

Fitzjohn's Avenue, NW3

Prepared for the London Borough of Camden

Planning, Design and Access Statement (including Landscaping and Townscape, Heritage and Visual Impact Assessment)

A detailed planning application, submitted on behalf of PegasusLife to provide specialist living accommodation for older people

Appendix 2

Townscape and Visual Assessment

PegasusLife



Arthur West House, Fitzjohn's Avenue,
Hampstead
Townscape and Visual Impact Statement

Prepared on behalf of PegasusLife Ltd

December 2014

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Project Ref:	23671	23671
Status:	Draft	Final
Issue/Rev:	001	002
Date:	12.12.14	18.12.14
Prepared by:	PC	PC
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Ref: 23671/A5

Date: 14th December 2014

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ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL

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Site Context Photographs (1-21)

Verifiable Photomontages – Full Size

Verifiable Photomontages – Methodology

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Barton Willmore Landscape Planning and Design (BWLPD) were commissioned by PegasusLife Ltd to undertake a Townscape and Visual Appraisal and prepare a Townscape and Visual Impact Statement in respect of land at Arthur West House, Fitzjohn's Avenue ('the Site'), in order to determine its suitability in townscape and visual terms for retirement residential development ('the Proposed Development') and to provide townscape and visual advice to assist in integrating such development into the surrounding townscape.
- 1.2 A townscape appraisal is the systematic description and analysis of the features within the townscape, such as landform, vegetation cover, settlement and transport patterns and land use which create a particular sense of place. A visual appraisal assesses visual receptors, which are the viewers of the townscape, and could include people at locations such as residential or business properties, public open space, roadways and Public Rights of Way (PRoW).
- 1.3 In order to explain the potential of the Site to accommodate the Proposed Development, the key objectives of this assessment are to:
- Assess the townscape character and quality of the Site and its context;
 - Assess the visibility of the Site and the nature and quality of existing views;
 - Identify the townscape and visual mitigation by design requirements for the Proposed Development;
 - Consider the potential effects of the Proposed Development.
- 1.4 The methodology for the townscape and visual appraisal and summary assessment of potential townscape and visual effects is based on principles of good practice from Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) 3rd Edition¹. The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage guidelines, 'Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland'² were also referred to, as appropriate.
- 1.5 In summary, the fundamental considerations in the assessment of townscape and visual effects are the sensitivity of townscape features, visual receptors and townscape character areas; and the magnitude of change (adverse and/or beneficial) that these receptors are likely to experience as a result of the Proposed Development. Sensitivity is rated on a scale of Very High-Low and magnitude of change rated on a scale of High-Very Low.

¹ Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013

² University of Sheffield and Land Use Consultants on behalf of Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, (2002). 'Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland', UoS/LUC.

1.6 Townscape character has been assigned a sensitivity based on the character and quality of the existing townscape (value) and its ability to accommodate change (susceptibility). Sensitivity of townscape character areas has been classified as High, Medium or Low as follows:

- High: Townscape of distinctive components and characteristics, which may also be nationally designated for its scenic beauty, sensitive to small changes. Attributes that make up the townscape offer very limited opportunities for the accommodation of change, or development of successful mitigation. A townscape element/ feature which makes a strong positive contribution to townscape character and would take considerable time to replace, e.g. a mature tree or woodland that makes a strong positive contribution to townscape character;
- Medium: Townscape of relatively common components and characteristics, reasonably tolerant of changes. Attributes that make up the townscape offer some opportunities for the accommodation of change, or development of successful mitigation. The townscape may be valued locally. A townscape element/ feature which makes some positive contribution to townscape character. This element is replaceable but maturity would take some time, e.g. a tree that contributes to the local townscape, or a hedgerow that contributes positively to the Site, but would be replaceable over time; and
- Low: townscape of relatively inconsequential components and characteristics, the nature of which is potentially tolerant of substantial change and offers opportunities for successful mitigation. A townscape element/ feature that does not contribute positively to townscape character. This element would be easily replaceable, e.g. a hedgerow in poor condition that does not contribute positively to the townscape, or young planting that could easily be replaced over a short time.

1.7 Intermediate categories are used where a finer degree of differentiation is required, for example, to describe the sensitivity of receptors which do not entirely fall within one of the main categories, or to provide a sufficient range of differentiation across a large number of receptors.

1.8 Magnitude of change for townscape character is determined through a combination of the scale of the development, the type of development and the level of integration of new features with existing elements and can result from direct change (within the character area) or indirect change (influence from change outside the character area). Magnitude of change can be classified as High, Medium, Low, Very Low or Neutral, as follows:

- High: an obvious change in townscape character and characteristics, ranging from a limited change in townscape characteristics over an extensive area, to an intensive change over a more limited area;
- Medium: discernible changes in townscape character and characteristics, typically moderate change in a localised area;
- Low: a small change in character and characteristics of the townscape, typically a minor change in a localised area;
- Very Low: virtually imperceptible change in any component, character or characteristics; and
- Neutral: no change discernible in any component.

1.9 The sensitivity of visual receptors in views will be dependent on:-

- The location and context of the viewpoint;
- The expectations and occupation or activity of the receptor;
- The importance of the view (which may be determined with respect to its popularity or numbers of people affected, its appearance in guide books, on tourist maps, and in the facilities provided for its enjoyment and reference to it in literature or art).

1.10 The most sensitive receptors may include:

- Users of outdoor recreation facilities, including public open spaces and public rights of way, where attention or interest may be focused on the townscape;
- Communities where the development results in changes in the townscape setting or value of views enjoyed by the community.

1.11 The magnitude of change in views is assessed in degrees of impact as defined below:

- High: High degree of change to existing view (e.g. loss of characteristic features) and/or high degree of exposure to view (e.g. near-distance or open views). Changed features in the view form the dominant influence on the view and become the key focus in the view. Changed features do not integrate well with existing features (adverse change only).
- Medium: Medium degree of change to existing view (e.g. partial loss of characteristic features) and/or medium degree of exposure to view (e.g. middle-distance or partial views). Changed features are clearly visible in the view and form an important but not defining element of the view. Changed features may partially integrate with existing features (adverse change only).
- Low: Low degree of change to existing view (e.g. limited loss of characteristic features) and/or low degree of exposure to view (e.g. long-distance, interrupted or glimpsed views). Changed features are visible in the view, but form a minor element

