



# DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

As part of the full planning application for the renovation of the front facade  
July 2015

**Application Site:** 89 Swain's Lane, Highgate, London, N6 6PJ

**Prepared on behalf of the client (applicant):** Raymond Flatt and David Pearson

**By Architects (agent):** Denizen Works  
29 Wadeson Street  
London  
E2 9DR

# CONTENTS

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 INTRODUCTION
- 1.2 DENIZEN WORKS

## **2.0 THE SITE**

- 2.1 THE SITE LOCATION
- 2.2 SITE CHARACTER
- 2.3 EXISTING BUILDING
- 2.4 NEIGHBOURING BUILDINGS

## **3.0 PLANNING**

- 3.1 CONSERVATION AREA
- 3.2 PLANNING POLICY

## **4.0 DESIGN**

- 4.1 CONCEPT
- 4.2 DESIGN AND IMPACT
- 4.3 MATERIALS AND APPEARANCE

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

APPENDICES:

## **6.0 DRAWINGS**

- 6.1 DRAWING ISSUE SHEET

## 1.0: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION:

Denizen Works were approached by the owners of 89 Swain's Lane to develop concepts for the renovation of the principle elevation that will match the ambition of the two neighbouring properties.

89 Swain's Lane is the last in a grouping of three modern dwellings. No. 85 by Eldridge Smerin Architects won a RIBA award in 2009 and No.87 by Dominic MacKenzie Architects won the Sunday Times British homes Award 2014 for best one-off house.

The existing elevation is white painted brick on a grey/green rendered base. Various fenestration details and the later addition of a glass conservatory roof extension contribute to a lack of visual coherence which detracts from the neighbouring dwellings.

Our proposal seeks to provide a design that restores coherence to the elevation whilst providing a contextual reference to the site to enhance the streetscene.



A traditional hebridean blackhouse with agricultural additions



Covered outdoor space creates a light filled internal hallway



Light filled internal spaces with carefully considered views



A combination of the traditional with the contemporary

## 1.2 DENIZEN WORKS

Denizen Works is an award winning architecture practice based in East London.

Murray Kerr founded Denizen Works in early 2011 as a collaborative studio to develop architectural projects of different scales and typologies that are founded in an understanding of place. Since its inception, Denizen Works has worked on a wide range of projects across Europe.

