

Heritage Statement *(in accordance with PPS5 & in particular sections HE6.1 & HE 6.2)*Character and Quality of the South Hill Park Conservation Area
(See also Design & Access Statement: 1.a & 1.b Assessment)

The special qualities and characteristics of the area are set out in the South Hill Park Conservation Area Statement. This Statement was consulted in detail during the development of the design and in the preparation of this planning application, and the design and access statement.

A successful application for the demolition of the existing house and the construction of a new house was made in 2011(ref 2011/3676/P). The present application is based on the previous application, but also includes a basement and front light well. The previously approved design for a new house above this basement and light well has not otherwise been changed.

During the consideration of the previous planning application the conservation officer was consulted. Various details were discussed and some minor changes were made to the proposals. These developments in the design are reflected in the present application.

Professional arborists have been consulted and tree reports and assessments of the impact of the development on the trees adjacent to the site has been undertaken both as part of the original approved application and this revised application. The reports concludes that the amenity value of the trees to the conservation area will not be compromised (See also the Tree Report attached to this application).

A Basement Impact Statement and a Structural Design Statement for Planning have been prepared. These consider in particular the proposed basement and light well. The BIA concludes that if certain precautions are adhered to and the works are appropriately designed then there is reason in particular why the stability of the land should be affected. The Structural Design Statement concludes that the new house built in accordance with the structural proposals will not affect the structural stability of adjoining properties. The proposals have considered and work to preserve the amenity value of the existing structures within the Conservation Area.

The South Hill Park Conservation Area is a largely homogenous late 19th century residential area. The pattern and grain of the local streetscape is quite consistent; Attached and semi-detached brick built terraced houses with small front and large back gardens, low brick front walls, pedestrian entry gates, and planting. A high proportion of the houses have front light wells and basement, partial basements, or lower ground floor levels. The building forms are similarly consistent: stone parapets, or pitched gable ends, dormer windows, chimneys, and bay windows. Materials are traditional and vernacular: brick walls and slate roofs, painted timber windows, surrounds and decorative details, with lead and zinc flashings, weathering and canopies. In the southeast corner of the Conservation area there is a pub and some shop elevations and in some areas there are a few pre and post war buildings although these are the exception.

The Statement breaks the Conservation Area down into two separate sub areas according to the two phases in the areas historical development and the resulting difference in the character of the conservation area. 15a Parliament Hill is within “Sub Area Two: Parliament Hill, Tanza Road and Nassington Road.” On close analysis however it is worth noting that the actual architectural characteristics of “Sub Area One: South Hill Park and South Hill Park Gardens” continue up Parliament Hill to number 14 Parliament Hill. In architectural terms 15a Parliament Hill sits on what is arguably the architecturally unconsidered and unremarkable boundary between the two sub areas.

To the southwest down Parliament Hill starting at number 14 the houses have characteristic square front parapets and mansards. To the northwest and up Parliament Hill starting at 15 the houses are characteristically gable fronted with pitched roofs, although this distinction has to some extent been lost due to the unfortunate alteration of 15 Parliament Hill through the addition of a full third floor and the consequent loss of the gable front.

The immediate area around 15a Parliament Hill also suffers as a result of the two pre- and post-war mansion blocks opposite. These were developed on the slope of the railroad cutting and also are called out in the Conservation Area Statement as not making a positive contribution to the area. Historic maps suggest that the later mansion block, Hill Court, displaced one of the original gable fronted terraced houses. All this contributes to the relatively fragmented and uncharacteristic character of the immediate surroundings to 15a Parliament Hill.

15a Parliament Hill: Proposed New HouseContribution to the Conservation Area of the Present House at 15a Parliament Hill
(See also Design & Access Statement: 2.a & 2.b Evaluation)

On the map and in the textual references in the Audit on page 5 of the South Hill Park Conservation Area Statement the present house at 15a Parliament Hill is *not* noted as a building which makes a positive contribution to the conservation area. The present building fails to make a positive contribution for the following reasons:

- Set Back From Building Line and Scale:

The present building is set back from the street and building line and is very small in relation to the surrounding buildings. The continuity of the front elevations of the adjacent terraces along the gentle curve in Parliament Hill is therefore broken and this leaves an inappropriate architectural and visual gap. This is inconsistent with the characteristic arrangement in the larger conservation area. The high and architecturally unconsidered side walls of the adjacent houses at 14 and 15 Parliament Hill are consequently exposed to the street.

