
Arthur West House, Fitzjohn's Avenue: Townscape and Visual Addendum

Prepared on behalf of PegasusLife Ltd

March 2015

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Barton Willmore LLP
7 Soho Square
London
W1D 3QB

Tel: 020 7446 6888
Fax: 020 7446 6889
Email: matthew.chard@bartonwillmore.co.uk

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

- 1.1 This addendum to the submitted Townscape and Visual Impact Statement relates to revisions to the Proposed Development of land at Arthur West House, Fitzjohn's Avenue (the 'Site') and updates the assessment of effects provided in the Townscape and Visual Impact Statement submitted in December 2014.
- 1.2 The revisions to the Proposed Development are illustrated in the submitted revised plans and elevations, in addition to the associated **Verifiable Photomontages** which accompany this document (including Full Size Images and Methodology).

Townscape Features

- 1.3 The revisions to the proposals will result in slightly greater areas of landscaping on the frontages to Prince Arthur Road and Fitzjohn's Avenue, providing enhanced contribution to the street scene, including an additional ornamental deciduous street tree on Prince Arthur Road, to further soften the appearance of built form, provide a human scale of tree planting (in contrast to the canopy scale of existing trees) adjacent to the proposed entrance and provide seasonal variation. Overall, therefore, the revised proposals would provide slightly greater beneficial effects in terms of townscape features than the original proposals.

Views

- 1.4 **Verifiable Photomontages P1, P2, P4 and P5**, from representative publicly accessible viewpoints, have been updated to reflect the revised proposals. These viewpoints have been selected from the original six photomontages to illustrate most clearly the revised proposals. These include views in winter conditions, to demonstrate the scenario of maximum visibility of the proposed built form.
- 1.5 In **Photomontage P1** the revised proposals are below the level of the existing Arthur West House building at the corner of the junction, thereby reducing the physical dominance of built form in the street scene. The lower volume, forming a bay on the corner, is lower than in the original proposals, with only 3 storeys providing a less dominant, more human scale to this important aspect of the building. The reduced height of built form is also more evident to the right hand side of the tree on the near side of the road, where clear sky is visible above the built form and below the tree. To the left, the built form is now at the same level

as the canopy tree adjacent to the building. Both of these relationships create a stronger sense of the building being absorbed into the existing scale of the street scene, within the framework created by the canopy trees.

- 1.6 In winter, the existing Arthur West House forms an even more prominent and overbearing presence on the corner of Fitzjohns Avenue and Prince Arthur Road than in summer. The photomontage demonstrates clearly the reduced height and more positive frontage of built form at this corner and the more even spread of massing to the right and left, providing more coherent progression in scale. The massing stepping down along Prince Arthur Road can be seen to the left, providing a sensitive response to the scale of existing built form visible further to the left. The pale colour of the brick and the form of fenestration creates visual interest in the contrast of light and shade, as opposed to the darkness and overbearing form of the existing building, particularly flanking Fitzjohn's Avenue. Even in winter conditions, the revised proposals clearly sit within, rather than exceeding, the surrounding framework of canopy trees.
- 1.7 As a result of the revisions, it is considered that there would be a slightly greater beneficial change in this view as a result of the Proposed Development, and the proposals would result in a beneficial visual effect of minor-moderate significance.
- 1.8 In **Photomontage P2**, the reduced height of the nearest elevation and the bay frontage provides a more gradual progression in scale from the existing property to the left of the proposed building, in relation to the existing building as well as the original proposal. Additionally, a slighter greater extent of clear sky is now visible between the building and the tree canopy, diminishing the sense of mass of the proposed building and retaining the dominance of the canopy tree in forming the structural framework to the street. At street level, the additional canopy tree flanking the entrance arches creates additional softening of the street scene.
- 1.9 In winter, the more harmonious relationship provided by the revised proposal, in comparison to the existing Arthur West House, between the lower volume and the adjacent property to the left, is more clearly visible. The massing of the upper volume is more evident in winter conditions but appears light and complementary to the existing facades of buildings to the left hand side, of which the variety of height and form is more clearly evident than in summer. Reflecting these bold forms and facades of the existing properties to the left hand side, the upper volume provides greater visual interest and a more positive contribution to the street scene than the existing Arthur West House which, even in winter, appears dark and muted and does not present an interesting frontage to Prince Arthur Road. The scale of built form does not exceed that of the branch structure of canopy trees in this view, but, through its height, more clearly and positively supports the legibility of the avenue ridgeline

of Fitzjohn's Avenue than the existing building, which steps up only in the form of a blank wall visible as part of the cluttered and incoherent roofline.