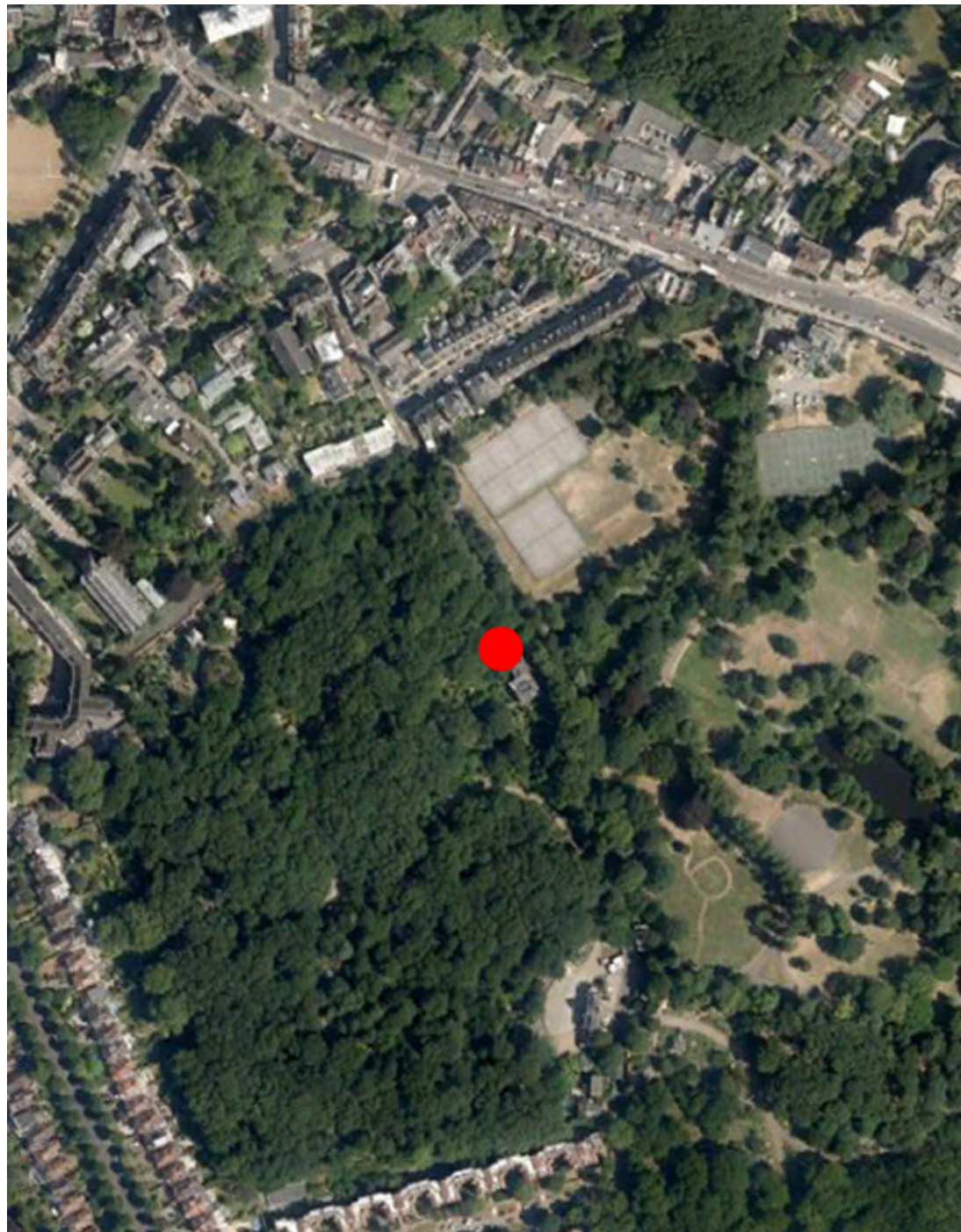
The approach that ties the various projects together is a desire to create architecture that taps into local history, landscape and microclimate. Only once these fields of investigation have been explored, along with in-depth client briefing, do we begin developing our design ideas.

We believe projects of all scales, types and location can be successfully approached in this way delivering architecture of the highest quality, buildings that are personal and spaces that are both functional and inspiring.

