

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
for
Athlone House Restoration

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVIA) has been produced on behalf of the applicant to support a detailed planning application for the restoration of Athlone House and ancillary buildings, and the restoration of its gardens. It should be read in conjunction with other submitted documents, including the Design and Access Statement and the Planning Statement, and submitted drawings should be consulted for details of the restoration design. The LVIA assesses the local landscape/townscape and visual baseline and planning policy relevant to landscape/visual considerations. It then judges the impacts of the proposals on these factors following accepted methodology. Particular reference is made to effects on the Highgate Conservation Area, Hampstead Heath, the London View Management Framework (View 3: Kenwood to St Pauls Cathedral) and consultation responses from key statutory and non-statutory consultees.

Planning policies underpinning the acceptability of the proposals are fully considered and include: The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); local/regional policy in The London Plan; and the adopted and emerging versions of the London Borough of Camden's local plan, and relevant supplementary planning guidance.

The baseline landscape/townscape character was fully considered as a basis for evaluating the proposals, in both a national and local context. A number of key landscape characteristics were identified, notably the network of open spaces (both private and public) and vegetation framing built development. The landscape/townscape is characterised by a wide mix of architectural styles both modern and historic, and includes many historically important buildings and sites.

Key landscape characteristics of both the Highgate Conservation Area and Hampstead Heath are also considered as an important local context for development proposals. The extent to which the site still reflects key local character attributes is evaluated, and opportunities for enhancement considered. The quality of the local landscape has a generally high townscape quality and this is summarised and evaluated.

The assessment found that Athlone house in its current state has a detrimental impact upon the character of Hampstead Lane and the Conservation Area, due to the current appearance of the house and the loss of the landscape structure within the site in recent history. There is also a lack of defined boundary between the proposal site and the adjacent Caenwood Court.

The overall visual amenity of the area is of a good quality, well maintained and verdant townscape of near to middle distant views, with built form and a mature landscape structure of street trees and private garden vegetation screening long-distant views. Hampstead Heath offers expansive views over a natural landscape and mature woodland, while framing views towards the City of London and strategic buildings of interest.

The visual baseline in terms of key views was also established and is in particular focussed on concerns of consultees. Seven external viewpoints were agreed for consideration of the impact, if any, of the proposals on visual amenity. These are both distant and middle views from Hampstead Heath and Highgate School, and close views from Hampstead Heath and Hampstead Lane.

Consultations were undertaken during 2015-2016. As well as the London Borough of Camden (LBC), The City of London, The Athlone House Working Group and the Caen Court Residents Association was consulted. A number of key issues arose out of these consultations, including protection of Metropolitan Open Land and protection of both public and private views. The proposals to restore the historic house and landscape grounds was universally welcomed.

The effects (impacts) of the proposals were considered in terms of both townscape/landscape, visual amenity and relevant policy.

The proposed development is shown to accord with the relevant local and national policy as it relates to landscape/visual matters. The restoration will have a positive impact on local landscape and townscape, including MOL and the Conservation Area, both policy-protected. The London View Management Framework View 3: Kenwood House to St Paul's Cathedral is also not affected by the proposals. These will restore the features of the existing house and is considered appropriate to the local context, neither dominating nor distracting the viewer from the vista towards the City and the Cathedral.

The restoration of house and grounds was found to be a positive effect at the local level, according with both local and national policy. In addition the restoration will enhance the setting and character of the Highgate Conservation Area and bring minor/moderate benefits to the local townscape and landscape. The development proposals will result in the restoration of the site in a way that is congruent with the character of Fitzroy Park: the roofline will be retained, with a renewal of many of the important architectural details. The new entrance with its avenue of trees will provide an enhancement to the streetscape with an increased perception of trees and greenery.

In terms of effects on visual amenity, the evaluation considers that the change will either be negligible, in that views will not change, or of minor beneficial significance. While the restoration is of considerable importance and will require much internal and external work, the visual effect of this is small. However, as the existing house is valued locally as a feature in the landscape, its retention as a landscape feature more or less as it exists at present should be seen as greatly in its favour. The visual improvement arises from the perception that a somewhat derelict and neglected landmark is now being restored.

The proposals will require little in the way of mitigation, beyond that which is standard for any proposal of a significant size. These will include the requirement to assess and conserve species and habitats before construction commences; details of tree protection measures, and full details of landscape treatment and management plan. It would also be expected that a Construction Management Plan would be prepared and agreed with the planning authority before site work commences. Additional mitigation measures are unlikely to be required.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.0.1 This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been produced on behalf of the applicant to support a detailed planning application for the restoration of a residential dwelling and associated landscape design on the site of Athlone House on Hampstead Lane, London, under the local authority of London Borough of Camden. It forms part of a suite of documents supporting the planning application for the development proposal and should be read in conjunction with other documents, particularly the Planning Statement.
- 1.0.2 The landscape design for the grounds of Athlone House does not materially differ from that presented in the most recent inquiry into proposals to demolish Athlone House. Similarly, particular care has been taken in relation to the boundary with Caenwood Court to conserve the amenities of neighbouring residents.

1.1 The Document and Status

- 1.1.1 This document has been produced by: Jaquelin C Fisher BSc MSc CMLI FAE, who has 23 years of experience as a Chartered Landscape Architect, has written numerous LVIAs and was a member of the team who wrote the 2nd Edition of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment; Abby Stallwood BSc(Hons) PGDipLM CMLI, Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute, who has over 13 years' experience producing LVIAs and Natasha Newbury BA(Hons) Dip LA provided the landscape design and planting strategy that is submitted as part of the planning application for the site.
- 1.1.2 This report considers the development which is assessed according to accepted guidelines produced by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', (GLVIA) 3rd Edition 2013, by Routledge.

1.2 Rationale

- 1.2.1 The purpose of this document is to make an assessment of the local landscape and townscape in and around the proposal site and to ascertain the potential landscape / townscape character and visual effects the proposed residential development and restored landscape may have, with particular reference to the Highgate Conservation Area, Hampstead Heath and upon London Strategic Panoramic View 3: Kenwood to St Paul's Cathedral, detailed within the London View Management Framework.