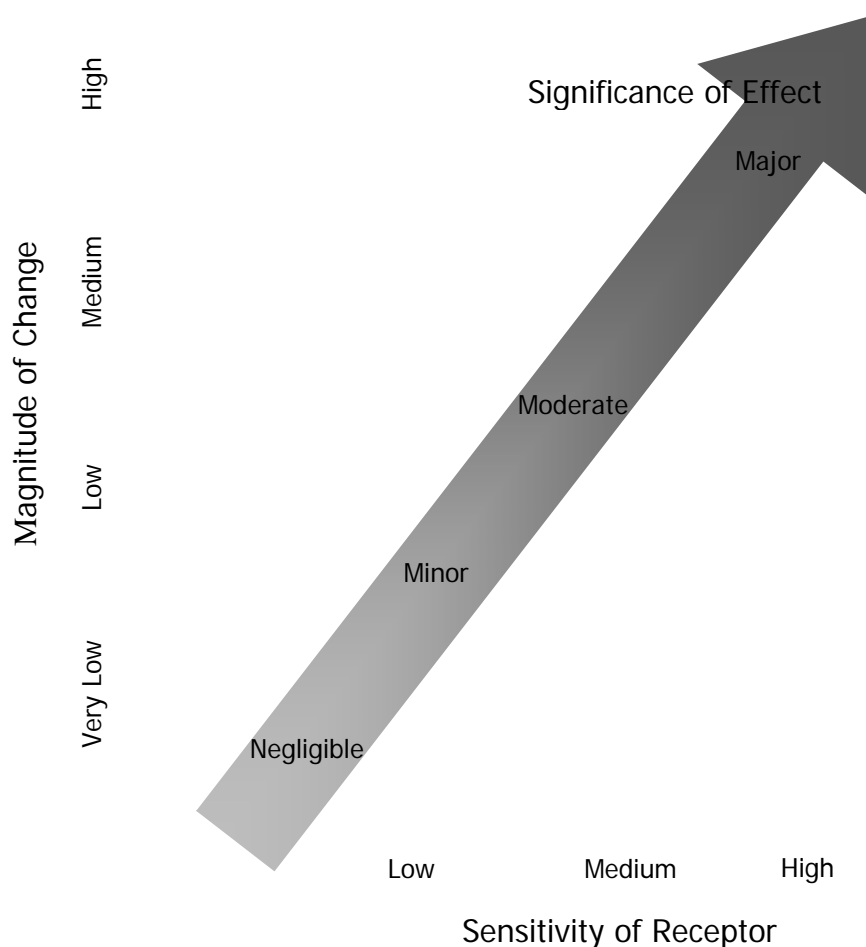
of the view. Changed features integrate well with existing features (adverse change only).

- Very Low: Barely perceptible change to existing view and/or very brief exposure to view. Changed features may go unnoticed as minor elements in the view.
- Neutral: No change discernible in existing view.

1.12 Intermediate categories are used where a finer degree of differentiation is required, for example, to describe the magnitude of change for receptors which do not entirely fall within one of the main categories, or to provide a sufficient range of differentiation across a large number of receptors.

1.13 The combination of magnitude of change and sensitivity of receptor results in a significance of effect of neutral to major (adverse or beneficial).

1.14 An indication of the correlation between magnitude of change and sensitivity of receptor is shown below.



- 1.15 Where it is considered that there is potential for both beneficial and adverse changes, these magnitudes of change are noted and the balance of these considerations used to inform conclusions on significance of effect.
- 1.16 A major significance of effect would be more likely to occur from high sensitivity receptors such as people in public open space and public rights of way, where attention is focused on the townscape/landscape, where they would experience a high magnitude change in the view. A minor significance of effect would be more likely from the least sensitive receptors, such as road users or users of commercial properties where attention is not focused on the landscape, and where there would be a low magnitude of change in view. Where no change is identified the significance is assessed as neutral.
- 1.17 Information is presented on the following plans and photographs:
- Figure 1: Site Context Plan at scale: 1:5,000 at A1/1:10,000 at A3;
 - Figure 2: Topographic Features Plan at scale: 1:5,000 at A1/1:10,000 at A3;
 - Figure 3: Local Townscape Character Plan at scale: 1:2,500 at A3;
 - Figure 4: Site Appraisal Plan (Aerial Photograph) at scale: 1:1,000 at A3;
 - Figure 5: Visual Appraisal Plan at scale: 1:2,000 at A1/1:4,000 at A3; and
 - Site Context Photographs (1-21), including at scale extracts of Site Context Photographs 12 and 21)
 - Verifiable Photomontages – Full Size and Methodology

2.0 SITE CONTEXT

Site Location

- 2.1 As shown in **Figure 1**, in terms of its setting within the wider townscape, the Site location at the junction of Prince Arthur Road and B511 Fitzjohn's Avenue, lies on the southern fringes of the centre of Hampstead, London Borough of Camden, approximately 3.8km kilometres (km) from the northern edge of the central area of London.
- 2.2 The Site lies approximately 700 metres (m) to the north of Finchley Road/South Hampstead/Swiss Cottage commercial district, which also features major vehicle and rail routes and interchanges. The Site lies approximately 1km to the east of West End Lane/West Hampstead commercial district.

Topography Features

- 2.3 As shown in **Figure 2**, the dominant topographical feature in the vicinity of the Site is a spur of elevated land, extending south from a prominent ridgeline which contains central London to the north of the River Thames. Nearby highpoints include the junction of Spaniards Road and North End Way, on the northern edge of the centre of Hampstead, approximately 870m to the north of the Site, at approximately 130m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). Central Hampstead is situated at approximately 120-125m AOD.
- 2.4 The Site is situated at approximately 105m AOD on the uppermost western slopes of the spur, which extends south from central Hampstead as far as South Hampstead. The spur is defined to the west by the valley of the River Tyburn. The course of the river is covered, resulting in loss of legibility of the underlying topographical structure of the area.
- 2.5 The ridgeline of this spur coincides with the north-eastern boundary of the Site. Land falls relatively steeply to the west from this localised ridgeline (approximately 1:12 between Fitzjohn's Avenue and Froggnal, approximately 300m to the south-west). As a result, the ridgeline provides containment from the east of land on the western slopes of the spur.

Land Use/Settlement

- 2.6 Urban development within central London north of the River Thames is formed of a primarily commercial core. The structure of the northern edge of this core area is influenced by historic communication routes north from the capital to the rest of the country. These include rail routes, which are tunnelled under the Hampstead ridgeline and

include a series of lines which pass beneath the spur on which the Site is located, emerging from tunnels approximately 650m to the south-west of the Site in the vicinity of Finchley Road and West Hampstead. A41 Finchley Road is a major vehicle routeway extending north-west from central London.

- 2.7 Fitzjohn's Avenue forms an important and direct vehicle and pedestrian route between Finchley Road/Swiss Cottage and central Hampstead. The route is aligned with the localised ridgeline of the spur extending south from Hampstead, which provides part of the townscape setting for the transport and commercial areas to the south-west.
- 2.8 Development flanking, and in some cases set back from, Fitzjohn's Avenue is of mixed uses, with a number of institutional buildings including healthcare, education and sheltered accommodation, in addition to residential development. Henderson Court sheltered accommodation is a particularly prominent institutional building, situated immediately to the east of the Site.
- 2.9 This mix of uses intensifies to the north of the Site as Fitzjohn's Avenue extends to central Hampstead, and includes retail/commercial, entertainment and infrastructural (underground station and busy traffic junctions) uses, in addition to residential development.
- 2.10 Land use east of Fitzjohn's Avenue is predominantly residential but further uses include educational and retail/commercial and entertainment on Hampstead High Street/Rosslyn Hill, between approximately 175-400m from the Site.
- 2.11 West of the Site, land use is again predominantly residential as far as West End Lane, West Hampstead, albeit with significant extents of land dedicated to sports pitches and educational facilities, situated off Frognal and Lymington Road.
- 2.12 Significant semi-natural open spaces are located at Hampstead Heath, a minimum of approximately 600m to the north and north-east of the Site, separated from it by built development within central Hampstead.
- 2.13 A number of large buildings are evident in the surrounding townscape, most notably:
- Greenhill residential estate, approximately 100m east (up to 5 storeys in a continuous arrangement of blocks);
 - Henderson Court (sheltered accommodation), approximately 30m east (up to 3 storeys in a continuous quadrangle layout, with a 4 storey lift shaft);
 - North Bridge House School, Hampstead, approximately 150m east (up to approximately 5+ storeys in principal block); and

- Monro House (sheltered accommodation), approximately 40m to the north (basement + up to 2.5/3 storeys in a continuous 'E'-shaped block)

- 2.14 In addition, there is a very large scale of residential properties in the surrounding area, notably along Fitzjohn's Avenue in the immediate vicinity of the Site, including detached and semi-detached buildings of substantial footprint, formed of basement + up to 4.5/5 storeys, notably no.104, immediately to the north-east of the Site.
- 2.15 In summary, the Site is located on the southern edge of central Hampstead, within an area of substantial built form, including a range of land uses, on a prominent routeway.

