

**Advice and Consultation Team  
Planning and Regeneration**  
Culture & Environment Directorate  
London Borough of Camden  
Town Hall  
Argyle Street  
London WC1H 8EQ

4 February 2016

Dear Fergus Freaney,

**26A Upper Park Road, London NW3 2UT**

**Your ref: 2013/7726/PRE**

I am writing in support of the planning application being developed by architects John Thompson & Partners on behalf of Anette and Tim Simpson, for their property at 26A Upper Park Road, London NW3 2UT in the London Borough of Camden.

I have reviewed and commented on the design developed by architects John Thompson & Partners. As an experienced consultant architect and advisor on design and heritage matters I have set out my relevant professional experience and reasoning in support of the proposal entails the installation of a mansard-style roof extension with a set-back at the rear of the property. The plan contains a bedroom, an en-suite bathroom and access stair. The design proposals seek to improve the appearance and setting of the property, the neighbouring villas, and the Parkhill and Upper Park Conservation Area.

## **CONTEXT**

The Parkhill and Upper Park Conservation Area is part of the nineteenth century suburb of Belsize and includes a range of Victorian semi-detached villas as well as post-war and contemporary insertions. The area is characterised by its hilly topography, mature trees and large back gardens which are typical of nineteenth century residential developments.

Upper Park Road contains a curving row of Italianate villas built in the early 1860s which make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. Though somewhat different in character, the listed Barnfield buildings at the northern end of Upper Park Road also make a positive contribution to the conservation area. Limited infill

developments, particularly from the later twentieth century make a neutral or negative contribution to the conservation area.

## **PROPOSED APPLICATION**

I have reviewed the relevant planning application drawings in support of an additional storey entrance bay extension, and in the context of the character of the Parkhill and Upper Park Conservation Area (PUPCA). I acknowledge the distinctive characteristic of the PUPCA, as set out in the London Borough of Camden's Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2011, 'Conservation Area Appraisal'), which has quite specific guidance on infill extensions and alterations. I appreciate that existing infill extensions are generally considered in the Conservation Area Appraisal to be neutral, or in some cases negative contributors to the conservation area. The infill developments generally date from the twentieth century and have been built in a range of styles, from pastiche to modern (see John Thompson & Partners Design and Access Statement p3-7).

There is a general presumption in the Conservation Area Appraisal that the remaining gaps between buildings should be retained. However, it is stated in the same document that the "*majority of gaps between houses have now been filled; [and] some are under construction at the time of this report [July 2011]*". On Upper Park Road the gap between Nos. 9 and 11 is the only gap clear of later additions.

Whilst the Conservation Area Appraisal states a "*presumption for the retention of gaps between buildings*" it also identifies opportunities where "*development of this type [infill] would preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area*" (7.2, p56). Of course, the Planning Act encourages "*opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas*" that "*preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution [to the conservation area]*" (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990, para 137), and the Council's Local Policy DP25 reflects this. The Conservation Area Appraisal also outlines the nature of infill developments and makes a distinction between earlier infills which make a positive contribution to the conservation area from low-quality twentieth century developments which do not.

It is evident that the existing Coach House extension at 26 A Upper Park Road is modest in size and set back from the front of the main building, and also from the neighbouring extension. This set back and difference in height between the two extensions lessens their visual impact when viewed from the street. It does not however make a positive contribution to the conservation area, which John Thompson Architects' design sought to address.

You identified a number of concerns with an initial design proposal in your letter dated 19 December 2013. You considered that: *“infill extensions of most concern tend to be the ones where there is little differentiation in height and setback and therefore present a solid appearance to the conservation area”*, and that echoing the cornice and mansard line would create an *“overbearing development”*. While this would appear to contradict the advice in the Conservation Area Appraisal, which identifies opportunities to *“improve the appearance of the building as a whole by aligning the height of the existing adjoining extension and following details such as cornices and other appropriate elements”* (7.2, ‘Infills and Extensions’, p56), in response to your concerns, the mansard roof line of the current application has been lowered by 250mm and the parapet lowered by 300mm. This will reduce the visual impact of the proposal and will ensure that the development reads as separate and ancillary to the adjoining villa.