- 1.10 Overall, a slightly reduced magnitude of adverse change from the retained sky in the view between trees resulting from the revised proposals would be further offset by a slightly greater magnitude of beneficial change from the enhanced street frontage and more harmonious relationship with existing buildings, resulting in beneficial effects on this view of minor significance.
- 1.11 In **Photomontage P4**, the reduced height of the revised proposals results in a skyline at a similar level as the existing Arthur West House, albeit formed of a much more visually interesting and coherent series of angular bays, continuing the perception of the articulation of existing pitched roofing, seen in the right hand side of the view. With the revised proposals, this existing roofline is seen as part of the skyline rather than set against the proposed built form. Not only does the skyline of the upper volume flow more naturally from the existing roofline to the right than the original proposal but also, the upper extent of the lower volume now flows cleanly and naturally along the street from the eave of the building on the right. This is in contrast to the existing tower form at this part of Arthur West House, which the proposals now lie well below. This creates a much improved integration with the existing street scene. This is further aided by the slight set back of the building line in the revised proposals, which reduces the influence of the massing of the proposed building on the street scene. The trees on the street frontage have more space to exist as attractive forms in their own right, rather than merely fitting in with the façade of the building, and the reduced building height provides a more even progression in scale from the street to the trees to the roofline.
- 1.12 In winter, the scale of built form at 104 Fitzjohn's Avenue on the left hand side of the view is clearly evident, with which the proposed built form is in harmony. The existing Arthur West House appears darker, more overbearing and more incoherent on the skyline than in summer. The pale brickwork and glass of the proposed built form provides a lighter, more visually coherent and interesting frontage, even in winter.
- 1.13 The enhanced proposals result in a reduced degree of adverse change and slight increase in beneficial change, such that, on balance, there would be minor beneficial effects in this view.
- 1.14 In **Photomontage P5**, the revised proposals appear as distinctly lower than the existing Arthur West House and compete less with the height of the tree immediately in front of the building. The reduced height of the lower volume also creates a more gradual progression in scale to the buildings beyond the proposed building, with the sense of a more coherent scale

in the street scene reinforced by the proposed street trees, with which the proposed building creates a better proportional balance.

- 1.15 In winter, the proposals are more clearly visible although they are still well below the canopy structure of the existing tree on the left hand side of Fitzjohn's Avenue. The absence of foliage on this tree exposes the dominance of the existing Arthur West House on this corner, as well as its height, which clearly exceeds the skyline of the residential property to the left. The revised proposal is at the same level as the skyline of the residential property on the left and is therefore less dominant than Arthur West House in this view. The stepping down of the proposed built form to buildings flanking Fitzjohn's Avenue beyond the Site is evident, as is the harmonious relationship of the three storey lower volume with the adjacent three storey buildings. Also more visible in winter is the large scale built form beyond these buildings, on the corner with Ellerdale Road, which the larger scale of the proposed built form complements in providing greater heights at either end of the row in between. In contrast, the incoherent massing of Arthur West House, is clearly seen in winter, providing no harmony in the relationship with adjacent buildings on Fitzjohn's Avenue, in particular as a result of the tower form at the north-western edge of this frontage.
- 1.16 The revised proposals therefore result in slightly increased beneficial change, resulting in a minor-moderate beneficial effect in this view.
- 1.17 In relation to the visual amenity aspect of private residential amenity, it is considered that the reduction in height of the proposed built form, the setting back from street frontages and the breaking up of massing in the rear garden area, will slightly reduce the magnitude of adverse change in view from properties adjacent to or opposite the Site. Balancing the beneficial changes in view from the enhanced building frontages, the significance of adverse effect is not considered to be greater than minor.

Townscape Character

- 1.18 The photomontages of the revised proposal, in conjunction with revised plans and elevations, assist in demonstrating how the proposed built form would be better assimilated into its townscape context, notably in relation to adjacent built form, with which the proportions of the building are more sympathetic than as originally proposed. In particular, the relationship with built form to the north-west on Fitzjohn's Avenue allows a more even flow of frontage scale and pattern between existing and proposed forms, better assimilating the proposed built form into the prevailing townscape. The lowered heights of the bays at the junction with Prince Arthur Road and at the south-western extent of the proposed built form, create more gradual progression in scale to the street scene and adjacent properties. The set back of the

building line on Fitzjohn's Avenue also creates a more coherent relationship between the proposals and the neighbouring buildings to the north-west.

1.19 For the reasons given, it is considered that the revisions to the Proposed Development satisfy the Townscape and Visual Mitigation by Design Objectives more comprehensively than the original proposal, notably in terms of complementing more closely the scale and pattern of existing built forms on Fitzjohn's Avenue and providing a more sensitive transition to the scale of built form to the south-east, notably through:

- the lowering of the lower volume and setting the built form back to complement existing building lines;
- providing a better progression in scale between proposed planting and the built form, by setting back and lowering the scale of built form, to provide a more balanced frontage to Fitzjohn's Avenue;
- providing a less dominant, more human scale in the bay volume at the eastern corner of the built form;
- providing a broader gap between built forms on Prince Arthur Road to enhance the transition to the looser grain of built form on Prince Arthur Road with a characteristic glimpse through to the garden to the rear, where currently there is none;
- achieving a more gradual progression in scale in the stepping down of built form to the neighbouring properties to the south-west on Prince Arthur Road, which also provides a more legible reflection of the underlying topography;
- setting back elements of the block on Prince Arthur Road to be more harmonious with existing building lines; and
- enhancing the visual presence of retained trees compared to the original scheme, to provide a stronger sense of the assimilation of the built form within the structural framework that the trees provide.

1.20 As a result it is considered that a low magnitude of adverse change in townscape character, resulting from the slightly greater massing of built form than in the existing Arthur West House, would be more than offset by a medium magnitude of beneficial change, resulting in beneficial effects on townscape character of minor-moderate significance.