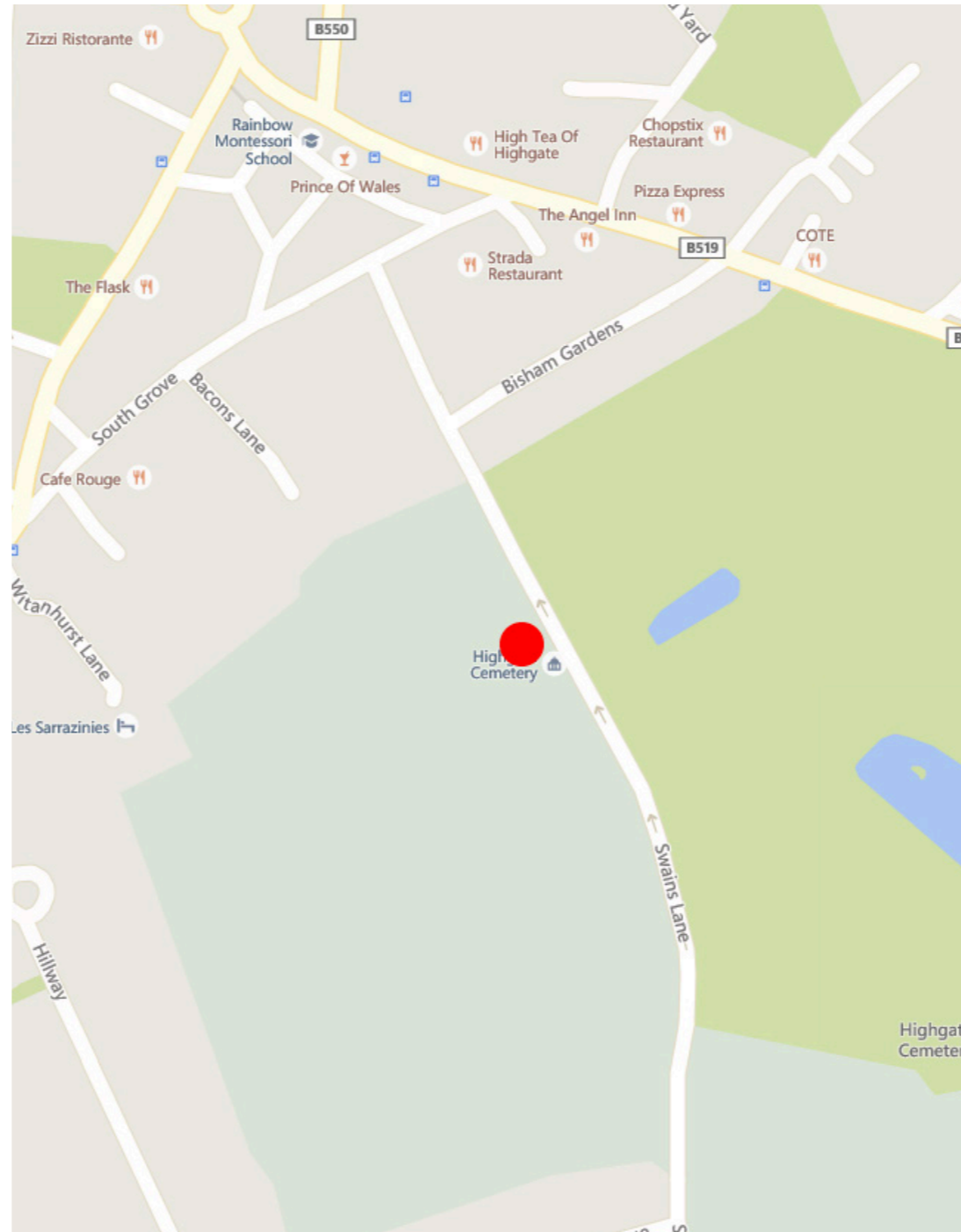
### Collaboration:

We were approached by our client to develop designs for the site after our House No.7 (pictured left) project was published in the national press. The house has gone on to win numerous awards including the Stephen Lawrence Prize 2014, an RIBA National Award, a Scottish Design Award and Grand Designs Home of the Year 2014. The house was also nominated for the Mies Prize 2015 for the best building in Europe.

## 2.0: THE SITE



Aerial photo showing the site within its woodland context



Map showing the site location

### 2.1 LOCATION:

The site is located at 89 Swain's Lane in the London Borough of Camden and falls within the Highgate Conservation Area.

Swain's Lane runs between South Grove to the north and Highgate Road to the south. No. 89 is one of three isolated modern houses located approximately a third of the way down the road from the north and is flanked by Highgate Cemetery to the west and Waterlow Park to the east.

### 2.2 SITE CHARACTER:

The site is characterised by the tall, mature trees surrounding the site, owing to its location between the park and cemetery which gives the site its woodland character.

The section of Swain's Lane where the site is located is a narrow road with the front building line of the houses directly at the edge of the road and a pavement opposite. Tall brick walls enclose the road and pavement. Due to the narrow proportions of the road, the experience of the front elevation is generally from an oblique angle and as such the sense of perspective and rhythm is heightened.

The bank of three houses present a modern character to the wooded setting. This modern approach to the context was established over 30 years ago with the construction of 85 Swain's Lane which was an example of Hi-tech architecture, designed by John Winter (subsequently demolished and replaced with the current building in 2008).



View down Swain's Lane



View up Swain's Lane



Highgate cemetery



The entrance of Highgate West Cemetry



Waterlow Park, located opposite to the site



Cor-ten house by John Winter



Looking down the hill with no.89 in the foreground and no.s 87 and 89 beyond



No. 89 with the reflective cladding to no.87 in the foreground

### 2.3 EXISTING BUILDING:

The existing building has a modern aesthetic with a grey/green rendered plinth at ground level and white painted brick at first and second storey levels. The white painted brick portion of the elevation has a staggered parapet line with the higher section also stepped back to bring some relief to the surface.