Vegetation

- 2.16 Canopy trees are significant structural elements of the surrounding streetscape and include lime, beech, London plane, holm oak, horse chestnut and sycamore species, among others. Large residential gardens also include native and ornamental canopy trees, in addition to ornamental shrubs. This includes the area of residential gardens including the north-western part of the Site.
- 2.17 In contrast to Fitzjohn's Avenue in the vicinity of and to the south-east of the Site, which features a number of canopy tree, including relatively regular avenue planting to the south of the dog-leg at Spring Walk, central Hampstead commercial area to the north of the Site does not include street trees in front of the predominantly commercial land uses.

Designations

- 2.18 The Site lies within the Fitzjohns/Netherhall Conservation Area. All trees within the Site are therefore subject to protection.
- 2.19 Extensive clusters of Listed Buildings are located within central Hampstead to the north, predominantly grade II or II* but including occasional grade I buildings such as Church of St. John, approximately 200m to the north-west of the Site; sporadic listed buildings flanking Fitzjohn's Avenue to the south (all grade II), including Fitzjohn's Primary School and a number of residential properties; a small cluster of listed buildings on Ellerdale Road, including Institute of St Marcellina (grade I) at no.6 Ellerdale Road, approximately 60m to the west of the Site.
- 2.20 The setting of heritage assets in relation to the Site and Proposed Development is considered separately, in the Planning, Design and Heritage Statement.

- 2.21 The Site does not lie within any London View Management Framework Panoramas or View Corridors.

Landscape/Townscape Character

National Character Area (NCA) 112: Inner London

- 2.22 This document, published in 2013, includes a number of observations of relevance to the Site and Proposed Development, summarised as follows:

- Varied geology and topography have defined the growth of London;
- An extensive urban forest of small woodlands and trees brings nature into the heart of the city, provides shade and cooling, cleans the air, communicates the seasons, supports wildlife and provides a link to London's previous wooded landscape;
- A unique mix of modern architecture and built heritage features;
- The low, wooded ridges to the north and south form a low-key backdrop to the internationally significant buildings and cityscape in the wide valley bottom;
- Landscape Change: Inner London experiences a constant programme of re-development, particularly at the centre of the NCA and guidance has encouraged urban greening measures;
- Landscape Opportunities: Safeguard views and vistas of townscapes; and
- Plan for the creation of new urban landscapes associated with redevelopment, major infrastructure projects and urban greening.

London's Natural Signatures: Hampstead Ridge Natural Landscape Area (no. 5)

- 2.23 This document, published in 2011, includes a number of observations of relevance to the Site and Proposed Development, summarised as follows:

- Natural signature: "A mosaic of ancient woodland, scrub and acid grassland along ridgetop summits with panoramic views";
- Key influences include individual specimen veteran trees and orchards on lower slopes; and
- Design Clues of relevance include: Highlight the transitional changes in landscape patterns and character on the slopes of the ridge – blocks of woodland, scrub, acid grassland and heath on a series of terraces or along cross-slope routes; mature specimen trees... to define and divide open spaces; and plant orchards within housing.

2.24 In relation to the northern part of the borough, in which the Site is located, the document notes the following of relevance to the Site and Proposed Development:

- Hampstead has a clearly defined 'village centre' which reflects origins;
- There is a variety of building types ... with a generally densely packed, high quality urban grain of a range of styles, scales and ages; and
- Many high quality, architect-designed houses from the 19th and 20th centuries, many of which ... important parts of local heritage and listed for national significance.

Fitzjohns/Netherhall Conservation Area Statement

2.25 Published in 2001, this document makes the following points of relevance to the townscape character of the area including the Site:

- Character and appearance of the area: spreads across the southern slopes of Hampstead, on the descent from Hampstead Village to Swiss Cottage/Finchley Road. The hills and their gradients play an important part in determining the area's character. Long views along the Avenues combine with substantially scaled properties and generous grounds to create an imposing district.
- Roofs are important and conspicuous element – mid-late Victorian architecture that dominates the profile of the skyline. The most common types of roof are gables (various designs), pitched with dormers, shallow pitched with overhanging eaves. There are few terraces and the gaps between buildings provide views to rear gardens and rhythm to frontages.
- Streetscape contribution is significant: trees (public and private) and vegetation, boundaries between gardens and street, rear gardens. Large mature trees have a presence in nearly every view.
- Large number of institutional and educational uses that have an impact on the streetscape.
- Sub Area One – Fitzjohn's: From closely packed streets of Hampstead, powerful impact of scale, topography and architecture of this mature avenue. Dramatic descent to Swiss Cottage, generous width and length of road and detached houses make it the most prominent street of the area. Imposing trees part of original street design. Verges and front gardens add to sense of verdant space. Front boundary walls of brick, terracotta and stone are characteristic of Conservation Area.

- Fitzjohn's Avenue: Earliest development at northern end with short groups of terraces on either side of the road until the junction with Prince Arthur Road... No. 79, Arthur West House, is an imposing five storey building from early 1970s, marred by its excessive height in relation to general townscape and prominent siting too close to Prince Arthur Road.
- Prince Arthur Road (south side): early 20th century in-fill development and further development post Second World War gives a diversity of style.
- Streetscape Audit sub-section: street trees are valuable streetscape elements.
- Current Issues sub-section notes inappropriate bulk, massing and height and impact on views of development in the Conservation area which has not positively contributed to its character and appearance.
- Guidelines section, 'New Development', Policy F/N1: new development an opportunity to enhance conservation area and should respect existing features. 'Trees and Landscaping', Policy F/N28: retain and protect trees which contribute to character or appearance of Conservation Area. Incorporate trees sensitively into design and demonstrate that no trees will be lost or damaged. Policy F/N29: high standard of external space which respects character and appearance of Conservation Area.

Townscape Character – Local

2.26 A townscape and visual appraisal of the Site and surrounding area was undertaken in June 2014. Based on this exercise, a number of Local Townscape Character Areas (LTCA) were identified. The extents of these LTCA's are illustrated on **Figure 3** and their key characteristics described below.

2.27 LTCA1: Hampstead Centre:

- Focused on junction of Hampstead High Street and Fitzjohn's Avenue/Heath Street.
- Imposing terraces of built form up to 4½ storeys and including notable feature buildings.
- Sense of vertical scale accentuated by proximity of built form to roadway and steep slope down from north-south.
- Absence of street trees results in dominance of built form.
- Predominantly retail/commercial frontages to principal corridors.
- More intimate side streets/courts, including residential and low-key retail uses.

