highest standards of access in all buildings and places and requiring schemes to be designed to be inclusive and accessible*
  - (e) protecting important views.."*
- 7.8 DP25: *Conserving Camden's heritage* of Camden's Development Management Plan states that the Council will (a) take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans when assessing applications within conservation areas; (b) only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area; and (e) preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character of a conservation area and which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage.

## Assessment

- 7.9 Having regard to the identified heritage assets and their significance, identified above, the key statutory and policy test which must be applied to the proposals are as follows:
- In accordance with s72 of the PLBCA, NPPF Paragraph 126 (general principles), 131 (determining planning applications) and 137 (new development in conservation areas and the Camden DM DPD Policies 24 and 25, would the proposals preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Camden Square Conservation area, a designated heritage asset?
- 7.10 As noted above, the Camden Square Conservation Area Appraisal dated March 2011, identifies the site as being within the Character Area 3b (Agar Grove), where the pattern of development of larger semi-detached houses grading to terraces from east to west has been eroded but is still legible.

- 7.11 The Conservation Area Management Plan requires high quality design and execution in all new development (7.1) and notes that "successful modern design can be of the 21st century and enhance the conservation area by carefully assessing and responding to the form and qualities of surrounding buildings and spaces".
- 7.12 In relation to the policy "tests" to be applied to the site, the site specific circumstances are somewhat unusual due to the loss of the two villas, in unfortunate circumstances, which previously occupied the site. These would have been regarded as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and in accordance with NPPF and local policies, there would have been a presumption in favour of their retention. However, the position today is that the site is in a derelict and dilapidated state and only the basement and ground floor levels of 53 Agar Grove survive. It is neither practical nor economic to conserve the latter. As a result, the site current detracts from the appearance of the Conservation Area and there will be policy support for development which results in the enhancement of the visual appearance of the site and hence its contribution to the wider area.
- 7.13 In the Design and Access Statement, consideration is given to the merits of a precise reinstatement of the semi-detached Victorian villas against the alternative of development in a contemporary form which is contextually sensitive. There are practical reasons in favour of building to designs of the 21st century, notably in relation to building sustainability, accessible design and meeting the design and layout requirements for a range of unit sizes without the compromises of converting a building structures designed originally as single dwelling houses.
- 7.14 In terms of the policy approach, neither the NPPF heritage policies, nor those set out in the Development Plan, set out to impose any particular architectural style within conservation areas. The policy position is essentially neutral allowing for a historicist approach or a contemporary approach to design where justified by the site circumstances. The requirement to achieve a high quality design will apply in either case.
- 7.15 With regard to the design proposed at 51-53 Agar Grove, the main principle, as set out in more detail in the DAS, is to build a new apartment block on broadly the footprint of the demolished villas. This includes a lower, three storey, projecting annexe and single storey infill development to either side of the annexe. This is consistent with the existing, historic, pattern of development along Agar Grove.
- 7.16 There are several examples of small scale infill development within the Conservation area, usually exploiting land to the rear of existing frontage plots where side roads connect to Agar Grove, with two examples close to the application site (49 and 102 Agar Grove). These are based on a significant reduction of scale in comparison with the larger Victorian Villas and the preservation of garden spaces to the street frontage and therefore are consistent with the existing pattern and hierarchy of development in the conservation area.

7.17

Having regard to the statutory and policy requirements in relation to development within conservation areas, it is considered that the following conclusions can be drawn:

- 1 The site currently detracts from the character and appearance of the conservation area and its redevelopment is desirable in principle
- 2 The policy approach is supportive of high quality design which preserves or enhances the conservation area but does not dictate a particular approach to style. Contemporary design is acceptable where justified
- 3 The proposals are based on the scale and hierarchical arrangement of existing development within the Camden Square Conservation Area
- 4 The approach to detailed design is contemporary but based on a contextually sensitive approach. The main building material is brick and the proportions and pattern of fenestration are related to historical precedents
- 5 The contribution of the garden space to St Paul's Crescent is preserved through new tree planting and the maintenance of an appropriate spacing between the proposed mews house to St Paul's Crescent and the principal block to Agar Grove
- 6 Both the Mews House and the main apartment building create an active frontage to St Paul's Crescent which has the potential to enhance the character and amenity of the landscaped area at the junction with Agar Grove
- 7 The proposals will result in the enhancement of the Camden Square Conservation area, thereby meeting all the relevant national and local policy requirements for development within conservation areas.

## 8.0 **Assessment of the Scheme**

### **Introduction**

- 8.1 The following sets out the key considerations when assessing the proposed development of 51 and 53 Agar Grove.