1.3 Limitations, Constraints and Assumptions

- 1.3.1 The assessment was completed during the spring of 2016. Considerations of landscape quality and condition and viewpoints are based upon site visits and the author's professional judgement. Use was made of photographs from the period 2009 to the present to further assess baseline conditions. The LVIA is illustrated using photographic material which is representative of the landscape and visual baseline, but does not substitute for nor completely replicate the impression made by site visits. Photographs and Computer Generated Images (CGIs) found in Appendix I to illustrate the Agreed Views utilise photography undertaken in the spring of 2016.
- 1.3.2 It is not possible or practicable to assess the potential visual impact of a proposed development from every part of the local area. The purposes of the LVIA are to assess the 'worst-case scenario' and to make judgements accordingly. Narrowing the assessment to a series of representative

viewpoints is generally considered to be sufficient to fulfil these tasks. In this case, viewpoints were agreed with the London Borough of Camden and other consultees as set out in Section 4.5 below, "Consultation".

- 1.3.3 The photographs and CGIs do not follow the methodology recommended in The Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/09: Use of Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Assessment. However, as part of the PPA and consultation process it was agreed with the local planning authority and consultees that representative photography would be acceptable from agreed viewpoints to give an impression of the completed restoration. Details of the consultees' agreement on this matter may be found in Section 4.5.

2.0 PLANNING POLICY

- 2.0.1 This chapter identifies the planning policies that are relevant to landscape character and visual amenity issues of relevance to this application. National policy is summarised, along with Local/Regional policy, found in The London Plan 2011 and its revisions and in the adopted London Borough of Camden Local Plan, and referenced SPGs. In addition, the 2016 Submission Draft of the Local Plan policies are also considered.

2.1 National Planning Policy

2.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published on 27 March 2012 sets out national planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. This includes an emphasis on a variety of high quality homes and sustainable development to maintain or enhance the vitality of the whole community, whilst providing a balance between the protection and enhancement of the local environment (natural, built and historic), with the desirability of new development, drawing on the contribution made by the natural and historic environment to the character of the place.

- 2.1.2 **Chapter 1 – Sustainable Design:** The NPPF states that *‘the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development’*. It then goes on to say that the planning system needs to perform a number of roles including *‘an economic role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment...’*
- 2.1.3 **Chapter 7 – Good Design:** Paragraph 60 states that *‘planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles of particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness’*.
- 2.1.4 *‘Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.’*
- 2.1.5 **Chapter 9 – Protecting Green Belt Land:** The proposal site is located within designated Metropolitan Open Land which is given the same protection as Green Belt within planning policy.
- 2.1.6 The NPPF states that *‘the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open,’* (NPPF paragraph 79). It goes on to state that *‘when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt,’* (paragraph 88).
- 2.1.7 **Chapter 11 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment:** The NPPF seeks to protect the natural environment including *‘protecting and enhancing valued landscapes,’* (paragraph 109).

2.2 Regional Planning Policy

2.2.1 This section details the regional planning policies and considerations relevant to the proposed development. This includes The London Plan and the City of London Management Plan for Hampstead Heath.

2.2.2 The London Plan

The Greater London Authority (GLA) is the strategic regional authority, with the Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) of the Mayor of London detailed within the London Plan, July 2011. It shares local government powers with 32 London Boroughs and the City of London Corporation.

2.2.3 The London Plan has been subject to a series of revisions and alterations with the Revised Early Minor Alterations (REMA) formally adopted October 2013. On 15th January 2014, the Mayor published Draft Further Alterations to the London Plan (FALP) for a twelve week period of public consultation, closing on 10th April 2014. The FALP have been prepared primarily to address key housing and employment issues emerging from an analysis of census data released since the publication of the London Plan in July 2011, and which indicate a substantial increase in the capital's population. On 14 March 2016, Minor Alterations to the London Plan were adopted and the latest version of the Plan was published, subsequent to an examination in public.

2.2.4 Policy 1.1 Delivering the Strategic Vision and Objectives for London:

"Growth will be supported and managed across all parts of London to ensure it takes place within the current boundaries of Greater London without:

- a) *Encroaching on the Green Belt, or on London's protected open spaces*
- b) *Having unacceptable Impacts on the environment*

2.2.5 **Policy 2.18 Green Infrastructure: The Multi-functional Network of Open and Green Spaces:** This policy relates to the Mayor's commitment to work with all relevant strategic partners to '*protect, promote, expand and manage the extent and quality of, and access to, London's network of green infrastructure*'. This is supported by the All London Green Grid (ALGG) March 2012 Supplementary Planning Guidance. '*This multifunctional network will secure benefits including, but not limited to: biodiversity; natural and historic landscapes; culture; building a sense of place*'"

2.2.6 **Policy 3.5 Quality and Design of Housing Developments:** This policy states that "Housing developments should be of the highest quality internally, externally, and in relation to their context and to the wider environment, taking account of strategic policies in the London Plan to *protect and enhance London's residential environment and attractiveness as a place to live*'.

2.2.7 **Policy 7.1 Lifetime Neighbourhoods:** This states that "... the natural and built environment of the neighbourhood should reinforce a strong, unique local history and character that is easy to relate to, and development should be based on the lifetime neighbourhood principles set out in the Plan at paragraph 7.4A"

2.2.8 **Policy 7.4 Local Character:** This policy states that '*development should have regard to the form, function, and structure of an area, place or street and the scale, mass and orientation of surrounding buildings. It should improve an area's visual or physical connection with natural features. In areas of poor or ill-defined character, development should build on the positive*

elements that can contribute to establishing an enhanced character for the future function of the area.’ Refer to Figure 1-Landscape Context.

2.2.9 *‘Buildings, streets and open spaces should provide a high quality design response that is informed by the surrounding historic environment.’*

2.2.10 **Policy 7.8 Heritage Assets and Archaeology:** This relates to the protection of heritage assets, including Conservation Areas. It states that such assets should be recorded so *‘that the desirability of sustaining and enhancing their significance and of utilising their positive role in place shaping can be taken into account.’*

C Development should identify, value, conserve, restore, re-use and incorporate heritage assets, where appropriate.