2.28 LTCA2: Fitzjohn's Avenue:

- Principal Vehicle and pedestrian route connecting central Hampstead with important commercial centre at Finchley Road/Swiss Cottage.
- Prominence befitting this role, resulting from: ridgeline route, scale of built form, width of roadway and footway and mature tree planting.
- Mature canopy tree vegetation along the localised ridgeline accentuates the prominence and sense of place of this route, although there is a marked distinction from the regular positioning and mature scale of London Plane trees flanking the road to the south of the dog-leg at Spring Walk and the more sporadic planting (typically within gardens rather than footway) of trees of varying species and sizes between Spring Walk and central Hampstead, reflecting the subtle south-north transition to a streetscape more dominated by built form.
- This transition in character at the southern edge of central Hampstead is reflected in the imposing character of substantial built forms, notably north-west of Prince Arthur Road (including up to 5 storeys at 104 Fitzjohn's Avenue on the ridgeline immediately to the north-east of the Site), albeit with some variation in styles and scales and softened by canopy tree vegetation.
- At this part of Fitzjohn's Avenue, the vertical scale of built form is emphasised by strong vertical patterns in façade treatment, as well as a generally closer built frontage to the roadway and closer relationship of neighbouring buildings, than to the south-east of Prince Arthur Road.
- To the south-east, the generally lower building heights, greater set-backs from the roadway and greater spacing between built forms results in a slightly more expansive character.
- Many built forms of institutional uses flank Fitzjohn's Avenue.
- Built form flanking the roadway is predominantly of 19th and early 20th century construction but prominent more recent built forms include Arthur West House (up to 6 storeys); Henderson Court (3+ storeys); Field Court (3+ storeys); No.63 (3 storeys); 15 Akenside Road (4 storeys); un-named residential block north of Nutley Terrace (4 storeys); and NHS Tavistock Centre opposite Maresfield Gardens (5 storeys).
- The avenue ridgeline has a noticeable influence on lower-lying land to the south-west, to which it provides a horizon of built form set amid and softened by vegetation and a clear structural legibility within the townscape, denoting an important physical link with the more elevated areas of Hampstead.
- Immediately to the south-west of the roadway, the rapid fall in levels emphasises the imposing character of built forms flanking Fitzjohn's Avenue.
- The existing built form of Arthur West House forms a relatively uninteresting and uninspiring component of the otherwise richly and vibrantly designed frontages of built fabric flanking the roadway. It is this relative lack of visual interest through

absence of, or regularity of façade pattern that, in combination with relatively dark and unvaried brickwork, results in its overbearing nature, rather than its height, which is broadly equivalent to no.104 Fitzjohn's Avenue opposite.

2.29 LTCA3a-d: Residential Streets. As shown on **Figure 3**, a number of areas in the wider townscape are formed of residential streets. The key characteristics of these areas are as follows:

- Almost exclusively 19th-early 20th century residential properties.
- Typically well vegetated with canopy trees lining streets and front gardens/on-plot parking.
- Scale of built form typically ranges between 2½ storeys without basement to basement plus 3½ storeys.
- Predominantly detached or semi-detached in LTCA 3a: Frognaal – Arkwright Road, including large scale villas. Prince Arthur Road to the east of the Site predominantly 2½ storeys whereas Ellerdale Road to west and north-west of Site includes built forms up to basement plus 3½ storeys. On Prince Arthur Road to the south-west of Fitzjohn's Avenue, there is a contrast between broken massing on south-eastern side and unbroken massing in the form of Arthur West House.
- LTCA 3b: Prince Arthur Road East, includes a mixture of large scale semi-detached and detached housing flanking Prince Arthur Road and mews properties to the south of Perrin's Lane. Prince Arthur Road to north-east of Fitzjohn's Avenue includes contrast in massing between broken massing (north-west side) and unbroken massing in LTCA4a (Henderson Court, Greenhill).
- Predominantly basement plus 3½ storeys terraced properties in LTCA3c: Gayton Road – Willoughby Road, although there are terraces of 2-storey, mid-20th century properties on Rudall Crescent.
- Predominantly basement plus 3½ storeys semi-detached or detached properties in LTCA3d: Thurlow Road – Lyndhurst Road.

2.30 LTCA4: Large-Scale Institutional. As shown on **Figure 3**, a number of areas in the wider townscape are dominated by large-scale institutional character. The key characteristics of these areas are as follows:

- Typically unbroken massing of large-scale built forms creating dominant patterns which are typically disassociated from patterns of adjacent residential LTCAs.
- Range of uses includes educational (notably LTCA4b: UCS Campus and schools to the north-east of Fitzjohn's Avenue); sheltered accommodation (including Henderson

Court, immediately to the east of the Site); and residential (including Greenhill complex to the north-east of Henderson Court.

- From LTCA4a: Vane Close-Fitzjohns, the institutional influence extends across Fitzjohn's Avenue to Arthur West House.
- Associated features include parking, service entrances, small-scale formal sports provision and formal open space.

2.31 LTCA5: Hampstead High Street – Avenue:

- Extends commercial character of LTCA1 to the south-east.
- Includes greater set-backs of built form than central Hampstead.
- Mature canopy tree planting set into pavements to create avenue character.
- Mixture of built form sizes, eras and styles creates less dominant sense of vertical scale than in LTCA1.

2.32 In summary, the area including the Site includes a mixture of character influences. The extent of Fitzjohn's Avenue in the vicinity of the Site forms a transitional zone on the approach from the more expansive, well vegetated avenue to the south-east to the more dominant vertical character of built form in central Hampstead to the north. There is also a strong institutional influence immediately to the north-east of the Site, including large scale and unbroken massing at Henderson Court. As a result of the conservation area designation, it is considered that the character of the area including the Site is of high value but of medium susceptibility to the type of development proposed owing to the transitional character of the immediate vicinity of the Site and the influences of taller built forms and large scale massing. As a result, it is considered that the character sensitivity of the vicinity of the Site to the type of development proposed is medium-high.

Policy

2.33 Policies related to the Site and Proposed Development are considered in detail in the Planning, Design and Heritage Statement. Those of particular relevance to the consideration of Townscape and Visual matters are summarised here.

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

2.34 Paragraph 17: take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas.

2.35 Paragraphs 58 and 61:

- Add to the overall quality of the area.

- Establish strong sense of place.
- Create attractive and comfortable places.
- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development.
- Respond to local character and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.
- Visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.
- Address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.

London Plan (2011)

- 2.36 Policy 2.9 Inner London: improve its distinct environment, neighbourhoods and public realm.
- 2.37 Policy 2.18 Green Infrastructure: the Network of Open and Green Spaces; and Policy 5.10 Urban Greening: incorporate appropriate elements of green infrastructure, integrated into the wider network and contribute to urban greening.
- 2.38 Policy 7.1 Building London's Neighbourhoods and Communities: reinforce or enhance the character, legibility, permeability and accessibility of the neighbourhood.
- 2.39 Policy 7.4 Local Character: consider form, function, and structure of an area, place or street and the scale, mass and orientation of surrounding buildings. Improve an area's visual or physical connection with natural features. High quality design response: regard to pattern and grain of the existing spaces and streets in orientation, scale, proportion and mass; positive relationship between the urban structure and natural landscape features, including underlying topography; human in scale, positive relationship between buildings and street level activity and people feel comfortable with their surroundings.
- 2.40 Policy 7.5 Public Realm: public realm comprehensible at a human scale. Landscape treatment... of the highest quality, have a clear purpose, maintain uncluttered spaces and contribute to the easy movement of people through the space.
- 2.41 Policy 7.6 Architecture: provide high quality indoor and outdoor spaces and integrate well with the surrounding streets and open spaces.

