


30, HAMPSTEAD GROVE, LONDON NW3 6SR



17:III:MMXV

Dear Sir,

**Planning Application: Grove Lodge**  
2015/0886P & 2015/1032/L

This proposal is sheer vandalism, and should not be given serious consideration. It is what Conservation Area status is all about.

Having lived for more than 60 years in a house with a view down Admiral's Walk to Grove Lodge, I have reason to know that this view is one of the major tourist attractions of Hampstead. Excluding the interest of the historic association with Goldsworthy, it is constantly being photographed, used as a backdrop to fashion shoots, and generally being crooned over.

Since neither Admiral's House nor Grove Lodge are (in themselves) of exceptional architectural beauty — Grove Lodge is simple and unpretentious, Admiral's House is downright odd — it is clear that the charm lies in the composition: the juxtaposition of the contrast and its setting. From the south, the looming cliff-like bulk of Admiral's House opposes the modest horizontal spread of Grove Lodge, linked by their pleasing irregularities. From the south and east, the tumbling roof-lines are a feature of subtle attraction. No wonder Constable chose it 200 years ago as a sight worth painting. The proposed alterations to Grove Lodge would degrade this happy contrast by increasing the visual weight of Grove Lodge, introducing an element of stolidity, and reducing the impression of heterogeneous intimacy.

Another subtle attraction is to be found in the classic view down Admiral's Walk from Hampstead Grove. The obvious components are the long blank wall of Fenton House's garden, the parallel wall and flower bed of Admiral's House, and the row of trees, all leading the eye down to the revealed space at the end, like the lit stage in a theatre. A vital element in the enchantment, however, is the distant view past the south end of Grove Lodge of the roofs of Terrace Lodge, partly obscured by trees. It conveys a sense of rural intimacy, of further hidden pleasures, of a living village. This element would be ruined by the extensions to Grove Lodge.

Apart from any other considerations, these alterations are not *necessary*: Grove Lodge is much more spacious than it seems. I have received a sob-story circular from the new owners about their circumstances seeking to elicit sympathy. If they have a large family, it is by their own choice. They did not have to buy Grove Lodge if it was too small for them; and by their own admission it is the second house that they have owned in Hampstead that they perceive as too small. They clearly could afford a more spacious house, even if not in such a wonderful position. They claim to have come to love the village: so have many others; but the fact that so much of Hampstead remains so desirable is because the majority of owners in the past have honoured the old adage "yours to own, yours to cherish, but not yours to spoil".

Yours faithfully