D Development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.

E New development should make provision for the protection of archaeological resources, landscapes and significant memorials.

2.2.11 *‘Crucial to the preservation of this character is the careful protection and adaptive re-use of heritage buildings and their settings. Heritage assets such as conservation areas make a significant contribution to local character and should be protected from inappropriate development that is not sympathetic in terms of scale, materials, details and form. Development that affects the setting of heritage assets should be of the highest quality of architecture and design, and respond positively to local context and character.’ (REMA Oct 2013)*

2.2.12 **Policy 7.11 London View Management Framework:** The London Plan identifies a list of views that help to define London at a strategic level, including significant buildings or landscapes, from places that are publicly accessible and well used. *These views represent at least one of the following categories:*

- *London Panoramas - panoramas across substantial parts of London;*
- *Linear Views - views from an urban space of a building or group of buildings within a townscape setting (including narrow, linear views to a defined object); or*
- *River Prospects - broad prospects along the river Thames.*

2.2.13 The Mayor has identified three strategically important landmarks in the designated views: St Paul’s Cathedral, the Palace of Westminster and the Tower of London. Supplementary Planning Guidance has been prepared in the form of the London View Management Framework, March 2012 (LVMF).

2.2.14 This SPG will seek to protect vistas towards strategically important landmarks by designating *landmark viewing corridors* and *wider setting consultation areas*. Together, these elements form a Protected Vista. Each element of the vista will require a level of management appropriate to its potential impact on the viewer’s ability to recognise and appreciate the strategically important landmark. Refer to section 2.2.22 below.

2.2.15 **Policy 7.12 Implementing the London View Management:** Under the heading “Strategic”, the policy **states:** “New development should not harm, and where possible should make a positive contribution to, the characteristics and composition of the strategic views and their landmark elements. It should also preserve or enhance the viewers’ ability to recognise and appreciate the strategically important landmarks in these views. “

- 2.2.16 Protected Vistas are designed to preserve the viewer's ability to recognise and appreciate a strategically important landmark from a designated viewing place.
- 2.2.17 **Policy 7.17 Metropolitan Open Land:** The London Plan outlines the importance of MOL and the Mayor's commitment to protect it. *'The strongest protection should be given to London's Metropolitan Open Land and inappropriate development refused, except in very special circumstances, giving the same level of protection as in the Green Belt. Essential ancillary facilities for appropriate uses will only be acceptable where they maintain the openness of MOL.'*
- 2.2.18 **Policy 7.18 Protecting Local Open Space and Addressing Local Deficiency:** This policy relates to the protection of areas of open space, including creation, enhancement and management.
- 2.2.19 **Policy 7.19 Biodiversity and Access to Nature:** This relates to planning for nature from the beginning of the development process and states: 'the Mayor will work with all relevant partners to ensure a proactive approach to the protection, enhancement, creation, promotion and management of biodiversity in support of the Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy. This means planning for nature from the beginning of the development process and taking opportunities for positive gains for nature through the layout design and materials of development proposals.'
- 2.2.20 **Policy 7.21 Trees and Woodlands:** At Section A. of this policy, it states: "Trees and woodlands should be protected, maintained, and enhanced, following the guidance of the London Tree and Woodland Framework (or successor strategy). Existing trees of value should be retained and any loss as the result of development should be replaced following the principle of 'right place, right tree'. Wherever appropriate, the planting of additional trees should be included in new developments, particularly large-canopied species.
- 2.2.21 **Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)- London View Management Framework, March 2012 (LVMF)**
This SPG identifies views that help to define London at a strategic level, from places that are publicly accessible and well used. These views represent at least one of the following categories:
- London Panoramas - panoramas across substantial parts of London;
 - Linear Views - views from an urban space of a building or group of buildings within a townscape setting (including narrow, linear views to a defined object); or
 - River Prospects - broad prospects along the river Thames.
- 2.2.22 The Mayor identifies three strategically important landmarks in the designated views: St Paul's Cathedral, the Palace of Westminster and the Tower of London. Within some views, a Protected Vista to a strategically important landmark is defined and used to protect the viewer's ability to recognise and appreciate the strategically important landmark. The Protected Vista is composed of two parts:
- *Landmark Viewing Corridor* – the area between the viewing place and a strategically important landmark that must be maintained if the landmark is to remain visible from the viewing place.
 - *Wider Setting Consultation Area* – the area enclosing the landmark viewing corridor in both the foreground and middle ground, and background of the protected vista. Development above a threshold height in this area could compromise the viewer's ability to recognise and appreciate the strategically important landmark.