London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework (2010)

Camden Core Strategy

- 2.42 Policy CS4 Areas of More Limited Change: some development is expected to take place in most parts of Camden. Development in areas of more limited change must respect character of surroundings ... provide environmental improvements, including improvements to walking routes and other links.
- 2.43 Policy CS5 Managing the Impact of Growth and Development: protecting and enhancing environment.
- 2.44 Policy CS14 Promoting High Quality Places and Conserving our Heritage: including highest standard of design that respects local context and character; preserve and enhance settings of heritage assets; promote high quality landscaping and works to streets and public spaces.

Camden Development Policies 2010-2025

- 2.45 Policy DP24 Securing High Quality Design: consider: character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings; quality of materials to be used; visually interesting frontages at street level; existing natural features, such as topography and trees; landscaping including boundary treatments; appropriate amenity space.
- 2.46 Policy DP25 Conserving Camden's Heritage: no development that causes harm to character and appearance of a conservation area or setting of a listed building.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Camden Planning Guidance (CPG 1) Sustainability (September 2013)

- 2.47 Chapter 10 notes requirement for all developments to incorporate green and brown roofs, unless demonstrated not possible or appropriate.

Camden Planning Guidance (CPG 3) Design (September 2013)

- 2.48 Chapter 2 'Design excellence' notes the following:
- Context of development; design, use and materials of the building; public spaces. Consider buildings in terms of context, height ... orientation, siting, detailing and materials. Enhance character ... and nature of existing buildings on site, immediately adjacent and in the surrounding area, and any strategic or local views. Particularly important in conservation areas.

- Sensitive to natural and physical features on and off the site, including slope, topography and vegetation.
- Consider views, both local and London wide.
- Consider degree of openness, including gardens and views in and out of these spaces.
- Contribution to character.
- Visual interest from all aspects and distances.
- Overlooking of street including 'active' features at ground floor.

3.0 SITE APPRAISAL

- 3.1 The Site is illustrated in **Figure 4** and in **Site Context Photographs 1, 3, 4** and **5**. The Site is dominated by the single massing building of Arthur West House, in wings flanking Fitzjohn's Avenue and Prince Arthur Road.
- 3.2 The variety of massing between 3 and 6 storeys along the road frontages helps assimilate the built form into the surrounding townscape and overall scale of built form is not out of character with rest of streetscene, notably to the north-west and north-east of the Site, including No.104 Fitzjohn's Avenue opposite which is of equivalent height.
- 3.3 This assimilation is, however, largely due to the presence of specimen trees, which are fundamental in softening the massing of the built form, notably the Lime, Holm Oak (both B-grade in the Tree Maintenance Ltd arboricultural survey, May 2014) and Copper Beech (A-grade) specimens flanking Prince Arthur Road; and, to a lesser extent, the Sycamore (C-grade) specimen and B and C-grade Birches flanking Fitzjohn's Avenue. The Birch trees provide an influence of natural local character but are small (8-12m) and contrast with the mature scale and more formal character of street canopy trees along Fitzjohn's Avenue and, in combination with the Sycamore, provide an incoherent vegetated frontage, out of keeping with the more positive and formal frontages of built form elsewhere alongside the roadway.
- 3.4 The vertical massing and scale of the built form respond to the slope down Prince Arthur Road, although there are incoherent jumps in scale on the roofline which appears cluttered and the unbroken massing does not reflect the prevailing gaps in massing on Prince Arthur Road, including to the south-eastern side of the road and further to the south-west.
- 3.5 Additional, lower-level massing fills the majority of the north-western area of the Site in incoherent blocky forms, responding insensitively to the otherwise garden character of space between buildings by diminishing the predominantly softened, intimate character of this area (albeit this character is defined by a perimeter of large scale built form). A small area of garden is located to the south-west of this massing, including an area of lawn and a small group of ornamental trees. These trees are all C-grade, with the exception of one A grade ornamental Birch and one B grade Sycamore.
- 3.6 The landscape frontages of the Site are incoherent and illegible, including varying surfacing materials in six entrance features from the adjacent public footways, including ramps and steps, as well as simple gaps in walls. Furthermore, shrub vegetation is incoherent in form and species. This combination of hard and soft landscaping does not currently form a positive or coherent contribution to the street scene.

- 3.7 The built form façades of the street frontages lack visual interest and are overbearing, notably in the form of the tall lift volume on the eastern corner, which forms a dominant and negative influence on the character of the junction of Fitzjohn's Avenue. Frontage materials lack warmth and vibrancy in contrast to the surrounding buildings. The absence of, or lack of variety in façade pattern, notably fenestration, results in a bland appearance that does not reflect the surrounding built forms and does not make positive contribution to the streetscene.

4.0 VISUAL APPRAISAL

- 4.1 **Figure 5** and **Site Context Photographs 1-21** demonstrate that there is extremely limited visibility of the Site at present. The existing built form of Arthur West House is heavily softened by existing canopy trees and screened by existing built form and topography from many locations, notably to the north-east, beyond the localised ridgeline.
- 4.2 Existing built form is barely perceptible if at all visible from more than 100m in any direction, with exception of very limited glimpsed views from Fitzjohn's Avenue to the north (**Site Context Photographs 11** and **12**), seen in the context of canopy trees and large scale built form; and from the lower lying townscape to south-west, in the vicinity of the West End Lane overbridge of the London-Sheffield Mainline railway (**Site Context Photograph 21**). In this view, upper parts of existing built form appear as part of the skyline, along with vegetation and other buildings on Fitzjohn's Avenue local ridgeline. Those parts of Arthur West House that are visible are indistinct, unattractive and incoherent.
- 4.3 In near-distance views from Prince Arthur Road and Fitzjohn's Avenue, the built form is well softened by canopy trees, although clearly perceptible above them (**Site Context Photographs 1-6, 10** and **13-14**). In the latter views, Field Court and Henderson Court demonstrate the strong influences of large-scale massing in the vicinity of the Site.
- 4.4 On the lower extent of Prince Arthur Road, and the majority of locations on Ellerdale Road, built form screens views of the Site, with only glimpsed views obtained from two publicly accessible locations on Ellerdale Road (**Site Context Photographs 7-9**). In these views, Arthur West House appears incoherent and lacking in the locally characteristic vibrant façade treatments and forms a detracting feature on the skyline.
- 4.5 In representative views from the area to the south and south-west (**Site Context Photographs 15-20**), the Site is entirely screened by built form.

5.0 TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL MITIGATION BY DESIGN

5.1 As a result of the baseline assessment, key townscape and visual considerations to be addressed by the Proposed Development in terms of the townscape of the Site and its setting, include the following:

- Large scale built form on the Site is well assimilated into the townscape by existing surrounding built form and canopy trees, notably on Prince Arthur Road. The Proposal must respect and work with this approach.
- Existing built form does not provide a positive contribution to the townscape, as a result of bland and relatively unvarying façade patterns and dark, overbearing materials.
- The avenue townscape extending along the localised ridgeline includes a range of residential/institutional uses and includes large scale built form, with very strong vertical character to the north-west of Prince Arthur Road. The Site lies on a subtle transition between this character and the less strong vertical character to the south-east, albeit still with significant massing of buildings of institutional character.
- The existing built form does not provide a sensitive contribution to this transition, through the overbearing frontage to Fitzjohn's Avenue; in the dominant form of the lift volume on the eastern corner; and the fact that the massing on Prince Arthur Road is continuous rather than broken up.
- Large scale built form is barely visible if at all in wider townscape but in glimpsed views from lower-lying townscape to west, the existing built form is indistinct, unattractive and incoherent and does not complement legibility of avenue ridgeline.