At third storey level a glazed, white-framed roof extension and terrace enclosed by potted planting represents a later addition to the building.

The fenestration detailing is varied with a mixture of flush and recessed frames and glazing panes separated by vertical and horizontal bars.



Translucent glass and dark panelled cladding to no. 85



Mirrored cladding to no.87 reflecting the trees in Waterlow Park

### 2.3 NEIGHBOURING BUILDINGS:

89 Swain's Lane is the last in a grouping of three modern dwellings.

No. 85 by Eldridge Smerin Architects won a RIBA award in 2009 and no.87 by Dominic MacKenzie Architects won the Sunday Times British homes Award 2014 for best one-off house.

Within this context, no.89 appears tired and unloved. The proposals seek to redress this and create a high quality intervention in the spirit of its two neighbours.



## 3.0 PLANNING

### 3.1 CONSERVATION AREA

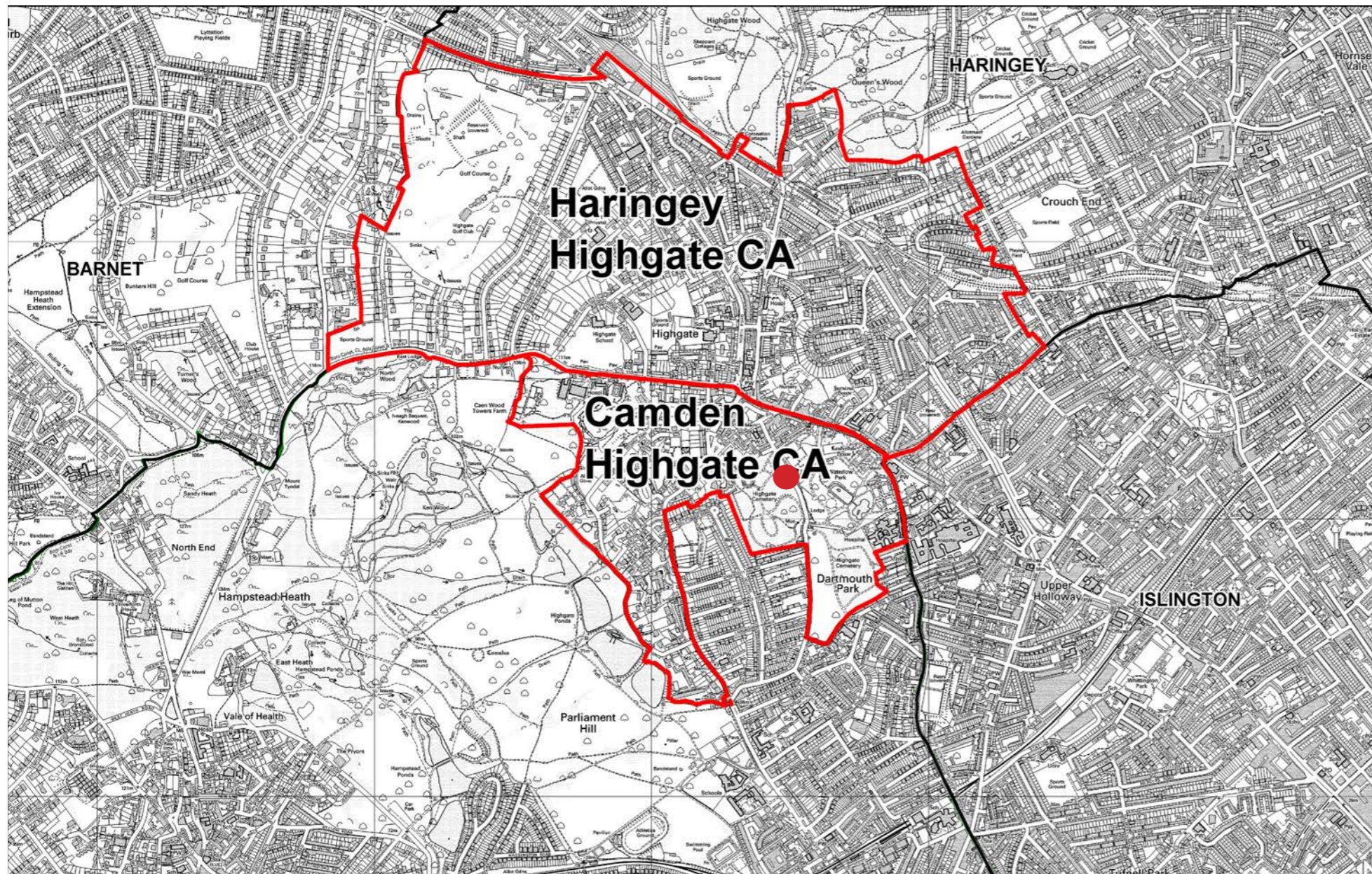
#### Highgate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy

