

**PLANNING STATEMENT
AND
CONSERVATION AREA
ASSESSMENT**

**FULL PLANNING APPLICATION
FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A
REPLACEMENT DWELLING**

**92 FITZJOHN'S AVENUE,
HAMPSTEAD, LONDON**

**ON BEHALF OF:
92 FITZJOHN'S AVENUE**

MARCH 2015

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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. APPLICATION SUPPORT INFORMATION	4
3. PUBLIC CONSULTATION	8
4. KEY ISSUES INFLUENCING DESIGN	11
5. HOUSING DELIVERY	18
6. DESIGN POLICY ANALYSIS	22
7. CONSERVATION AREA ASSESSMENT	24
8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	27

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement and Conservation Area Assessment is to support a full planning application for the erection of a replacement dwelling at 92 Fitzjohn's Avenue on an enlarged site taking in surplus land to the east at North Bridge House School, Hampstead currently used for car parking.
- 1.2 The site previously gained conservation area consent for demolition of the existing dwelling and planning permission for the erection of a new house on 28 June 2013 (2013/1448/C and 2013/1119/P). The applications were reported to committee with an officer recommendation for approval and were approved unanimously by members. These permissions remain extant. The intention is to demolish the existing dwelling under the extant conservation area consent¹. This new full planning application is therefore solely for the erection of a replacement dwelling.
- 1.3 The site is bounded to the north east by North Bridge House Senior School, to the south east by Fitzjohn's Primary School (the main building of which is listed), to the south west by St Anthony's Preparatory School and to the north west by Henderson Court sheltered accommodation and a block of residential flats called Greenhill. Access is via a driveway off Fitzjohn's Avenue which is in shared ownership with St Anthony's Preparatory School.
- 1.4 Since the extant planning permission was granted the applicant has been working on the detailed design of the new house. However, the bespoke nature of the house meant that the cost of building it proved too high and too uncertain, rendering the development unviable.
- 1.5 The applicant is therefore now proposing to use a building manufactured off site and assembled on site by a company called Baufritz. Baufritz have built hundreds of

¹ The Conservation Area consent included a condition requiring that the demolition would not be undertaken before a contract for the carrying out of the works of redevelopment of the site was made. The applicant can meet this requirement.

houses across continental Europe, mainly in Germany. They have built 50 homes in the UK, including some in London.

1.6 The footprint, scale and layout of current proposal are very similar to the previous approved scheme. Like the approved scheme it consists of a long thin single storey dwelling with a part lower ground floor storey on the surplus land to the east which is at a lower level.

1.7 The current application offers a number of advantages over the previous scheme.

1.8 Firstly, the fact that it is largely manufactured off site offers a number of benefits:

- It has extremely high eco-credentials;
- Because the building is manufactured off site and can be assembled quickly (in about two weeks) it will cause the minimum of disruption to neighbours; and
- Its cost is much more certain.

1.9 Secondly, its design has been amended:

- The building will be moved further away from the north western boundary, meaning it will be further away from the trees;
- Two tall projections on the “rear” north west elevation, adjacent to the boundary with Greenhill, will be removed;
- The current proposal includes a southwards projection which is in a similar position to the existing building footprint, but is narrower and less tall than the existing building (new building: one floor with flat roof; existing building: two floors with pitched roof). Furthermore, the proposed building has no windows on this boundary (compared to five windows in the existing building). Importantly, the proposed building is moved away from the south east boundary.

1.10 The next section of this Planning Statement and Conservation Area Assessment explains the information which has been submitted in support of this planning

application. It then explains the public consultation which has informed this application. Section 4 is an analysis of the key issues influencing the design of the scheme. Section 5 explains the planning policy position regarding housing delivery; section 6 is a design policy analysis; and Section 7 is a Conservation Area Assessment. Since there has been no material change in circumstances since the grant of the extant planning permission these three sections are very similar to those contained within the Planning Statement and Conservation Area Assessment approved as part of the extant planning permission. Section 8 provides a summary and conclusion.

2.0 Application supporting information

2.1 This section sets out the information which is submitted in support of the current planning application. The information reflects that which was submitted and approved as part of the extant permission.

2.2 The extant permission contained a number of conditions requiring further details. In order to provide a full explanation of the application proposals, and in order to avoid the need for similar conditions on the new permission, we are providing a number of these details as part of this new planning application.