5.2 From this assessment, Key Townscape and Visual mitigation by design objectives to be achieved are as follows:

5.3 **Enhance the character of Fitzjohn's Avenue:**

- Provide a positive, contemporary built form, echoing existing examples in Hampstead of outstanding modern architecture, with vibrant façade treatment and warm materials to complement the character of existing built forms in the vicinity.
- Complement existing strong vertical forms and patterns evident in the streetscape to the north-west of Prince Arthur Road and provide a more sensitive and positive transition in built form to the townscape to the south-east of Prince Arthur Road.
- Enhance structural canopy trees on frontage to Fitzjohn's Avenue – there is potential for more formal and coherent planting to create a more positive frontage of built form in balance with vegetation.

5.4 **Maintain sensitive relationship with Prince Arthur Road:**

- Enhance the transition in built form to the townscape of Prince Arthur Road through a more positive eastern corner to the built form and through allowing a gap between built forms.
- Provide a stepping-down in scale of built form to the south-west, to respect adjoining built forms and acknowledge the underlying topography.
- Respect the existing building lines on Prince Arthur Road.
- Maintain canopy tree planting to soften and assimilate built form, and provide more coherent and locally characteristic frontage walls to acknowledge more private character of this roadway.

5.5 **Maintain and enhance the character of the avenue ridgeline:**

- Building heights should be varied to reflect underlying topography, providing legibility of the ridgeline along Fitzjohn's Avenue in the local and wider townscape.
- The built form should complement the positive and vibrant façade treatment of existing tall built forms with strong vertical character on Fitzjohn's Avenue, in contributing to a sense of approach at the upper part of the slope at the southern edge of central Hampstead.
- Building heights should provide visual interest on the skyline, including in glimpsed views from Ellerdale Road, to west.
- In these views, the garden character between the Site and Ellerdale Road should be enhanced, including with canopy specimen trees and retained or re-constructed garden walls to provide visual interest and screening.
- Buildings should not notably exceed canopy tree profile in views from the townscape to south-west.
- Skyline profile of built form should be coherent, attractive and legible.

6.0 SUMMARY CONSIDERATION OF TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS AND CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS AGAINST TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL MITIGATION BY DESIGN RATIONALE OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 The Proposed Development is illustrated in the submitted plans and elevations and landscape plan, in addition to the associated verifiable photomontages which are included in **Appendix 1a-c**.

Townscape Features

- 6.2 In terms of individual townscape features, 13 no. trees are proposed to be removed as part of the construction of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development will include a more attractive and legible series of landscaped spaces than at present, with attractive and coherent surfacing and distinctive tree and shrub planting, including approximately 8 no. semi-mature specimen trees. These will provide a more coherent vegetated frontage to Fitzjohn's Avenue and a more coherent and attractive containment of the garden space to the rear of the proposed built form, extending approximately twice the distance along the boundary then at present. Over time, through positive management as part of the proposed land use, these trees will offset the proposed removal of trees from the Site. Frontage landscaping will be greatly enhanced through simplification of treatments along the street frontages in the form of walls with ground cover and bulb planting interrupted by only one principal entrance area on the Prince Arthur Road frontage and two discreet footways on the Fitzjohn's Avenue frontage. Overall, notwithstanding the adverse change of the loss of canopy trees, which are relatively high sensitivity features, the enhancement in the quality, legibility, condition and coherence of the collected townscape features within the Site will result in beneficial effects on townscape features, particularly with the establishment of planting over time.

Views

- 6.3 To accurately understand the proposed appearance of the built form in its townscape setting, views from 6 no. key representative publicly accessible viewpoints (**P1-P6**), have been used for assessment of visual effects and illustrated as **Verifiable Photomontages**. These photomontages have been prepared by DesignHive, a specialist photomontage consultant. The photomontage baseline photographs were taken in October 2014 and therefore, the existing and proposed built forms would be slightly more visible in winter months. An illustrative indication of this visibility has been provided in images showing the

existing vegetation transparent over the proposed built form. The images used are from viewpoints accessible by pedestrians, although these are on roadside footways rather than on paths or open spaces where attention would be more focused on the townscape, and are therefore considered to be of medium sensitivity as representative visual receptors. These locations are shown in the plan included within the Verifiable Photomontage Methodology.

- 6.4 **Viewpoint P1** is situated on the south-eastern side of Prince Arthur Road, north-east of Fitzjohn's Avenue, looking south-west. In this view, the height of the left hand side of the proposed built form is the same as existing, well below the level of the canopy tree in the foreground, and in keeping with the tall built form on the right hand side of the view, but provides a much more positive and attractive street frontage at the junction of Prince Arthur Road and Fitzjohn's Avenue. The illegible and incoherent changes in the existing massing further to the right are replaced by a more coherent frontage of brick and glass that reflects the character of existing built form to the right and provides a positive contrast to the monolithic built form to the left. It is considered that in this view, there would be a beneficial change in view of low magnitude, resulting in a beneficial visual effect of minor-moderate significance.
- 6.5 **Viewpoint P2** is situated on the south-eastern side of Prince Arthur Road, south-west of Fitzjohn's Avenue, looking north-east. In this view, the blank, dark and indistinct frontages of the existing building are replaced by a positive presentation of windows and lighter, locally characteristic brick, reflecting that visible to the left of the Proposed Development. The form is vigorously sculpted and presents visual interest, including a balance between the two curved bays at either end of the building. In combination with the more coherent frontage landscaping, the Proposed Development provides a positive contribution to the streetscene. Whilst the proposed built form is taller in this view, the massing steps back substantially at the nearest end of the building, avoiding any sense of over-dominance and providing a coherent, interesting skyline. Overall, a low magnitude of adverse change from a loss of view of the sky between trees would be offset by a low-medium magnitude of beneficial change from the enhanced street frontage, resulting in beneficial effects on this view of minor significance.
- 6.6 **Viewpoint P3** is situated on the north-eastern side of Fitzjohn's Avenue, at the junction with Perrin's Lane, looking south-east. In this view, the indistinct and incoherent appearance of Arthur West House is replaced by a positive and vibrant built form, of light, locally characteristic brick, interspersed with glazing, providing animation and visual interest to the frontage. In combination with the proposed specimen trees flanking the roadway, this provides a more coherent and positive street scene at the Site. The massing

of the built form, whilst slightly taller than existing and more exposed, as a result of the removal of the existing Sycamore tree from the frontage, is not out of keeping with the scale of development visible on the right hand side of the view. The Proposed Development provides greater cohesion on the skyline and, as a result of the vigorous sculpting of form, a more interesting townscape element of the view. As a result of the increased exposure of built form, pending the maturing of the proposed planting to soften the left hand edge of the built form and absorb it better into the townscape, in combination with the limited loss of sky resulting from the increase in scale of built form (albeit partially offset by the opening of sky from the removal of the sycamore on Fitzjohn's Avenue), it is considered that there would be an adverse change of low magnitude in this view. However, the Proposed Development would also result in a beneficial change to the streetscene of low magnitude, resulting from the more positive appearance of built form and landscaping. As a result, it is considered that, balancing these factors, there would be a neutral significance of effect in this view as a result of the Proposed Development. Over time, with the maturing of the proposed trees, there would be potential for beneficial effects in this view.