### **Land Use**

- 8.2 The former lawful use of the site is residential and officers have confirmed that the existing use continues to be residential. As the existing area is predominantly residential and residential use is the priority land use in Camden, the redevelopment of the site for residential purposes accords with existing planning policy and provides an opportunity to provide high quality residential floorspace to contribute to local and strategic housing objectives.

### **Scale, layout and Design**

- 8.3 The proposed development has taken account of the general scale and uniform character of this part of Agar Grove. The introduction of development to the rear of the property with access from St Paul's Crescent reflects the development within the rear gardens of no. 49 Agar Grove and no. 102 Agar Grove.
- 8.4 The density of the proposed development is 297 hr/ha, which is in accord with the acceptable density range for an urban site with a PTAL of 2, which is 200–450 habitable rooms per hectare.

### **Dwelling Mix**

- 8.5 The scheme provides a mix of unit sizes (three 1-bed, three 2-bed and two 3-bed units), in accord with London Plan Policy 3.8 which indicates that new developments should offer a range of housing choices in terms of the mix of housing sizes and types. Paragraph 6.39 of Camden's Core Strategy states that the Council's dwelling size priorities for market housing are 2-bedrooms (highest priority), followed by 3 and 4-bedrooms (medium priority). The unit sizes are generally in accordance with the Mayor's Dwelling space standards. Officers confirmed at the meeting on 20 March 2014 that the proposed mix is acceptable.

### **Affordable Housing**

- 8.6 The London Borough of Camden housing policy is triggered by net additional dwellings (10 or more units) or by additional floorspace (more than 1,000 sqm). There is therefore no requirement for affordable housing provision on the site.

## **Impact on the Conservation Area**

- 8.7 The site is located within the Camden Square Conservation Area. The existing site is in a poor condition and detracts from the appearance of the conservation area.
- 8.8 As noted in Section 7 of this Statement, the former villa buildings at 51-53 Agar Grove which previously occupied the site have been lost. Whilst these would have been regarded as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and in accordance with NPPF and local policies there would have been a presumption in favour of their retention, only the basement and ground floor levels of 53 Agar Grove survive. As previously noted, it is not considered practical or economic to conserve them. Proposals for redevelopment would enhance the area's townscape and the local environment.

## **Access and Parking**

- 8.9 The scheme would be car free and there is no scope to provide parking in front of the property. Twelve cycle spaces are provided. As there are less than ten units, there is no requirement to provide residential units suitable for wheelchair users.

## **Sustainability**

- 8.10 Section 7 of the Design and Access Statement sets out how the scheme complies with the London Borough of Camden's emission target of 40% carbon dioxide improvement and the requirement for Code for Sustainable Homes level 4. The pre-assessment study confirmed a score of 72.5%.

## **The Case for Demolition and Replacement**

- 8.11 The current condition of the site is poor, with very little of the original houses remaining as shown on the site photographs and drawings of the existing property (A40 to A43); and fails to contribute to the existing townscape. In contrast, the proposed scheme has been specifically designed to respect the local context and in particular the character of the conservation area. The proposal is a high quality scheme that will reinstate the former properties in a contemporary style as well as delivering new dwellings that will fully comply with the current regulations and standards.

9.0

## Summary and Conclusion

9.1

The application is for the demolition of the remaining parts of the former pair of residential villas at nos. 51 and 53 Agar Grove and the erection of a four storey plus basement building fronting onto Agar Grove and a three storey plus basement mews house to the rear, with access from St. Paul's Crescent. The proposed development makes use of what is currently a derelict site which detracts from the local streetscape and conservation area. The scheme provides eight new residential units in a mix of dwelling types and sizes, and an enhanced landscaped setting, which replaces the existing trees with mature species and maintains an appropriate spacing between the proposed mews house and the principal block to Agar Grove.

9.2

The proposed development fronting onto Agar Grove has been designed to architecturally and visually reflect the existing paired villas along this part of Agar Grove. The proposed side and rear extensions have been designed to be subservient to the main villa, which will occupy a similar position to the original buildings. The mews house to the rear is of a similar form to that to the rear of nos. 49 and 102 Agar Grove.

9.3

The scheme is a high quality contemporary design which respects the local context in accordance with paragraphs 14.7 and Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy. It has been designed in accordance with Policy DP24, which states that "*within areas of distinctive character, development should reinforce those elements which create the character. Where townscape is particularly uniform attention should be paid to responding closely to the prevailing scale, form and proportions and materials*". The Pre-Application Advice Note from Camden Council (12 December 2013) confirmed on page 9 that as the character of the street had eroded and the condition of many properties was poor and in need of investment and reinstatement of detail and that consequently the current streetscape was not considered to be complete and did not represent the highest quality character and appearance. The note then confirms that in these circumstances officers could therefore support a very high quality contemporary approach to the sites redevelopment. That approach is exemplified in the submitted proposals.



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