Planning Statement and Conservation Area Assessment

2.3 This explains the information which has been submitted in support of this planning application and the public consultation which has informed the application. It also explains the planning policy position regarding housing delivery and the relevant design policy context. It also provides a Conservation Area Assessment and analysis of the key issues influencing the design of the scheme.

Drawings and Design and Access Statement

2.4 The Design and Access Statement assesses the site's context and the constraints influencing design. It explains the historical context of the area; the site context including boundary treatment; and factors influencing design including overlooking and privacy. It then describes the proposals including the brief, process, layout, amount of development, scale of development, appearance, boundary treatments, landscape and access. Finally it highlights the sustainable design and construction credentials of this site.

2.5 The appendices of the Design and Access Statement provide details on external finishes (sample of materials sent separately); details of the green roof; and details of

cycle parking². This provides a detailed explanation of what is proposed and avoids the need for a condition on the planning permission requiring these details.

Sustainability and Energy Statement

- 2.6 The application is accompanied by a Sustainability and Energy Statement which explains how the relevant standards have been met.
- 2.7 The location and extent of photovoltaic cells and solar water heaters are shown on roof plan. A note is also provided explaining the detail of what is proposed. This avoids the need for a condition on the planning permission requiring these details.

Arboricultural Assessment and Method Statement

- 2.8 The extant planning permission was supported by a detailed Arboricultural Assessment and Method Statement. This has been updated to reflect the current proposals, including confirming that the current application offers a benefit compared to the extant scheme as it encroaches less into the root protection areas of retained trees.

Bat survey

- 2.9 The extant scheme was accompanied by a bat survey report comprising an internal and external bat inspection (April 2013) and subsequent emergence/return surveys (May 2013). These surveys found no evidence of bats but suggested demolition should proceed in a precautionary manner³. The May 2013 report, which summarised the results of both surveys, is resubmitted as part of the current application along with a covering letter from the ecological consultant confirming their conclusions remain relevant. The letter highlights that the current application will offer wider ecological

² In accordance with the Council's standards, two cycle spaces are provided in the garage of the house as shown on the upper ground floor layout plan. As they are in the garage they are secure and covered. We also provide details of the wall mountings which will be used.

³ To comprise the careful removal by hand of features which could support bats, including roof tiles, lead flashing and fascia boards. If bats or signs of bats are recorded during these works, works must halt and an ecologist should be contacted to determine how best to proceed.

benefits as a result of the increased garden area and green roof on the proposed building.

- 2.10 The letter from the ecological consultant also contains details of bird and bat box locations and types and indication of species to be accommodated and thus avoids the need for a condition on the planning permission requiring these details.

Daylight/Sunlight/Overshadowing Report

- 2.11 During pre-application discussions with officers regarding the extant permission they agreed that no assessment of daylight/sunlight/overshadowing was necessary. Despite this the applicant commissioned a specific report on these issues. The report confirmed that the proposal would not have any adverse impact on surrounding properties. The consultants who produced that report have reviewed the current application and written a note confirming that because it is similar in terms of siting and scale it will not give rise to any adverse impact.

Construction Management Plan (CMP)

- 2.12 Following the determination of the extant planning permission, and in accordance with the requirements of the s106, the applicant produced a Construction Management Plan (CMP). This was discussed in detail with neighbours through the Construction Work Group. The CMP was submitted to and approved by the Council.
- 2.13 The CMP has now been updated and resubmitted as part of the current application. The updated CMP makes clear that whilst the works necessary for the construction of the foundations and slab of the current application are very similar to those for the extant permission⁴, the above ground works are very different because the house is manufactured off site. This results in a much quicker construction process, many fewer vehicle movements and less disruption in terms of noise, dust etc.

⁴ The current application, like the extant permission, takes advantage of level differences across the site to have a lower ground floor at the eastern end of the site (which is currently the car park of North Bridge House). Neither scheme included a basement, thus eliminating the need for significant excavation.

Other

- 2.14 The north eastern corner of the site (i.e. the northern section of the redundant North Bridge House car park which is included within the application site) falls within an Archaeological Priority Area. As part of the consideration of the extant permission English Heritage confirmed that, bearing in mind that the site and surrounding area already contains development, no archaeological assessment was needed for the application or required via condition. This remains relevant for the current application.