The character of the Highgate Conservation Area is formed by the relationship of topography, open spaces, urban form and architectural details.

#### Sub-Area 3: WATERLOW PARK & CEMETERIES

This sub-area contains three major elements: Waterlow Park, including Lauderdale House; Highgate East Cemetery on the east side of Swain's Lane and Highgate West Cemetery on the west side of the upper part of Swain's Lane... The sub-area benefits from a mature and varied green landscape. Swain's Lane forms the structural 'spine- road' joining together the east and west parts of this sub-area.

Swain's Lane, southern section, rises from the south (in Dartmouth Park Conservation Area and Holly Lodge Conservation Area) up to Highgate Village. Past the Holly Lodge Estate it is defined by the cemeteries and their high boundary walls. Around the cemetery there is a cluster of houses on the west side of the road. Of particular interest is the John Winter house at No 81 which was built in 1969 and sits behind a high brick wall. Winter bought the 19th century cemetery superintendent's house, St James' Villa, and divided the generous garden into two so that he could build a radically modern new house. The three-storey house is rectilinear in form, with its proportions based on the golden section. It is framed by Cor-ten steel which has weathered to a rust finish in harmony with the woodland character of the surroundings... No 85 was characterised by dark blue steel cladding and circular windows, but it suffered from structural problems and was recently demolished. A replacement scheme, the 'Deconstructed House' by Eldridge Smerin architects has large areas of glazing maximising its close proximity to the cemetery. Nos 87 & 89 rise up from the road, continuing the walled boundary. No 87 has recently been remodelled by Justin Bere Architects. Both properties have roof-top conservatories exploiting the views.



Conservation Area map with the site highlighted

### 3.2 PLANNING POLICY

#### *Core Strategy 2010-2015*

To promote high quality, sustainable design and physical works to improve our places and streets and preserve and enhance the unique character of Camden and the distinctiveness of our many conservation areas and our other historic and valued buildings, spaces and places.

#### *CS14 – Promoting high quality places and conserving heritage*

The Council will ensure that Camden's places and buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use by:

- a) requiring development of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character;
- b) preserving and enhancing Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens.

#### *Excellence in Design*

14.3 Camden has many special and unique places and historic and modern buildings of the highest quality. 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.

14.4 Development schemes should improve the quality of buildings, landscaping and the street environment and, through this, improve the experience of the borough for residents and visitors.

14.7 High quality design also takes account of its surroundings and what is distinctive and valued about the local area. ...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.

#### *Camden's Character*

Hampstead and Highgate are derived from medieval hamlets

and have clearly defined village centres which reflect their origins. They have 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.

#### *Camden Planning Guidance CPG1 Design*

##### *Context*

2.9 Good design should:

- positively enhance the character, history, archaeology and nature of existing buildings on the site and other buildings immediately adjacent and in the surrounding area, and any strategic or local views. This is particularly important in conservation areas;
- respect, and be sensitive to, natural and physical features, both on and off the site. Features to be considered include, but are not limited to: slope and topography, vegetation, biodiversity, habitats, waterways and drainage, wind, sunlight and shade, and local pollutant sources.

##### *Materials*

2.12 Materials should form an integral part of the design process and should relate to the character and appearance of the area, particularly in conservation areas or within the setting of listed buildings. The durability of materials and understanding of how they will weather should be taken into consideration.

##### *Heritage*

Camden has a rich architectural heritage and we have a responsibility to preserve, and where possible, enhance these areas and buildings.