- 2.2.23 Views are defined from a selected viewing point as 120degree field of interest. Development will be assessed for its impact on the designated view if it falls within the foreground, middle ground or background of that view. The front and middle ground areas are the areas between the viewing place and a landmark, or the natural features that form its setting. The background area to a view extends away from the foreground or middle ground into the distance. Part of the background may include built or landscape elements that provide a backdrop to a strategically important landmark.
- 2.2.24 **LVMF London Panorama View 3: Kenwood House to St Pauls Cathedral**
Kenwood House is considered the finest 18th Century house in north London, and is set within a landscaped estate bordering Hampstead Heath. The Viewing Place occupies a stretch of parkland that runs into a meadow, which falls away to the south. There is one Viewing Location at Kenwood: 3A, the viewing gazebo.
- 2.2.25 The viewing gazebo identifies the position from which views should be considered. An Assessment Point (3A.1) is located there, and includes a Protected Vista orientated towards St Paul's Cathedral. *'The middle ground consists of a wooded ridge, generally free of buildings. There is an abrupt contrast between the parkland in the foreground and middle ground and the modern commercial tower buildings of central London. Hills beyond the City form the background. The view is particularly sensitive to development breaching the tree line in the middle ground, as it would inhibit views of the panorama.'* Refer to Figure 2-LVMF View 3.
- 2.2.26 **City of London – Hampstead Heath Management Plan 2007-2017 (Nov 2007)**
Since the 1870s the City of London has had a policy of protecting open spaces from development and conserving them for the enjoyment of the public. This battle to save the Heath from development was part of a longer-term concern to preserve open spaces within the cities that had grown rapidly in the aftermath of the industrial revolution.
- 2.2.27 Hampstead Heath is the largest area of open space in north-west London. The City of London is obliged by the provisions of the London Government Reorganisation (Hampstead Heath) Order 1989 to manage the Heath, protect it and make it available as open space. The foundation legislation, the Hampstead Heath Act 1871, brought the original Heath into public ownership with, amongst others, the following obligations:
- Forever to keep the Heath open, unenclosed, unbuilt upon and by all lawful means to prevent, resist and abate all encroachment on the Heath and attempted encroachment and to protect the Heath and preserve it as an open space
 - At all times to preserve as far as may be the natural aspect of the Heath and to that end to protect the turf, gorse, heather, timber and other trees, scrubs and brushwood thereon
- 2.2.28 The Management Plan covers general policy objectives and proposals relating to the management of Hampstead Heath for the period 2007 to 2017, produced by the City of London. The plan outlines how it is essential to identify and to address threats to the Heath, for example, planning applications for developments that are adjacent to or visible from the Heath that would adversely affect its atmosphere or landscape setting.
- 2.2.29 There are three designed gardens related to the Heath, of which Kenwood (managed by English Heritage), is close to Athlone House and is included in the English Heritage register of Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest in England and Wales. Kenwood also has its own management plan that was prepared by English Heritage and is separate from the Heath Management Plan.

- 2.2.30 The Plan notes that the Heath is a unique remnant of London's former countryside, now surrounded by urban development and that *'the interplay between the Heath and the immediate surrounding townscape, including the historic village centres of Hampstead and Highgate and the Hampstead Garden Suburb, is noteworthy'*. Plan objectives outlined under the Natural Landscape section state that *'enjoyment of the natural world and landscape must surely be its greatest asset and one that it should be our guiding objective to maintain'*.
- 2.2.31 Aspirational Goals within the Natural Landscape section include the identification of wildlife habitats and species close to, but outside, the Heath and encourage their protection and enhancement. The plan notes that there are substantial areas of (mostly private) open space surrounding the Heath, such as large back gardens and large numbers of ancient oaks from the former Bishop's Wood surviving in back gardens north of Hampstead Lane. *'Protection, enhancement and creation of wildlife habitats would reinforce and help maintain the biodiversity of the area and help wildlife to access, and disperse from, the Heath'*.

2.3 Local Planning Policy

- 2.3.1 This section details the key local planning policies and considerations relevant to the proposed residential development. (London Borough of Camden's Core Strategy Development Plan Document, Adopted November 2010, and the Development Policies Adopted November 2010).
- 2.3.2 At Section 2.3.27 – 2.3.33 are set out emerging policies of relevance in the 2016 Submission Draft Local Plan, now currently out for review
- 2.3.3 **Core Strategy:**
CS 1- Distribution of Growth
Making the best use of Camden's limited land; *'The Council will promote the most efficient use of land and buildings in Camden by:*
d) seeking development that makes full use of its site, taking into account quality of design, its surroundings, sustainability, amenity, heritage, transport accessibility and any other considerations relevant to the site;'
- 2.3.4 CS 4- Areas of More Limited Change
To *'ensure that development in the areas of more limited change respects the character of its surroundings, conserves heritage and other important features and provides environmental improvements and other local benefits where appropriate'*.
- 2.3.5 CS 5- Managing the Impact of Growth and Development
Particular consideration will be given to:
c) providing sustainable buildings and spaces of the highest quality; and
d) protecting and enhancing our environment and heritage and the amenity and quality of life of local communities
- 2.3.6 *'Protect the amenity of Camden's residents and those working in and visiting the borough by:*
e) making sure that the impact of developments on their occupiers and neighbours is fully considered;

- f) seeking to ensure development contributes towards strong and successful communities by balancing the needs of development with the needs and characteristics of local areas and communities; and*
- f) requiring mitigation measures where necessary.'*

2.3.7 CS 6- Providing Quality Homes

To 'make full use of Camden's capacity for housing by:

- a) maximising the supply of additional housing to meet or exceed Camden's target of 5,950 homes from 2007-2017, including 4,370 additional self-contained homes;*
- b) maximising the supply of additional housing over the entire plan period to meet or exceed a target of 8,925 homes from 2010-2025, including 6,550 additional self-contained homes;*
- d) minimising the net loss of existing homes;*
- e) regarding housing as the priority land-use of Camden's Local Development Framework.'*

2.3.8 CS 14- Promoting High Quality Places and Conserving Our Heritage

To 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;*
- c) promoting high quality landscaping and works to streets and public spaces;*
- d) seeking the highest standards of access in all buildings and places and requiring schemes to be designed to be inclusive and accessible;*
- e) protecting important views of St Paul's Cathedral and the Palace of Westminster from sites inside and outside the borough and protecting important local views.'*

2.3.9 CS 14 further describes how it will ensure it will meet the policy, such as paragraph 14.7, where high quality design will also have to take account of its surroundings and what is distinctive and valued about the local area. Taking account of context and local character is particularly important where most development involves the replacement, extension or conversion of existing buildings. The design of buildings and places will be expected to respond to the local area and its defining characteristics and reinforce or, if appropriate, create local distinctiveness.

2.3.10 Paragraphs 14.11 and 14.12 highlight preservation, enhancement and architectural detailing. Conservation areas such as Belsize, Hampstead and Swiss Cottage will utilise 'Article 4 Directions' to allow greater LPA control over detailing to reduce cumulative change and washing out of historical character.

2.3.11 Access to new buildings, paragraph 14.19, states it will be inclusive and accessible to all, highlighting perceptions as well as physical factors; should 'appear' to be accessible, as well as actually be accessible.