3.0 Public consultation

- 3.1 Prior to the submission of the original planning application on the site the applicant held two pre-application meetings with officers in July 2012 and December 2012. All the neighbours were consulted by the applicant prior to submission of the planning application and again by the Council during the determination of the planning application.
- 3.2 The extant planning permission was reported to committee with a recommendation for approval by officers and was unanimously approved by members.
- 3.3 Following the grant of the extant permission in June 2013 the neighbours were invited to attend the Construction Work Group (CWG) which explained the construction process and timetable. Two meetings of the CWG were held on 3 December 2013 and 1 May 2014. These meetings were attended by representatives of North Bridge House Senior School, Fitzjohn's Primary School, St Anthony's Preparatory School and Greenhill flats. A further meeting with just residents of Henderson Court was held on 15 May 2014.
- 3.4 Two issues were raised by neighbours during determination of the extant planning permission which have been addressed by the current application:
- 3.5 The driveway into the site is jointly owned by St Anthony's School and the applicant. St Anthony's were concerned that construction traffic using the driveway could cause disruption to their access during school pick ups and drop offs. This has been resolved by the applicant securing a temporary construction access through the grounds of Henderson Court. Moreover, the fact that the proposed house is created off site but assembled on site means that the construction process is extremely quick and the number of vehicle movements is limited, thus limiting any highways conflict.
- 3.6 A number of residents from Greenhill raised concerns about the extant permission's impact on their garden space adjacent to the boundary and on their outlook. The Daylight/Sunlight/Overshadowing report approved as part of the extant permission confirmed that there would be no material impact on any windows or amenity spaces.

Notwithstanding this, the current application offers a benefit to Greenhill residents by removing the two taller sections at the rear of the scheme adjacent to the boundary with Greenhill.

3.7 The current application has again benefitted from pre-application discussions with officers in January 2015. A meeting of the CWG was also held in February 2015 to explain the current application, the construction process and the timetable. A further meeting with Henderson Court residents was held in March 2015.

3.8 The key issues raised at the CWG were:

- Henderson Court explained that their refurbishment works were ongoing and reminded the applicant that both parties had to liaise together over the shared temporary construction access.
- St Anthony's School highlighted the need to try and avoid peak traffic hours.
- Projectplus highlighted that because the new house is manufactured off site there is less need for space on site to store materials or for contractors to park vehicles.
- Neighbours asked for a weekly email update explaining what works were anticipated for the following week.
- Surrounding schools all keen to avoid noise during exam periods and end of year presentations/shows.
- Neighbours welcomed the Baufritz construction method which was quicker, quieter and caused less disruption in terms of dust.

3.9 The key issues raised at the meeting with Henderson Court were:

- The construction process and timescales. The applicant explained that these would be very similar to the previously approved scheme but the fact that the building is manufactured off site and erected on site in c2 weeks means it is much quicker and quieter.

- Reinststate the planting that is affected by the temporary construction access.

4.0 Key issues

4.1 In approving the extant planning permission the Council highlighted certain key aspects of the proposals which were considered acceptable. We summarise these below and explain how they have been borne these in mind in the design of the current application.

4.2 The previous, now extant, applications on the site were reported to committee with an officer recommendation for approval and were approved unanimously by members. The officer's report to committee concluded that:

“The demolition of the dwellinghouse is considered acceptable as the existing building makes a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area due to its undistinguished design and limited visibility from the public realm. The replacement building would be well designed and utilise quality materials which would ensure that the character and appearance of the conservation area is both preserved and enhanced. The new dwelling would reprovide good quality accommodation with sound sustainable features, and would not harm the amenity of adjoining occupiers or the local transport network. Subject to the recommended planning conditions the proposal is considered to be compliant with policy” (paragraph 7.1).

Demolition of the existing building

4.3 As explained in Section 1, the site previously gained conservation area consent for demolition of the existing dwelling and planning permission for the erection of a new house on 28 June 2013 (2013/1448/C and 2013/1119/P). These permissions remain extant. The intention is to demolish the existing dwelling under the extant conservation area consent. This new full planning application is therefore solely for the erection of a replacement dwelling.