- We will only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area

#### *Guidance for all Extensions and Alterations*

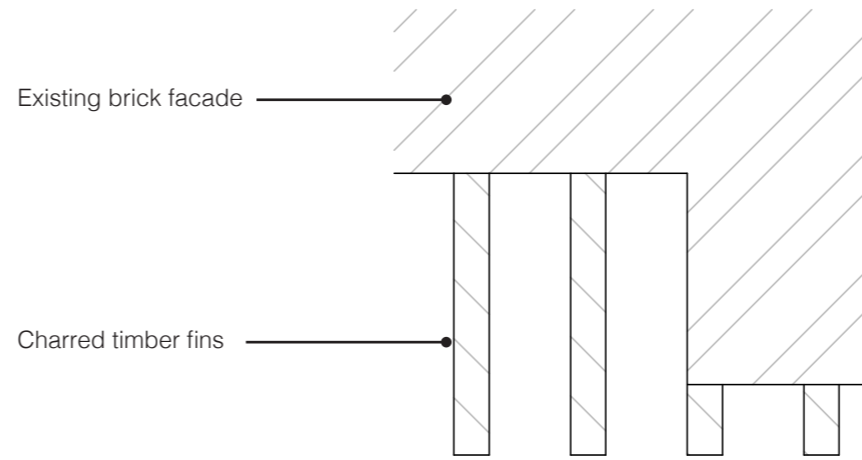
##### *External alterations*

4.7 Good practice principles for external alterations  
Alterations should always take into account the character and design of the property and its surroundings. A harmonious contrast with the existing property and surroundings may be appropriate for some new work to distinguish it from the existing building; in other cases closely matching materials and design details are more appropriate so as to ensure the new work blends with the old.

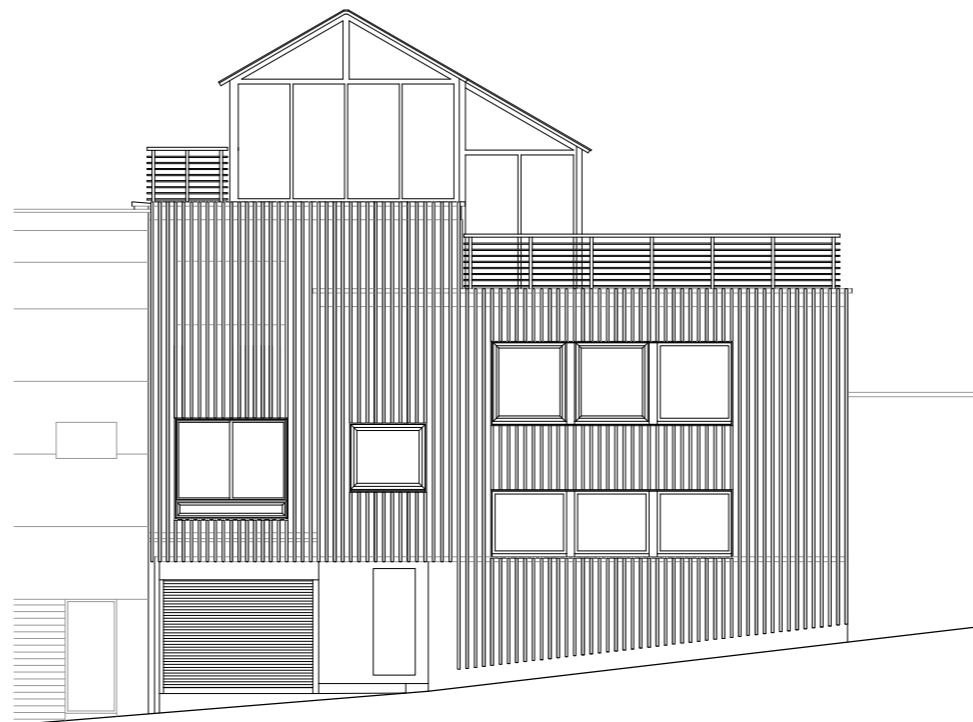
Materials for alterations should weather well, so their ageing process contributes positively to the character of the building, and the site's wider context.