2.3.12 Paragraph 14.24 highlights the 'protection of locally important views that contribute to the interest and character of the borough. These may include;

- *views of and from large public parks and open spaces , such as Hampstead Heath, Kenwood Estate, Primrose Hill and Regent's Park, including panoramic views, as well as views of London Squares and historic parks and gardens; and*
- *views into and from conservation areas'.*

2.3.13 Development should be compatible with views, setting, scale and massing so as to not cause harm as set out with paragraph 14.25. Development will not generally be acceptable if it obstructs important views or skylines, appears too close or too high in relation to a landmark or impairs outlines that form part of the view. Camden's Local List identifies locally significant buildings, landscapes and features of heritage value. Refer to section 2.3.25 below.

2.3.14 CS 15- Protecting and Improving Our Parks and Open Spaces and Encouraging Biodiversity

To ensure protection and improvement of Camden's parks and open spaces:

a) protect open spaces designated in the open space schedule as shown on the Proposals Map, including our Metropolitan Open Land, and other suitable land of 400sqm or more on large estates with the potential to be used as open space.

The Council will preserve and enhance the historic, open space and nature conservation importance of Hampstead Heath and its surrounding area by:

k) working with the City of London, English Heritage and Natural England to manage and improve the Heath and its surrounding areas;

l) protecting the Metropolitan Open Land, public and private open space and the nature conservation designations of sites;

m) seeking to extend the public open space when possible and appropriate;

n) taking into account the impact on the Heath when considering relevant planning applications;

o) protecting views from Hampstead Heath and views across the Heath and its surrounding area;

p) improving the biodiversity of, and habitats in, Hampstead Heath and its surrounding area, where opportunities arise.

2.3.15 Paragraphs 15.23, 24 and 25 refer to Hampstead Heath and the conservation area statements, appraisals and management strategies to *preserve and enhance the built environment around the Heath and preserve outlooks and views from it*. Many views to and from the Heath are protected, for example the views from Kenwood House to St Paul's Cathedral.

2.3.16 **Development Policies:**

DP 24- Securing high quality design

The Council will require all developments, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, to be of the highest standard of design and will expect developments to consider:

a) character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings;

b) the character and proportions of the existing building, where alterations and extensions are proposed;

c) the quality of materials to be used;

d) the provision of visually interesting frontages at street level;

f) existing natural features, such as topography and trees;

g) the provision of appropriate hard and soft landscaping including boundary treatments;

h) the provision of appropriate amenity space; and

i) accessibility.

2.3.17 Paragraph 24.11 outlines respect for local character, with careful consideration of the characteristics of a site, features of local distinctiveness, and the wider context in order to achieve high quality development which integrates into its surroundings. Paragraph 24.12 takes this further requiring a clear understanding and recognition of factors that preserve and positively enhance local character.

- *Within areas of distinctive character, development should reinforce those elements which create the character.*

- *Where townscape is particularly uniform attention should be paid to responding closely to the prevailing scale, form and proportions and materials.*
- *In areas of low quality or where no pattern prevails, development should improve the quality of an area and give a stronger identity.*

2.3.18 Paragraphs 24.15 and 24.16 deal with architectural detailing and choice of materials. Paragraph 24.19 states that proposals should respond to the natural assets of a site and its surroundings, such as slopes and height differences, trees and other vegetation. Development should not cause the loss of existing habitats.

2.3.19 DP 25- Conserving Camden's heritage

In order to maintain the character of Camden's Conservation Areas, the Council will:

- a) take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans when assessing applications within conservation areas;*
- b) only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area;*
- c) prevent the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area where this harms the character or appearance of the conservation area, unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention;*
- d) not permit development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character and appearance of that conservation area; and*
- e) preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character of a conservation area and which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage.*

2.3.20 The character and appearance of a conservation area can be '*eroded through the loss of traditional architectural details, ... garden settings and boundary treatments.*' The value of existing gardens, trees and landscaping to the character of the borough noted as they make a particular contribution to conservation areas. Development will '*not be permitted which causes the loss of trees and/or garden space where this is important to the character and appearance of a conservation area*'.

2.3.21 **Highgate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (Adopted 2007)**

The Highgate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy was adopted in October 2007. It defines and analyses what makes the conservation area 'special' and provides important information about the types of alterations and development that are likely to be acceptable or unacceptable in the conservation area. The Conservation Area spans the London Boroughs of Camden, Haringey and Islington.

2.3.22 The Highgate Conservation Area, in particular, enjoys a wealth of open spaces and green surroundings. Lanes and farm names live on alongside open areas of allotments and parks, Hampstead Heath, Highgate Cemetery, Waterlow Park, South Grove reservoir, Fitzroy Park allotments and the many large gardens contribute to the informal landscape setting and rural atmosphere which is an important part of the Conservation Area character. The Conservation Area is further subdivided into character areas as follows;

- Sub area 1: Highgate Village
- Sub area 2: Fitzroy Park
- Sub area 3: Waterlow Park and cemeteries
- Sub area 4: The Whittington Hospital
- Sub area 5: Merton Lane and Millfield Lane

- 2.3.23 The proposal site is located within Sub Area 2 – Fitzroy Park. In its present form, Fitzroy Park was developed within the framework of the boundaries of older estates. As the large houses were demolished, the surrounding parkland became available for development, particularly in the 19th and 20th centuries. The character of the area is derived from the close relationship between the topography, the soft landscape and the groups or individual houses built within it. There is an overriding impression of heavy foliage and mature trees as well as the sense of open space denoted by the Heath.
- 2.3.24 Athlone House is specifically mentioned as *‘set into the hillside overlooking the Heath and is visible in long views such as from Kenwood House. As such, it is a positive contributor to the Conservation Area. The main house and outbuildings currently stand empty, and are at risk due to their vacant and deteriorating condition.’* The Appraisal recognises that the buildings detract from the character of the area and would benefit from enhancement.
- 2.3.25 **Camden’s Local List (Adopted January 2015))**: Camden’s Local List identifies historic buildings and features that are valued by the local community and that help give Camden its distinctive identity. The List recognises elements of the historic environment that are not already designated in another way (for example a Listed building), but which may nonetheless contribute to a sense of place, local distinctiveness and civic pride. These are known as ‘non-designated heritage assets’.
- 2.3.26 Athlone House is noted as an asset on the Local List (No 252) for its natural features or landscape, identified as being of significant importance to the character and amenity of the local area. The house itself is noted as having been sold for development.
- 2.3.27 **2016 Submission Draft Local Plan**. This has several policies that will replace the 2010 Adopted plan policies; however, it should at present be given limited weight. There are six relevant policies which are discussed below.
- 2.3.28 **Policy H7** – The Council will secure a range of houses of different sizes.
- 2.3.29 **Policy A1 – Managing the Impact of Development**. “The Council will protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours. We will grant permission for development unless this causes unacceptable harm to amenity.”
- 2.3.30 **Policy A2 – Open Space**. “The council will protect, enhance and improve access to Camden’s parks, open spaces and other green infrastructure.”
- 2.3.31 **Policy A3 – Biodiversity**. “The Council will protect and enhance sites of nature conservation and biodiversity.”
- 2.3.32 **Policy D1 – Design**. “The Council will seek to secure high quality design in development.....Development should:
- c) respect local context and character;...
 - b) preserve or enhance the historic environment and historic assets;...
 - k) incorporate high quality landscape design;...
 - m) preserve significant and protected views.