4.4 It is nevertheless useful to note that the existing house is of a late Victorian design but has been extensively added to and altered so very little remains of the original. It is one of the few buildings in the Fitzjohn's Conservation Area that is not identified as a

building that “makes a positive contribution” (Fitzjohn’s Conservation Area Statement, p29). In approving the extant scheme the officer’s report agreed that the existing building was of poor quality and its demolition offered the opportunity for a high quality replacement:

“The existing house is an average quality dwelling, most of which dates from the mid-20th Century, and is considered to be of limited architectural and historic interest. It is not identified in the Conservation Area Statement, nor is it visible from the public realm. The dwelling is largely concealed from view except from the surrounding buildings. In this regard the dwelling is not identified as an undesignated heritage asset and its demolition would not be resisted subject to a suitable replacement” (paragraph 6.2).

Design

- 4.5 The officer’s report relating to the extant scheme made clear that the low scale of the scheme would “would result in the development having minimal impact on the area” (paragraph 6.3). The current application is of a similar low scale, and in fact is of a lower scale as it removes two of the three taller hipped roof sections.
- 4.6 The officer’s report relating to the extant scheme also confirmed that “the site is concealed from public view and has limited private views” (paragraph 6.3) and the fact that the new dwelling would be set within brick boundary walls and covered with a green roof would have the benefit of “reducing the already concealed site from view” (paragraph 6.4). The current proposal uses similar boundary treatment and has a much larger area of green roof which, in combination with its lower scale, would increase its hidden nature.
- 4.7 The current proposal, like the extant scheme, uses a “simple palette of materials” (paragraph 6.4). The single storey element, like the extant scheme, would be largely glazed. The current proposal does not include brick or tile as it is not possible to incorporate these materials within a building manufactured off site. As explained in the Design and Access Statement, the white render on the building is appropriate to

the building's design aesthetic and is used on other similar style buildings in Hampstead (the existing building is also painted white). There is natural larch timber cladding to the north western 'rear' elevation to soften the building's visual appearance through the boundary tree screening.

- 4.8 The officer's report relating to the extant scheme concluded that "This low scale and high quality dwelling would result in a neutral response to the area whilst providing a high quality living environment. This would preserve the character and appearance of the building as well as sub-area 1 of the Conservation Area" (paragraph 6.5). Compared to the extant scheme the current scheme will have a similar scale (and in fact reduce it); maintain the site's hidden nature; and use an appropriate, simple palette of materials. It will therefore also preserve the character of the Conservation Area.

Standard of proposed residential accommodation

- 4.9 The officer's report relating to the extant scheme made clear that the standard of proposed residential accommodation complied with the relevant standards. The current proposal also meets the relevant standards.

Amenity of neighbouring properties

- 4.10 The officer's report relating to the extant scheme explains that whilst the existing building "occupies almost the full width of the site with the south eastern flank abutting the boundary with Fitzjohn's Primary School" (paragraph 6.8), the extant scheme was re-orientated through 90° and sited on the northern boundary. This had the result of improving the building's outlook and providing a south facing amenity space, but also of "reducing the impact on neighbouring properties" (paragraph 6.3). The current proposal has adopted the same siting and therefore offers the same benefits.

Daylight/sunlight

- 4.11 The extant planning permission scheme was accompanied by a daylight/sunlight report which also considered overshadowing. The report confirmed that the proposal would not have any adverse impact on surrounding properties. The current proposal is accompanied by a note from the same consultants confirming that because it is similar in terms of siting and scale it will also not give rise to any adverse impact.

Overlooking

- 4.12 As explained in the officer's report relating to the extant scheme, the existing building currently overlooks Fitzjohn's Primary School to the south east: "The existing building is two storeys, the side elevation of the existing building abuts the boundary with Fitzjohn's Primary School with windows at ground and first floor level" (paragraph 6.14).
- 4.13 This would be significantly improved by the current proposal. The main ground floor part of the building would, like the extant permission, be largely glazed and includes a study at first floor level. The ground floor will be set back from the south eastern boundary and be hidden by a boundary wall and existing and proposed trees. Moreover, "Due to the topography of the site the school grounds are at least 2m lower than the proposed dwelling", thus reducing any overlooking (paragraph 6.14).
- 4.14 The current proposal includes a southern projection but this will be set back 1.5m from the south eastern boundary (compared to the existing building being hard up against this boundary); would be narrower than the existing building; would only be at ground floor; and would contain no windows (compared to five existing windows).
- 4.15 The proposed building would be a similar distance from St Anthony's School to the south west as the extant scheme (8m and 7.8m). The existing building, although further away from this boundary, directly faces the School. The current proposal will have a significant improvement since it will be re-orientated through 90° to face southwards instead and the existing tall boundary wall will have a mesh added to the top to increase its height.