- Detailing & Finish to Front Elevation:

The rendered and white painted front elevation is uncharacteristic of the area. The majority of the buildings are in red brick. Other than the decorative brickwork over the entry porch the fenestration is very bland and is without texture or decoration. The fenestration of the building is tripartite with a central entry porch and door, nor is the building architecturally paired with 15 Parliament Hill as is characteristic in the area. The glazing to the entry porch is ad hoc. These differences between the existing building and the surrounding context are not part of a deliberate and self conscious dialogue. The building is simply inappropriate.

- Front Garden and Boundary:

The set back of the house results in an unusually large front garden space. The mature birch to the east corner and the planting generally are important and positive features, but a very large portion of the present front garden (over 50%) is covered in concrete paving and off street parking. The front boundary wall and piers are built in brick, but there is no pedestrian entry gate. The large metal double gates for car entry are the only means of access. A garden shed and ad hoc timber fencing also clutter in the front garden. These uses of the front garden are not surprising given its size, but all are inconsistent with the character of the conservation area.

- Rear Elevation:

The heritage issues associated with the existing rear elevation of 15a Parliament Hill are less significant than those to the front. The unusual site plan of 15a results in a fragmented rear elevation in two parts. One section faces the rear garden of 14 Parliament Hill. It is the main two story, white painted brick elevation of the main house to 15a and it is windowless. A very contemporary single story extension to 14 sits in front of this part of the elevation. This elevation is of little or no particular heritage value.

The second portion of the rear elevation to 15a must be considered as part of the rear elevation to 15 Parliament Hill. It is comprised of unpainted timber, double french doors and surrounding glazing. These doors are visually inappropriate to the conservation area. They lead to the large garden of 15a. The rear elevation of 15 has been significantly altered with an ad hoc collection of largely unrelated new and in many cases inappropriate windows and doors at ground and first, second, and third floor level. Only one window at first floor level appears to be original. Areas of the second floor and of the parapet at roof level have been rendered and this further contributes to the limited heritage value of the overall elevation.

As the Conservation Area Statement's assessment implies, the present house at 15a Parliament Hill is of little or no heritage value. It does not relate to the surrounding context in character, scale, materials, or appearance. A thoughtful re-development of the house could improve and reinforce the character of the larger conservation area and make a positive contribution.

Archeological Interest

The house itself is not of archeological interest and the larger site is not within an Archeological Priority Area. The Council will be notified immediately and in the normal way if anything of archeological significance is discovered during the course of the works.

Design Concept in Relation to Heritage Value

(See also Design & Access Statement: 2.a & 2.b Evaluation, 3.a Design Development,)

The design seeks to create a new house which will bridge the existing gap in the terrace formed by the present inappropriate building at 15a Parliament Hill. The new house will reinforce the character of the

conservation area by linking the existing scale, forms, materials, and fenestration of the surrounding terraces to either side. The design also seeks to maintain a dialogue with the architectural sensibility of the contemporary period in which it has been designed. This characteristic will however be secondary. The prime intention is that the building should work to reinforce and improve the character of the conservation area:

- Proposed Scale and Relation to Front Building Line:

The proposed building continues the visual line and physical planes of the adjacent terraces around the shallow bend in Parliament Hill which occurs along the front boundary of the site. This continuation of terraces around bends and curves in the streetscape is characteristic of the area. As a result, the present gap in the fabric will be repaired and the overexposed side elevations to 14 and 15 will be significantly less prominent. The increased size of the proposed building at 15a Parliament Hill will also act to lessen the present impact of the large scale of both the additional storey added to 15 Parliament Hill and two adjacent mansion blocks. The proposed new building will therefore improve the larger setting of the conservation area at this gentle bend in Parliament Hill.