- 2.3.33 **D2 Heritage.** “The Council will preserve and where appropriate enhance Camden’s rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings....historic parks and gardens and locally listed heritage assets. “ This policy also sets out the protection of designated heritage assets, stating: “The Council will not permit the loss or substantial harm to a designated heritage asset.”
- 2.3.34 **Supplementary Planning Document – Camden Planning Guidance -1 Design and 2 Amenity**
In addition to policy, LBC has also adopted in 2011 the above SPD which is an additional material consideration. This was most recently revised in 2015. The following portions of the SPD are relevant in the context of policy to be applied at the design stage.
- 2.3.35 At **2.10 of CPG 1 Design**, third bullet point, it states that good design should: “consider views, both local and London wide, particularly where the site is within a recognised strategic viewing corridor.” The fourth bullet point states: “Consider the degree of openness of an area and of open spaces, including gardens, including views into and out of these spaces.” At the fifth bullet point it states: “[consider] the contribution to the character of certain parts of the Borough.”
- 2.3.36 **Section 6 “Landscape Design and Trees” of CPG 1 Design** covers in some detail landscape expectations for high-quality design of both hard and soft landscape elements and emphasises the important contribution trees make to the character of the Borough.
- 2.3.37 **CPG 6 – Amenity** addresses a range of design issues focussing on the protection of amenity in the context of development. This section relates particularly to adopted local plan policies CS5 and CS14. Of relevance to the LVIA is paragraph 7.1, which states: “Consider the potential impact on the privacy and outlook of neighbouring properties.” Paragraph 7.5, fifth bullet point, recommends “screening by...landscaping.” Finally, paragraph 7.11 states: “Note that a specific view from a property is not protected as this is not a material planning consideration.” Section 8 of CPG 6 advises on Construction Management Plans as a form of mitigation for the effects of development at the construction stage.

2.4 Athlone House Planning Background

2.4.1 Consented Scheme 2005

Planning permission was granted in 2005 for the reinstatement of Athlone House to a single residential dwelling, the conversion of the associated smaller dwellings on the site and the construction of 22 apartments in three separate buildings with underground car parking. As part of this application, 0.98hectare of land was donated as an extension to Hampstead Heath. This area of land has subsequently been incorporated into Hampstead Heath and the apartments of Caenwood Court to the north-east have been constructed and are now occupied.

2.4.2 Refused Scheme 2009, Appeal and Inquiry

In 2009, an application was made by Athlone House Ltd for the demolition of Athlone House and its replacement with a single residential dwelling and associated staff quarters and garaging. This application was refused in April 2010. The decision was appealed and the application sent to Inquiry in February 2011. The principal reason for refusal was harm to the openness of Metropolitan Open land due to the size of the proposed replacement house.

2.4.3 **Refused Scheme -2015.**

Another application was submitted for a replacement building in 2014 on the site, similar in architectural style to the first application but reduced in size. The application was not determined, but was subsequently appealed by the applicant with the public inquiry taking place in early 2015. Despite a reduction in size, this scheme was also found to give rise to harm to the openness of the MOL.

2.5 **Description of the Built Development**

- 2.5.1 The development comprises the restoration of the original house, including restoring brick and stone work. There will be some changes to window treatments and placements, along with removal/restoration and replacement of chimneys and roofline features. A new driveway will be constructed. There will also be a ground floor extension housing a swimming pool complex with an associated terrace. A full description and drawings of the architectural proposals can be found in the Design and Access Statement.

3.0 **BASELINE CONDITIONS**

3.1 **National Character**

- 3.1.1 The site lies within Character Area 112 Inner London, (National Character Areas profile, Natural England). Predominantly urban, the area lies at the centre of the Thames Basin on a broad flood plain which rises in gentle terraces, providing panoramic views of London's skyline from the clay plateaux and ridges in the north at the border with the Northern Thames Basin. It is steeped in both historical and contemporary culture; it is the centre of UK Government and a major international hub for finance, business, tourism, transport and recreation. However, the extensive network of green infrastructure throughout the NCA, provides outdoor recreation and wildlife habitat close to people's homes and places of work. Parks and green spaces scattered among the built environment provide highly valued pockets of perceived tranquillity.
- 3.1.2 The key characteristics include:
- Varied geology and topography that have defined the growth of London. Inner London sits within a wide flood plain dominated by London Clay soils and gravel terraces; low hills to the north and shallow river valleys are almost entirely obscured by dense urban development. Hills to the north provide highly valued views across London's gentle terraces.
 - The River Thames is the most immediately visible natural feature in the Inner London landscape. The Thames with its tributaries is an internationally important river system, the principal draining network for the Thames Basin, a major source of drinking water for London, and an important historic trade route. It provides wildlife habitat, iconic views and cultural inspiration in Inner London.
 - An extensive network of parks and open spaces, providing outdoor recreation close to people's homes and places of work. This network, which is also a resource for wildlife, features large public parks such as Hyde Park in the west and Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in the east; heaths, such as Hampstead Heath and commons to the north and south; garden squares, churchyards, allotments and public open spaces; and the Thames Path National Trail.