- 6.7 **Viewpoint P4** is situated on the south-western side of Fitzjohn's Avenue, looking south-east. In this view, the existing incoherent massing of the upper part of Arthur West house is clearly demonstrated. The built form is cluttered, illegible and includes large expanses of blank wall, which combine to provide a negative influence on the street scene. The proposed built form provides a more positive frontage to the street, including a vibrancy resulting from the vigorous sculpting of form and the detailing of fenestration. Pending the maturing of the proposed specimen trees on the frontage to Fitzjohn's Avenue, the built form appears more exposed to the street as a result of the removal of the existing Sycamore, although is nevertheless well anchored into the street scene by existing and proposed planting. The skyline would be formed of a coherent but strongly articulated series of angular bays, providing the perception of the existing articulation of pitched roofing, seen in the right hand side of the view. From this angle, the skyline would be perceived as slightly higher than existing but nevertheless, approximately the same as the building on the left hand side of Fitzjohn's Avenue, seen protruding out from the nearer building frontages. A progression in scale down to the properties visible on the right assists in assimilation the Proposed Development into the townscape. As a result of the increased sense of exposure of built form and the slight loss of sky, it is considered that there would be potential for adverse change of medium magnitude. This would be offset by the potential for beneficial change, resulting from the enhancement in street scene and skyline through provision of a more coherent, positive and vigorously sculpted façade treatment than at present, also of medium magnitude. As a result, it is considered that there would be neutral effects on this view as a result of the Proposed Development, although again,

over time, with the maturing of the proposed trees, there would be potential for beneficial effects in this view.

- 6.8 **Viewpoint P5** is situated on the north-eastern side of Fitzjohn's Avenue, looking north-west. In this view, the existing indistinct and incoherent built form of Arthur West House is replaced by the more coherent frontage of the Proposed Development. This includes, from this angle, the perception of a series of frontages, resulting from the vertical sculpting of the built form along the Fitzjohn's Avenue frontage. This frontage relates sensitively in pattern and through the decrease in scale in the distance, with the existing built forms beyond. The existing blank wall on the nearest part of Arthur West House is replaced by a curved bay of windows and brickwork, presenting a positive feature at the junction of Prince Arthur Road and Fitzjohn's Avenue. Henderson Court is prominent in the right hand side of the view and forms a strong influence on the character of the view. The Proposed Development responds sensitively by adopting some of the rhythm of the frontage of Henderson Court, whilst greatly enhancing the materials used and providing more sympathetic and interesting frontage to the street. As a result of these considerations, it is considered that a very low adverse change, as a result of a slight increase in perceived scale and sense of exposure of built form resulting from the removal of the Sycamore tree on the Fitzjohn's Avenue frontage, would be more than offset by the enhancement in street scene. This would result in a low beneficial magnitude of change. Balancing these factors it is considered that the Proposed Development would result in a minor significance of beneficial effect in this view. It is considered that there would be potential for further enhancement of this view with the maturing of frontage tree planting on Fitzjohn's Avenue.
- 6.9 **Viewpoint P6** is situated on the south-western side of West End Lane at the crossing of the London-Sheffield Mainline railway, approximately 1.1km from the Site, looking north-east. In this view, which represents the most open view to Site encountered from a publicly accessible location in the vicinity, the Proposed Development replaces the existing cluttered, indistinct and incoherent built form on the skyline with a building that provides a coherent cluster of similar coloured forms, emerging from and complementing the existing treeline in enhancing the legibility of Fitzjohn's Avenue as a prominent ridgeline element of the townscape. It is therefore considered that a very low magnitude of beneficial change would result, leading to beneficial effects on this view of minor significance.
- 6.10 On the basis of the above assessment, it is considered that there are likely to be beneficial changes in view from these publicly accessible representative viewpoints, resulting primarily from the positive contribution to the street scene arising from the Proposed Development. Whilst there would also be adverse changes in a limited number of views resulting from loss of views of open sky and increased exposure of built form as a result of

the increase scale, notably from near distances on Fitzjohn's Avenue to the north-west, these are considered to be offset by beneficial changes and further mitigated by the ongoing maturing of proposed specimen trees.

- 6.11 In terms of residential amenity, there are a limited number of private residential receptors with views of the proposed built form not represented by the above photomontage views, including front window views from properties on Fitzjohn's Avenue and Prince Arthur Road, opposite the Site; and rear window views from a very limited number on Ellerdale Road (2 no. properties with frontal views and 2 no. with oblique views) and Fitzjohn's Avenue (4 no. properties with oblique views) overlooking the rear garden of the Proposed Development. As for publicly accessible views, there will be beneficial changes in the form of the enhanced frontages and skyline and adverse changes in the form of the increased scale of the built form, resulting in loss of sky. It is considered that in these near distance views, the built form will appear less monolithic than existing in terms of massing and materials; more coherent in pattern on landscape and built form frontages and along the strongly-sculpted skyline; and of enhanced material quality through the use of lighter than existing brick and extensive fenestration. Furthermore, in terms of views from the rear windows of properties overlooking the garden of the Proposed Development, the existing massing of built form extending to the edge of approximately half the existing garden boundary will be replaced by garden, including proposed canopy tree planting along the boundary (including semi-mature stock), reinforcing the softening and screening provided by existing mature canopy trees and shrubs. Overall, it is considered that in private residential views of the street frontages from Prince Arthur Road and Fitzjohn's Avenue, the balance of medium levels of beneficial and adverse change is such that there would be neutral significance of effects on views. In terms of private residential views across rear gardens of properties on Ellerdale Road, medium levels of adverse change, combined with low levels of beneficial change the Proposed Development would overall result in a minor significance of adverse effect, diminishing over time with the maturing of proposed planting.

Townscape Character

- 6.12 The photomontages assist in demonstrating the potential effects of the Proposed Development on townscape character. The Proposed Development, whilst substantial in massing and height, would complement the subtle transition in character along the Fitzjohn's Avenue ridgeline from the relatively expansive, generally lower building height character to the south-east, to the dense, strongly vertical pattern of dominant built form in central Hampstead to the north. This would be achieved through positive and vibrant frontage treatments, in combination with attractive and coherent proposed vegetation and landscaping, as well as a sensitive use of different levels of massing of built form adjacent

to the street, reducing the overall perception of large-scale built form. The built form reflects the existing influences of large scale institutional massing at Henderson Court, immediately to the east of the Site, whilst providing a more sympathetic material character that integrates the built form into the townscape more successfully. At its highest, the built form reaches slightly higher than the built form at 104 Fitzjohn's Avenue, immediately opposite the Site to the north-east. However, the highest elements of the built form are set back from the frontage, diminishing the sense of enclosure. To provide a sensitive integration with the adjacent built form, the massing of the built form is stepped down to the north-west as well as to the south-west. In providing descending massing along Prince Arthur Road, the Proposed Development reflects the underlying topography. Through the use of curved bays on the lower storeys the built form provides positive, animated and human scale elements at the streetscape level, notably at the junction of Fitzjohn's Avenue and Prince Arthur Road. The latter provides a positive, albeit not overly dominant, feature at this nodal point, in contrast to the blank walls and of the existing lift volume.