Further, you raised concerns that the treatment of the façade would not constitute a visual improvement over its existing form and would therefore not comply with Policy DP25 of the Local Development Framework. This is supported by the Conservation Area Appraisal (6.3, p. 52) which encourages the use of a suitable character and colour palate for new building work. In line with these recommendations the following amendments were made to John Thompson Architects’ Pre-Application Planning Report (Amended), 1 December 2014:

- Mansard roof line lowered by 250mm and parapet line lowered by 300mm;
- Width of dormer reduced from 2400 to 1700mm;
- Dormer external finish changed to lead cladding;
- Dormer door to front roof ‘terrace’ omitted;
- Step in insulation in front façade omitted;
- Traditional, white framed windows shown with projecting sills; and
- Panelled front door shown and glass sidelights omitted.

### **Amenity**

Given that the mansard extension would be contained to the side of the villa and above the existing Coach House extension there are unlikely to be any significant impacts on the amenity of adjoining neighbours – as you acknowledge in your letter dated 19 December 2013.

## CONCLUSIONS

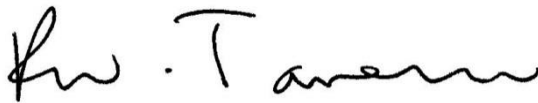
The current application has addressed specific objections outlined in the letter of 19 December 2013, including:

- The provision of a roof terrace, parapet and roof height and façade treatment; and
- The use of high-quality materials and appropriate detailing to reflect the character of the conservation area and improve the appearance of 26a, thus enhancing the setting of Upper Park Road villas and the wider conservation area.

I consider the proposed application will be in keeping with the terrace and this part of the conservation area, and that no harm would be caused to the building, terrace or conservation area. The proposal will not harm the settings of the listed building or the Parkhill and Upper Park Conservation Area, it will enhance them. Consequently, Policy DP25 of the Local Development Framework (which requires all development to both preserve and enhance the appearance of the conservation area) would be satisfied.

I therefore fully support the current planning application.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Tavernor', written in a cursive style.

Professor Robert Tavernor

## RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

I am a registered architect and a member of the Royal Institute of British Architects (since 1985). I am Emeritus Professor of Architecture and Urban Design at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). I have been Forbes Professor of Architecture at the University of Edinburgh (1992-5), Professor of Architecture and Head of the Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering at the University of Bath (1995-2005); and Professor and Director of the LSE Cities Programme (2005-10). I have held various visiting academic posts internationally, including Visiting Professor at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA, 1998), European Union Visiting Scholar in planning and conservation at the University of Texas A&M (2002); and Visiting Professor in Architecture and Urbanism at the University of São Paulo, Brazil (2004). I am currently Visiting Professor at the University of Bath (since 2009).

I am the author of books, book chapters, and peer review journal essays on the foundations of architecture – in particular the classical tradition of architecture – and urban design through history, and my writings recently have focused on London. My principal publications are listed on my website at: [www.tavernorconsultancy.co.uk](http://www.tavernorconsultancy.co.uk)

Through the Tavernor Consultancy I provide architectural, heritage and urban planning advice to institutions, developers and architects. I am regularly engaged in planning applications that relate to Conservation Area and Listed Building issues. The majority of my work has related to large-scale masterplanning and building design submissions (including in London: Greenwich Peninsula, Croydon Gateway, New Wembley, Bishopsgate Goods Yard, Battersea Power Station, and currently Earls Court) and the design of individual buildings, some tall and often located in or visible in relation to historic settings. Internationally, I provided the visual and heritage assessment principles for the Russian city of Perm, the first application of such principles in the Russian Federation, part of a new city planning concept which won the Grand Prix at the Moscow Architecture Biennale 2010. I have advised the US Government regarding the impact of large modern buildings on the historic core of Washington DC.

My expertise in the urban development of London led to the DCMS asking me to give evidence to the UNESCO and ICOMOS World Heritage Committee in the autumn of 2006 regarding the impact of modern architecture in the City on the Tower of London.