- 4.16 On the “rear” north western elevation of the proposed scheme there are three windows (plus two blind bay windows), each of which is narrower and further away from the boundary than the windows on the extant scheme. The proposed scheme has less length of window on the boundary with Greenhill. The boundary with Henderson Court is heavily planted which offers further privacy. There is a tall fence along this boundary which will be replaced.
- 4.17 The rear of the existing building includes four windows that direct overlook North Bridge House School. The current proposal will have a significant improvement since it will be re-orientated through 90° to face southwards instead and a new tall boundary wall with screening will be added.

Outlook of surrounding properties

- 4.18 The officer’s report regarding the extant scheme confirms that the scheme would not impact upon the outlook of the neighbouring properties. The report highlights that Greenhill is on higher land than the application site (paragraph 2.17) and that Henderson Court is separated by dense vegetation and would in any event only have oblique views of the new house (paragraph 6.18).
- 4.19 The current scheme offers further benefits in that it removes two of three taller first floor elements which adjoined the boundary with Greenhill. It also pulls the building further away from the boundary with these properties.

Transport

- 4.20 Because the existing occupiers will return to the new house once complete their existing parking rights can be retained in accordance with paragraph 5.19 of Camden Planning Guidance ‘CPG7 – Transport’. The officer’s report relating to the extant permission confirmed that the development could retain two car parking spaces.
- 4.21 During consideration of the extant permission the Council confirmed that “rights” to parking permits means the entitlement to resident’s permits, which is one permit per

person at the address, rather than simply the number of permits held at the time the new planning permission is granted.

- 4.22 The Council's cycle parking standards require one space for the new house.
- 4.23 The officer's report considering the extant permission explained that "The development would also involve the loss of 8x parking spaces in the North Bridge House car park, but this would still allow the school to retain at least 24 parking spaces" (paragraph 6.24). This would be the same for the current scheme and would therefore remain acceptable.

Sustainability

- 4.24 The Design and Access Statement highlights the sustainability advantages inherent in manufacturing the building off site.
- 4.25 The Sustainability and Energy Statement explains the sustainability credentials of the proposed building.

Trees and biodiversity

- 4.26 The extant scheme was accompanied by an Arboricultural Assessment and Method Statement which confirmed that all the existing trees on the site would be preserved. This will be updated as part of the current application. It highlights that the current application in fact offers a benefit compared to the extant scheme as it encroaches less into the root protection areas of the two large trees on the north eastern boundary.
- 4.27 The extant scheme was accompanied by a bat survey report comprising an internal and external bat inspection (April 2013) and subsequent emergence/return surveys (May 2013). These surveys found no evidence of bats but suggested demolition should proceed in a precautionary manner. The May 2013 report, which summarised the results of both surveys, is resubmitted as part of the current application along with a covering letter from the ecological consultant confirming their conclusions remain relevant. The letter highlights that the current application will offer wider ecological

benefits as a result of the increased garden area and green roof on the proposed building.

5.0 Housing delivery

5.1 This section begins by explaining that there has not been a material change in the policy context since the extant planning permission was granted. It therefore repeats the analysis of the housing delivery which was approved as part of the extant permission.

Policy context

5.2 The development plan remains largely unchanged since the extant planning permission was granted. It consists of the London Plan (July 2011); Revised Early Minor Alterations to the London Plan to ensure consistency with the NPPF (October 2013)⁵; the Camden Core Strategy (November 2010); the Camden Development Policies DPD (November 2010); and Site Allocation DPD (September 2013)⁶.

5.3 Since the grant of the extant planning permission the Council have begun preparation of a new draft Local Plan, but the first consultation stage has not yet been published.

5.4 The Draft Further Alterations to the London Plan have reached an advanced stage⁷ and so can be given weight in decision making, but it does not fundamentally change the policy framework with regards to this application.

5.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) was also an important material consideration in the determination of the extant planning permission and remains so for the current application. The National Planning Policy Guidance (March 2014) was published following the extant planning permission being granted, but it is simply

⁵ Although the Revised Early Minor Alterations to the London Plan was published after the extant planning permission was granted, this document had already reached an advantaged stage at the time the extant planning permission was granted with the Examination having been completed (November 2012).