- 6.13 The built form is softened by retained existing planting along Prince Arthur Road, which, as for the existing building, ties the proposed built form into the prevailing landscape structure. New, more coherent, frontage planting of fastigate canopy trees provides a more positive influence on the character of Fitzjohn's Avenue. All frontages would be presented positively in the form of enhanced landscaping, rationalising entrance features and creating a more legible and coherent street scene.
- 6.14 The gap in built form between the Fitzjohn's Avenue and Prince Arthur Road blocks creates a locally characteristic glimpse between the built forms, where currently there is none, opening up the positive influence of the intimate, garden character beyond the buildings to this area of Prince Arthur Road. The building line on Prince Arthur Road has been positioned to provide a positive presentation of varied and well-sculpted built form, whilst retaining and respecting the existing canopy trees as the dominant structural forms within the streetscene.
- 6.15 The upper parts of the building form a positive contribution to the Fitzjohn's Avenue skyline, providing legibility and visual interest as part of the imposing and prominent ridgeline character of the route. The vigorous sculpting of the frontages, complemented by an overall design cohesion currently lacking in Arthur West House, contributes positively to the avenue itself, whilst the variation of the skyline provides a more positive and coherent influence on the adjacent townscape to the west. At near distances, the Proposed Development reflects the large scale of existing built form in Ellerdale Road and on Fitzjohn's Avenue in providing containment to the rear garden area. The extent of garden frontage would be increased and the extent of built frontage to adjacent gardens

decreased. An extended provision of canopy trees softens the influence of the increased height of built form and the extension of more elevated massing to the rear of the buildings. At longer distances, the proposed built form provides reinforcement of the prominence of Fitzjohn's Avenue as a strategic and legible containing and connecting feature on the ridgeline connecting Finchley Road with Hampstead. However, the massing and materials of the built form are coherent and light in colour and texture and do not appear as a dominant influence on the horizon, which remains primarily vegetated.

- 6.16 For the reasons given, it is considered that the Proposed Development satisfies the Townscape and Visual Mitigation by Design Objectives, as described above. Whilst there would be an increased perception of height and mass on the Site, creating a more substantial pair of built forms than those immediately adjacent, this is mitigated by the design approach which also provides beneficial changes to the townscape of the vicinity of the Site. As a result it is considered that a low magnitude of adverse change would be more than offset by low-medium magnitude beneficial change, resulting in beneficial effects on landscape character of minor significance.

7.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The Site is located on the southern edge of the centre of Hampstead, flanking the strategic corridor formed by Fitzjohn's Avenue, which forms a strategic connecting route along a ridgeline spur from the Hampstead Ridge to the north, down to Finchley Road to the south. Whilst the character of the district is recognised in the Fitzjohn's/Netherhall Conservation Area Statement to be imposing, the Site lies on a subtle transition from the more expansive and well-vegetated character of the avenue to the south-east and the more dominant built form character of the avenue as it reaches the commercial centre of Hampstead to the north. There is also a strong institutional influence immediately to the east of the Site, including large scale and unbroken massing at Henderson Court. Policy of relevance to the Site and Proposed Development focuses on identification and enhancement of the distinctiveness of local character as part of a high quality design approach, including sensitive consideration of topography; vegetation; permeability to and visual influence of garden spaces; positive, well-overlooked street frontages; public realm; and visual interest from all aspects.
- 7.2 The existing built form of Arthur West House, predominantly between 3 and 6 storeys in height, forms a relatively uninteresting and uninspiring component of the otherwise richly and vibrantly designed frontages of built fabric flanking the roadway. It is this relative lack of visual interest through absence of, or regularity of façade pattern that, in combination with relatively dark and unvaried brickwork, results in its overbearing nature, rather than its height, which is broadly equivalent to no.104 Fitzjohn's Avenue opposite. Arthur West House is relatively well integrated into the townscape structure by existing built form and canopy trees, notably the three specimens flanking Prince Arthur Road. The hard and soft landscaping of frontages areas, do not currently combine to form a positive or coherent contribution to the street scene. Additional, lower-level massing fills the majority of the north-western area of the Site in incoherent blocky forms, responding insensitively to the otherwise garden character of space between buildings by diminishing the predominantly softened, intimate character of this area (albeit defined by a perimeter of large scale built form).
- 7.3 Whilst visible from adjacent streets and in glimpsed views from limited publicly-accessible locations on Ellerdale Road to the north-west and west, existing built form is barely perceptible if at all from more than 100m in any direction, with the exception of very limited glimpsed views from Fitzjohn's Avenue to the north and from the lower lying townscape to south-west, in the vicinity of the West End Lane overbridge of the London-Sheffield Mainline railway.

- 7.4 To mitigate by design any potential adverse effects of the Proposed Development, a number of Townscape and Visual Mitigation by Design Objectives are proposed to be achieved. In terms of the **enhancement of the character of Fitzjohn's Avenue**, the Proposed Development would provide a positive, contemporary built form, echoing existing examples in Hampstead of outstanding modern architecture, with vibrant façade treatment and warm materials to complement the character of existing built forms in the vicinity. It would complement existing strong vertical forms and patterns evident in the streetscape to the north-west of Prince Arthur Road and provide a more sensitive and positive transition in built form to the townscape to the south-east of Prince Arthur Road, notably through a sensitive reduction in massing adjacent to the roadway; and enhanced frontages, including built form at the junction of Fitzjohn's Avenue and Prince Arthur Road and frontage landscaping to Fitzjohn's Avenue.
- 7.5 With regard to **maintaining a sensitive relationship with Prince Arthur Road**, the Proposed Development would provide a more positive frontage at the upper corner of the Site, as well as a gap between built forms to echo the existing pattern on the south-east side of the road. Massing would be stepped down to the road and to the south-west, providing a sensitive assimilation of built form into the townscape, as well as responding to the prevailing topography. The more vibrant and varied, yet coherent frontage, in combination with the more coherent proposed landscaping would provide visual interest and a more positive street scene, still dominated by the three retained mature canopy trees.
- 7.6 In terms of **maintaining and enhancing the character of the avenue ridgeline**, the Proposed Development would respond by retaining the tallest massing at the upper part of the Site, along Fitzjohn's Avenue, reflecting the role of the Site in the subtle transition along Fitzjohn's Avenue to the strong vertical character of central Hampstead to the north of the Site. The varied, yet coherent frontages and rooflines would provide visual interest and vibrancy to complement this transition, both at street level and on the skyline. In contrast, the intimate garden character to the rear of the built form would be extended along the boundary to adjacent gardens, and reinforced with semi-mature canopy tree planting which would also soften the influence of the increased massing of the built form.
- 7.7 For these reasons, the Proposed Development, whilst acknowledging the potential adverse changes resulting from the increase in sense of enclosure from the mass and scale of the built form, would overall provide a positive contribution to existing townscape character, as well as its appearance in representative views from the surrounding area. The Proposed Development would respond positively to policy directions at a national and local level, notably in relation to establishing a strong sense of place, responsive to local character and

adding to the overall townscape quality of the area. This would be achieved through positive, vibrant design of built form, in sympathetic materials, as well as coherent and legible landscape design. The Proposed Development would thereby provide a beneficial addition to existing examples in Hampstead of outstanding modern architecture, whilst integrating sensitively with its townscape setting.