Visualisation of the design



Sketch plan detail of the design, showing the various depths of the fins



Drawing of the front elevation

## 4.0 DESIGN

### 4.1 CONCEPT

The ambition is to create a beautifully crafted and transformative intervention with a poetic resonance to place.

The concept for the proposal responds to the two overriding characteristics of the site; the park and the cemetery. The proposed intervention seeks to translate the essence of this context into an architecture rooted in its environment.

### 4.2 DESIGN AND IMPACT

The proposal is for a series of long slender fins create a strong vertical articulation, referencing the verticality of the surrounding trees, which characterise the site, and accentuating the rhythm of the streetscene as experienced from the pavement.

These fins stretch across the height of the facade, unifying the various components of the existing facade and bringing coherence to the elevation. Delicate protruding metal frames to the edges of the existing windows help to refine the scale of the existing frames and bring further unity to the facade.

The front projecting face of the fins are designed to sit in the same plane and so are deeper where the existing brick facade is set back (see adjacent sketch detail). This move is intended to describe the change in depth and a 'ghosting' effect is created, conveying the memory of the old facade.

The fins are set 300mm above the ground level to avoid detrimental weathering and follow the slope of the road, describing the topography of the site.

The proposals also include for the infilling of the window to the third floor bedroom as this is currently blanked out internally.



#### 4.3 MATERIALS AND APPEARANCE

Whilst the facade at the neighbouring house at no.87 reflects the living trees of Waterlow Park opposite, our proposal seeks to describe the other prevailing character of the site; that of the graveyard. Charred timber fins provide a poetic counterpoint to the living trees and create a strong contrast with the existing white painted facade to enhance the rhythm of the pieces.

Charred timber cladding is an ancient Japanese art known as Shou Sugi Ban, and was originally developed as a means of preserving the cladding.

The process involves charring the wood, cooling it, cleaning it, and finishing it with a natural oil. It is an environmentally friendly way to preserve the timber and (paradoxically) make it fire resistant.

In addition to its aesthetic and conceptual qualities, this cladding treatment also ensures a maintenance free solution ensuring the facade will remain attractive and robust in the long term.

Minimal detailing will be achieved through discreet fixings to ensure a clean, contemporary look, in keeping with aesthetic qualities of the neighbouring buildings.

All timber is to be from sustainably managed forests and locally sourced.

Images showing the various textures achievable and the charring process



## 5.0 CONCLUSION

### CONCLUSION

The ambition of the proposed works is to enhance the existing building and to match the architectural ambition of the neighbouring dwellings.

The proposals present a restrained and site specific solution to a sensitive location. Whilst low impact in terms of its physical effect on the building, the proposal seeks to have a big impact on the aesthetic quality of the building and in turn, the wider streetscene.

Denizen Works have established a reputation for creating thoughtful, high quality buildings with exemplary detailing and it is these skills which will ensure the proposed works are successful in their ambition.

The proposal outlined within this application meets local and national planning policy and offers the opportunity to increase the clients' enjoyment of their house and enhance the setting of the Conservation Area.

**APPENDIX 6.0: DRAWINGS**

**6.1 DRAWING LIST**

<b>LIST OF DRAWINGS</b>	<b>REV</b>	<b>DRAWING NAME</b>
AP EX LP	A. Planning	Existing location plan
AP EX SP	A. Planning	Existing site plan
AP EX 000	A. Planning	Existing ground floor plan
AP EX 001	A. Planning	Existing first floor plan
AP EX 002	A. Planning	Existing second floor plan
AP EX 003	A. Planning	Existing third floor plan
AP EX 004	A. Planning	Existing roof plan
AE EX 000	A. Planning	Existing east elevation
AE EX 001	A. Planning	Existing north elevation
AS EX 000	A. Planning	Existing section AA'
AP PRO 000	A. Planning	Proposed ground floor plan
AP PRO 001	A. Planning	Proposed first floor plan
AP PRO 002	A. Planning	Proposed second floor plan
AP PRO 003	A. Planning	Proposed third floor plan
AP PRO 004	A. Planning	Proposed roof plan
AE PRO 000	A. Planning	Proposed east elevation
AE PRO 001	A. Planning	Proposed north elevation
AS PRO 000	A. Planning	Proposed section AA'