- An extensive urban forest of small woodlands and trees in streets, parks, gardens and open spaces which bring nature into the heart of the city, provide shade and cooling, clean the air, communicate the seasons, support wildlife and provide a link to London's previous wooded landscape.
- A network of rivers, streams, canals, lakes, reservoirs and smaller waterbodies which, together with similar features in outer London, form a strategically important network which provides transport corridors,
- Drainage and flood management, freshwater, diverse wildlife habitats, heritage value, recreational opportunities and important views.
- A unique mix of modern architecture and built heritage features. Many important historic buildings, features and designed landscapes provide evidence of a rich heritage. Roman remains, medieval churches, historic Royal palaces, former Royal hunting grounds and World Heritage Sites at Westminster Palace, the Tower of London and Maritime Greenwich sit alongside and among modern urban development and contemporary iconic features such as the Shard, the Gherkin and the London Eye, providing views across Inner London and to neighbouring NCAs. Architectural materials are very varied and reflect a wide range of sources, from locally made bricks to further afield within the UK, such as Portland Stone from Dorset.
- Remnant sites of former industry feature throughout Inner London, some of which are managed to support wildlife and/or provide recreational activities. These include former filter beds, brownfield sites awaiting development, railway sidings, canals, docks and quays.

3.2 Regional Character

- 3.2.1 London has been further subdivided into character areas by 'London's Natural Signatures: The London Landscape Framework' (Natural England, January 2011), a framework to re-establish the relationship between the built and the natural aspects of London, of which Athlone House sits within region 5 Hampstead Ridge.
- 3.2.2 It is described as a mosaic of ancient woodland, scrub and acid grassland along ridgetop summits. Wet flushes (bogs) occur at spring-lines and there are ancient hedgerows, wildflower meadows, orchards and secondary woodland on the slopes of the ridge. The panoramic views from the ridgetop summits of Hampstead Heath and Primrose Hill are well known throughout London. The majority of the urban framework comprises Victorian terracing surrounding the conserved historic cores of Stonebridge, Willesden, Bowes Park and Camden which date from Saxon times and are recorded in the Domesday Book (1086). There is extensive industrial and modern residential development (most notably at Park Royal) along the main rail and road infrastructure. The principal open spaces extend across the summits of the ridge, with large parks at Wormwood Scrubs, Regents Park and Hampstead Heath and numerous cemeteries. The open space matrix is a combination of semi-natural woodland habitats, open grassland, scrub and linear corridors along railway lines and the Grand Union Canal.
- 3.2.3 Key characteristics of Hampstead Ridge include:
- Ancient woodland, with transitions to woodland and scrub and more open scrub.
 - Veteran trees, within woodland, hedgerows and individual specimens.
 - Acid grassland and lowland heath with carpets of heather.
 - Wet flushes, bogs and small streams at springlines.
 - Panoramic views from ridgetops with a wild, natural heathy character.
 - Wildflower meadows.

- Orchards on lower slopes.

3.3 Local Character

3.3.1 The assessment has been confined to an area approximately 1-2km from the proposal site. This is considered a sufficient area to establish the landscape baseline. In a more rural setting, a wider area would potentially be studied. However, the nature of a built environment such as London means that the character of the landscape changes with a much finer grain than might be found in open countryside. Refer to Figure 1 – Landscape Context.

3.3.2 Topography and Hydrology

The proposal site is located on the edge of a knoll, the house at 110m AOD, giving the house a raised setting and granting views over Hampstead Heath and conversely allowing it to be visible from the higher points of the Heath. The gardens surround the house and extend westwards, the land falling away to the south to 105m AOD and westwards down to 95m AOD, approximately. There are small ponds and streams located to the north west of the proposal site which was historically part of the grounds and in the north western corner of the proposal site. These have been neglected and are overgrown. Refer to Figure 3.

3.3.3 The surrounding area varies greatly in height, ranging from 30m AOD in Kentish Town and 40m AOD in South Hampstead to approximately 130m AOD around Highgate Hill and is one of the highest points in London. This changing topography and the resulting views towards central London are strong characteristic features of the area, refer to Photo Sheet 3, Photograph 20. Figure 3 also illustrates the key ridgelines and topographic features in the vicinity.

3.3.4 The underlying geology, combined with the overlying topography results in a series of ponds, streams and ditches. Some of these relate to Hampstead Heath and are likely historic drainage features, whereas some were created as ornamental features, typically associated with the historic estates in the area, such as Fitzroy Park.

3.3.5 There are 18 large ponds within Hampstead Heath, from Wood Pond in the north to Highgate Pond in the south. Originally these ponds were created to act as reservoirs to provide water to the City of London, but are now utilised for a range of activities from bathing and model boats to wildlife ponds.

3.3.6 Land Use and Settlement

Highgate was originally a small rural village, close to the historic city of London, and which now forms the central part of the more recent conurbation. However, it retains certain characteristics giving the area of Highgate a distinct identity, such as its mature wooded nature. Road widths narrow and boundaries become increasingly informal in style with houses overlooking allotments contributing to a much greener village character. Cottages with timber palisade fencing and gates defining front gardens with informal cottage plants spilling over into the lane. Highgate Hill West forms a triangular green at the junction with South Grove, overlooked by St Michael's Church. This village vernacular is reinforced by Hampstead Heath, a wide expanse of natural open space which further supports the semi-rural character. The area is generally residential with associated schools, shops and other community facilities. There are many large, detached dwellings, some of which can be viewed from the Heath, set within the well wooded horizon.

3.3.7 The proposal site contains three buildings, Athlone House, a gatehouse and a former stable block. The main house was designed and built as a residential dwelling in 1871 before being commandeered by the RAF for use as a training base under the guise of a convalescent home. It was later taken on by the NHS who added several functional extensions to the building and used it as a hospital in 1951, during which time it provided publicly accessible private open space abutting Hampstead Heath and Kenwood kitchen gardens.