⁶ Although the Site Allocation DPD was published after the extant planning permission was granted, this document had already reached an advantaged stage at the time the extant planning permission was granted with the Examination having been completed (January 2013), Main Modifications consultation completed (April 2013) and the Inspector's Report published (June 2013).

⁷ The Examination in Public has taken place (September 2014) and the Mayor has submitted the "intend to publish" to the Secretary of State (December 2014).

guidance and does not change the content of the NPPF. It has been borne for the current proposal.

- 5.6 The site also falls within the Fitzjohn's/Netherhall Conservation Area.
- 5.7 There has therefore not been a material change in this context since the extant planning permission was granted.

Housing delivery

- 5.8 The first "challenge" the Council faces, as outlined Camden's Core Strategy, is "Adapting to Camden's growing population and to social changes", which includes "...accommodating new and expanded buildings while preserving our valued places and promoting high quality design" (CS20).
- 5.9 This is reflected in Camden's Community Strategy's Vision, which includes four themes the first of which is to create "a sustainable Camden that adapts to a growing population" (CS30 and CS6.2). Building new housing is key to this.
- 5.10 The Development Policies DPD also makes clear that "housing is regarded as the priority land-use of the Local Development Framework, and the Council will make housing its top priority when considering the future of unused and underused land and buildings" (DP2.8).
- 5.11 These positive intentions are enshrined in Policy CS6 'Providing Quality Homes', the opening of which makes clear that "The Council will aim to make full use of the Camden's capacity for housing" to meet, or exceed, Camden's housing target. The supporting text to Policy CS6 emphasises that the Council wish to "...seek to establish a plentiful supply and a broad range of homes" (CS6.3).
- 5.12 The delivery of housing is therefore a key challenge faced by the Council and there is clear positive policy support for developing new housing. The importance of this proposal in terms of delivering new housing is therefore an important material consideration weighing in its favour.

- 5.13 The opening section of Policy 3.3 ‘Increasing Housing Supply’ states that “The Mayor recognises the pressing need for more homes in London in order to promote opportunity and provide a real choice for all Londoners in ways that meet their needs at a price they can afford”.
- 5.14 Policy 3.4 ‘Optimising Housing Potential’ explains that “Taking into account local context and character, the design principles in Chapter 7 and public transport capacity, development should optimise housing output for different types of location within the relevant density range...”.
- 5.15 The ‘Revised Early Minor Alterations’ (October 2013) inserted a new paragraph emphasising that “The Mayor recognises the pressing need for more homes in London and to help boost significantly the supply of housing this Plan sets out the average annual housing targets for each borough until 2021 as a minimum level for delivery” (paragraph 3.14A). It highlighted that the London Plan’s strategy “takes account of London’s locally distinct circumstances of pressing housing need and limited land availability and aims to deliver sustainable development” (paragraph 3.14A).
- 5.16 The Draft Further Alterations to the London Plan (January 2014) explain that “there is clear evidence that London’s population is likely to increase significantly more than was anticipated in the past. However, there is uncertainty as to the actual scale and nature of this increase. This Plan therefore assumes that London’s population is set to increase by up to 2 million in the 25 years to 2036, with the level of growth reducing over time, but still remaining significantly above that assumed in the 2011 Plan” (paragraph 3.16).
- 5.17 The housing target for Camden for the period 2015-2025 is proposed to be 8,892 (889/year) (Table 3.1). This is a significant increase in housing compared to the target originally set by the London Plan for the period 2011-2021 of 6,650 (665/year) (Table 3.1).

Conclusion

- 5.18 This section demonstrates that the proposals accord with the development plan and, in accordance with the NPPF, planning permission should therefore be granted.

6.0 Design policy analysis

- 6.1 As made clear above, there has not been a material change in the policy context since the extant planning permission was granted. This section therefore repeats the design policy analysis which was approved as part of the extant scheme.
- 6.2 The NPPF makes clear that Councils should “always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings” (paragraph 17). It adds that “good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people” (paragraph 56).
- 6.3 The NPPF specifically emphasises that “in determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs...” (paragraph 63). It warns that “planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles” (paragraph 60).
- 6.4 In order to achieve good design the NPPF explains that the planning system must “not simply be about scrutiny” but must be “a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives” (paragraph 17).
- 6.5 The opening of the Design Chapter of the Core Strategy explains the balance that must be struck between growth and good quality design, stating that the Council’s “overall strategy is to sustainably manage growth in Camden so it meets our needs for homes, jobs and services in a way that conserves and enhances the features that make the Borough such an attractive place to live, work, and visit” (CS14.2).
- 6.6 Policy CS14 has two relevant objectives which have been central to the design of this proposal, namely;
- a. “requiring development of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character”, and;

- b. “preserving and enhancing Camden’s rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments”.