- Fenestration & Profile of the Proposed Front Elevation:

The proposed front elevation is slightly faceted in plan. This is a contemporary reworking of the traditional bay window form common in the area. The facets also respond to the curved shape of Parliament Hill and they work to both carry the line of the two neighboring terraces across the site and provide a gentle architectural punctuation to the slight bend. This slight architectural acknowledgement of corners and bends is a typical characteristic of the conservation area (*See also Design & Access Statement: 1.a Assessment, 1.5 The Curving Streetscape, & 1.6 Structure Within the Streetscape*)

The faceting of the front elevation will also introduce visual interest and relief to the larger surface of the front elevation. The elevation runs from the northeast to the southwest and the faceting of the front planes will catch sharp angled light in the morning and early afternoon. This articulation and contrast of light and dark on the front elevation is in dialogue with the decorated relief on the existing elevations in the conservation area.

Although slightly different, the pitched front gable forms of the proposed new house relate directly to the existing gables which are the dominant characteristic of the larger conservation area up Parliament Hill and to the northeast of 15a. These new gables work to weave together the characteristics of the two sub areas of the Conservation area. The visual sequence moving from left to right up Parliament Hill will proceed as follows: 14 completes a row of square fronted, parapet, and mansard roofed terrace houses; 15a will be gable fronted with pitched roofs; 15 again has a square front and parapet, and 17 again is the first in a row of pitched, gable fronted houses running up Parliament Hill. The profile of the front elevation is a deliberate attempt to establish a dialogue with the large terrace. The present gap in the terrace at 15a is replaced by a form which will tie together the neighboring terraces and will reinforce the character of the conservation area. The window fenestration of the proposed new house is also designed to establish a direct dialogue with the existing houses in the conservation area. The scale, binary vertical arrangement, and rhythmic structure of the proposed windows echos existing forms. Some slightly more emphatic variation in the scale of the windows and the use of a few frameless fixed glass windows provides a gently and secondary contemporary character.

- Detailing & Material of the Proposed Front Elevation:

The clay handmade hanging tile provides a direct material connection to the surrounding buildings. The tiles and bricks are both made of red clay and will be colour matched. The variation, and the texture, and light and shadow cast by the corduroy character of the hanging tiles on the elevation will achieve a visual interest which is similar to that of the decorated architectural relief on existing adjacent elevations. This interest will be achieved in a slightly different and more contemporary way, but the overall character will consistent. The continuity and character of the existing conservation area will be enhanced and reinforced.

- Front Garden, and Brick Boundary Wall, and Front Light Well,:

The proposed front garden and boundary directly reflect the pattern and character of the existing conservation area. The front parking and crossover are removed. A low brick front wall with a pedestrian gate framed by brick piers leads to a yorkstone pedestrian path to the front door.

A relatively small light well is also proposed. In scale, and form it follows the existing pattern within the conservation area. The sides of the light well are angled in response to the root protection zones of the adjacent trees. The light well brings air and light to the basement and makes some of the rooms at that level habitable.

15a Parliament Hill: Proposed New House

The front garden will be similar in depth and scale to adjacent front gardens. It will be extensively planted with a mixture of low hedges, shrubs, and ground cover. These will provide a degree of structure to the entry, bins and recycling store, and to the larger front garden which will partially screen the main living space from close and direct views from the adjacent pavement. The inappropriate, large concrete paved area of the off street parking area is replaced by planting. The existing birch is preserved and the roots to the lime planted within the front pavement are protected.

Rear Elevation

The heritage concerns on the back elevation are less significant. The proposed single storey extension with a mono-pitch roof is at low level and will have little impact on the larger conservation area. Nonetheless its form, material and fenestration all relate to the conservation area and will enhance its character. The mono-pitched roof, red handmade tiles, and painted timber windows will all establish a dialogue with the exiting adjacent buildings and are consistent with the character of the conservation area.