6.7 Within this context we now consider a number of key issues which have influenced the design here. These issues have informed the design and layout of this scheme, as explained in detail in the accompanying Design and Access Statement which should be read in conjunction with the submitted plans.

7.0 Conservation Area Assessment

7.1 As made clear in section 4, there has not been a material change in the policy context since the extant planning permission was granted. This section therefore largely repeats the Conservation Area Assessment analysis which was approved as part of the extant scheme.

7.2 The Fitzjohn's/Netherhall Conservation Area Statement identifies key characteristics which have informed the design of the scheme. These are explained in turn below.

1. Existing building of limited merit

7.3 Before considering the design of the current proposals, it is important to note that the existing building is of no particular architectural interest and does not merit protection. It is of late Victorian design but has been extensively added to and altered so very little remains of the original. It is one of the few buildings in the Fitzjohn's Conservation Area that is not identified as a building that "makes a positive contribution" (Fitzjohn's Conservation Area Statement, p29).

7.4 In approving the extant scheme the officer's report agreed that the existing building was of poor quality and its demolition offered the opportunity for a high quality replacement:

"The existing house is an average quality dwelling, most of which dates from the mid-20th Century, and is considered to be of limited architectural and historic interest. It is not identified in the Conservation Area Statement, nor is it visible from the public realm. The dwelling is largely concealed from view except from the surrounding buildings. In this regard the dwelling is not identified as an undesignated heritage asset and its demolition would not be resisted subject to a suitable replacement" (paragraph 6.2).

2. Site is “hidden”

- 7.5 When considering the design of the scheme it is important to understand the site’s context. Bearing in mind the tightly packed urban fabric of the Borough the Core Strategy emphasises that “High quality design also takes account of its surroundings and what is distinctive and valued about the local area... As Camden is a densely built-up borough where most development involves the replacement, extension or conversion of existing buildings, taking account of context and local character is particularly important. The Council will therefore expect the design of buildings and places to respond to the local area and its defining characteristics and reinforce or, if appropriate, create local distinctiveness” (CS14.7). These considerations have been fundamental to the design approach here.
- 7.6 When considering the context of the site it is important to note that the site has no frontage to any public roads and only extremely limited visibility from public viewpoints. It is an extremely hidden site.
- 7.7 The officer’s report relating to the extant scheme confirmed that “the site is concealed from public view and has limited private views” (paragraph 6.3) and the fact that the new dwelling would be set within brick boundary walls and covered with a green roof would have the benefit of “reducing the already concealed site from view” (paragraph 6.4). The current proposal uses similar boundary treatment and has a much larger area of green roof which, in combination with its lower scale, would increase its hidden nature.
- 7.8 Although the site is surrounded by existing buildings, there is limited visibility into or out of the site and it remains extremely secluded, as explained in section 2.

3. Good quality design does not mean simply replicating existing design

- 7.9 As the Core Strategy makes clear; “as well as preserving this rich heritage, we should also be contributing to it by making sure that we create buildings of equally high quality that will be appreciated by future generations” (CS14.3).

- 7.10 As the Core Strategy's makes clear, diversity in architectural styles is inherent to the character of Hampstead which has "a variety of building types from cottages and terraces to detached houses and grand residences, with a generally densely packed, high quality urban grain of a range of styles, scales and ages. Both areas contain many high quality, architect designed houses from the 19th and 20th centuries, many of which have become important parts of the local heritage and are listed for their national significance" (CSp129).
- 7.11 The Fitzjohn's/Netherhall Conservation Area Statement similarly explains the architectural diversity of this part of the Borough: "Within the framework of broadly similar building types there is a mixture of architectural styles... a feature of the area is the number of properties built for individual owners (some of whom were artists) by respected architects" (p10).
- 7.12 The application proposal represents an opportunity to add to this rich architectural heritage. The scheme can also be an exemplar development in terms of its sustainability credentials, building on the tradition in this part of London of being at the forefront of modern design.

4. The importance of vegetation and trees

- 7.13 As the Conservation Area Statement explains, "trees are an inherent and characteristic part of the Conservation Area. As well as appearing as formal street planting they appear in front gardens, in gaps between properties and in rear gardens" (p10). Landscaping is a central part of the design on this site.

Conclusion

- 7.14 All these factors identified by the Conservation Area Assessment have been borne in mind in designing the application proposals.

8.0 Summary and conclusion

- 8.1 This Planning Statement and Conservation Area Assessment is to support proposals for a full planning application for the erection of a replacement dwelling at 92 Fitzjohn's Avenue on an enlarged site taking in surplus land to the east at North Bridge House School, Hampstead currently used for car parking.
- 8.2 The site previously gained conservation area consent for demolition of the existing dwelling and planning permission for the erection of a new house on 28 June 2013 (2013/1448/C and 2013/1119/P). The applications were reported to committee with an officer recommendation for approval and were approved unanimously by members. These permissions remain extant. The intention is to demolish the existing dwelling under the extant conservation area consent⁸. This new full planning application is therefore solely for the erection of a replacement dwelling.
- 8.3 The site is bounded to the north east by North Bridge House Senior School, to the south east by Fitzjohn's Primary School (the main building of which is listed), to the south west by St Anthony's Preparatory School and to the north west by Henderson Court sheltered accommodation and a block of residential flats called Greenhill. Access is via a driveway off Fitzjohn's Avenue which is in shared ownership with St Anthony's Preparatory School.
- 8.4 Since the extant planning permission was granted the applicant has been working on the detailed design of the new house. However, the bespoke nature of the house meant that the cost of building it proved too high and too uncertain, rendering the development unviable.
- 8.5 The applicant is therefore now proposing to use a building manufactured off site and assembled on site by a company called Baufriz. Baufriz have built hundreds of houses across continental Europe, mainly in Germany. They have built 50 homes in the UK, including some in London.

⁸ The Conservation Area consent included a condition requiring that the demolition would not be undertaken before a contract for the carrying out of the works of redevelopment of the site was made. The applicant can meet this requirement.

- 8.6 The footprint, scale and layout of current proposal are very similar to the previous approved scheme. Like the approved scheme it consists of a long thin single storey dwelling with a part lower ground floor storey on the surplus land to the east which is at a lower level.
- 8.7 The current application offers a number of advantages over the previous scheme.
- 8.8 Firstly, the fact that it is largely manufactured off site offers a number of benefits:
- It has extremely high eco-credentials;
 - Because the building is manufactured off site and can be assembled quickly (in about two weeks) it will cause the minimum of disruption to neighbours; and
 - Its cost is much more certain.
- 8.9 Secondly, its design has been amended:
- The building will be moved further away from the north western boundary, meaning it will be further away from the trees;
 - Two tall projections on the “rear” north west elevation, adjacent to the boundary with Greenhill, will be removed;
 - The current proposal includes a southwards projection which is in a similar position to the existing building footprint, but is narrower and less tall than the existing building (new building: one floor with flat roof; existing building: two floors with pitched roof). Furthermore, the proposed building has no windows on this boundary (compared to five windows in the existing building). Importantly, the proposed building is moved away from the south east boundary.
- 8.10 Section 2 of this report has explained the full suite of supporting information that is being submitted with this application. Section 3 explains the consultation with the Council and neighbours which has informed the application. It explains how the current application has addressed the issues previously raised.

- 8.11 Section 4 explains that the delivery of housing is a key challenge faced by the Council and there is clear positive policy support for developing new housing.
- 8.12 Section 5 explains how the current scheme accords with the key issues identified in the determination of the extant scheme.
- 8.13 Section 6 explains that within this positive context that recognises the importance of delivering housing, the Council also want to see ensure quality design.
- 8.14 Section 7 provides an analysis of the Fitzjohn's/Netherhall Conservation Area and confirms that these characteristics have informed the design of the scheme within the context of local and national policies which make clear that design is not prescriptive.
- 8.15 Paragraph 14 of the NPPF makes clear that "At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking". This means that development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved "without delay", or where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, grant permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits or specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted.
- 8.16 The NPPF specifically highlights that "housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development" (paragraph 49).
- 8.17 The proposal fully accords with the development plan and so should therefore be granted permission without delay.