3.3.8 Although the plain and functional extensions have been demolished, Athlone House is boarded up and the foundations of the extensions are still evident, adding to the site's sense of dereliction. Further details can be found in the Historic Building Report, produced by Dr Miller. A distinctive feature of the house is the tower, rising approximately two storeys above the main roofline, on the western elevation. This is the most distinguishing and visible element from the Heath. Refer to Photo Sheet 1, Photographs 1 and 2.

3.3.9 Historic and Built Environment

The Highgate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy outlines the history of settlement in the area going back to the 14th Century, with the key periods of expansion being in the 18th and 19th Centuries. The Ordnance Survey maps from 1870-1975 show that the Conservation Area primarily consisted of parkland landscapes relating to large estates.

3.3.10 The area around Highgate West Hill appears to be an extension of the village of Highgate, with houses, church and a pub overlooking a central village green. At this point, Highgate is still a relatively isolated village. By 1935, new housing estates have been established to the east and south, bringing the suburban edge of London closer to the village. Despite this, the area around Highgate West Hill and the area to the west of this remain relatively unchanged, the historic use reflected in the strong landscape structure, along with the presence of Hampstead Heath, creating a wooded and semi-rural character with large, individual dwellings set back from the road in expansive private grounds.

3.3.11 Highgate School, to the north of the proposal site, and the associated dwellings appear in the late 19th Century. Prior to this the present school site is demarked on maps as a cricket pitch. During the 1920s infilling of the area around the school took place and gradually the urban expansion of Haringey joined the areas together.

3.3.12 Further infill development occurred throughout the 20th and continues into the early 21st Century but the key character areas remain distinct.

3.3.13 Listed Buildings

Highgate has many Listed Buildings that clearly define the historic village core, main village routes and routes to London. This section outlines the Listed Buildings that have the closest relationship to Athlone House either due to their physical proximity or their similarity in size and inter-visibility, breaking through the well wooded horizon line, in particular those views from Hampstead Heath. Refer to Figure 4 – Designations.

3.3.14 Kenwood House (also known as the Iveagh Bequest)

Kenwood House is a Grade I Listed Building, noted as a detached villa, the original house c1616 and renovated c1749 which forms the core of the present house. It is located in Hampstead at the northern boundary of Hampstead Heath. Alongside the House are service buildings, dairy farm buildings and lodges as well as features such as gate piers, walls and bridges as well as the park and garden, further referenced below.

3.3.15 Beechwood, Fitzroy Park

Beechwood is a Grade II Listed Building and is a detached house c1840. Formerly it was two separate residences and with later additions and alterations; only the front elevation remains untouched. Beechwood itself was built on the site of Fitzroy House, c1770, belonging to Lord Southampton, demolished in 1828 and which gives its name to the area.

3.3.16 The Elms, Fitzroy Park

The Elms is a Grade II Listed Building and is a detached house c1838-40, with later alterations and additions. The Lodge House and pedestrian entrance and garden wall are also Listed assets.

3.3.17 Witanhurst, 41, Highgate West Hill

Witanhurst is a Grade II* Listed Building and is a substantial detached house, c1913-20. It incorporates part of Parkfield, an early C18 house. It was restored in 1946 and is noted for its red brick with stone dressing; further restoration and refurbishment has occurred more recently. Witanhurst is noted as forming part of the middle ground of the strategic panoramic London View 3: Kenwood to St Paul's Cathedral (LVMF). The roofscape appears above the wooded horizon that forms the eastern edge of Hampstead Heath. Refer to Photo Sheet 7, Photographs 46, 47 and 48.

3.3.18 Church of St Michael, South Grove, Highgate

The Church of St Michael is a Grade II* Listed Building. It is noted as a particularly large and ambitious church of the 1830s, incorporating work by three leading architects of the Gothic Revival. It forms part of an important cluster of listed buildings at the junction of South Grove and Highgate West Hill, as well as a focal point within the Grade I-registered Highgate Cemetery, outlined below. The octagonal spire is enriched by pinnacles, small flying buttresses and a cross finial and is visible in views from Hampstead Heath, set amongst the well wooded horizon. This Church is also noted as forming part of the middle ground of the strategic panoramic London View 3: Kenwood to St Paul's Cathedral (LVMF). The spire appears above the wooded horizon that forms the eastern edge of Hampstead Heath. Refer to Photo Sheet 7, Photographs 44, 48 and 49.

3.3.19 Registered Parks and Gardens

There are three Registered Parks and Gardens either side of the site at Athlone House. Kenwood Grade II* Registered Park and Garden, lies to the west and covers approximately 45ha. There are good views from the higher ground, especially the terrace in front of the house, southwards towards central London and the City. The strategic panoramic London View 3: Kenwood to St Paul's Cathedral (LVMF) is from Kenwood Gazebo. The north westerly most corner of the Athlone House site meets with the Kenwood kitchen garden area.

- 3.3.20 To the south east of Athlone House lies Waterlow Park Grade II* Registered Park and Garden, c 10ha, located to the south-east of Highgate and is the park and gardens to Lauderdale House Grade II* Listed Building. The park is well preserved and there are good views from the higher ground southwards towards central London and the City. To the south east of Athlone House lies Highgate Cemetery (East and West) Grade II* Registered Park and Gardens. The c 7.3ha site was designed with serpentine roads and broad gravel paths leading up to the burial area beneath St Michael's church. Refer to Figure 4 – Designations.

3.3.21 Scheduled Ancient Monuments

To the south (ca 960m) of Athlone House, lies the Scheduled Ancient Monument of a Bell Barrow called Boadicea's Grave, 650m west of Millfield Cottage and set within Hampstead Heath. This is

marked as Tumulus on Figure 1 – Landscape Context. As a particularly rare form of round barrow, it would be considered to be of national importance. It will contain both archaeological and environmental information relating to the mound and the landscape in which it was constructed.

3.3.22 Vegetation

The proposal site still retains much of the historic parkland and gardens structure from its heyday as a residential dwelling. These trees and mature shrubs are important structural elements providing the setting to Athlone House whilst aiding its integration into the local landscape. In longer distance views towards the house, the existing roofscape, in particular the tower, is clearly visible, set within the mature trees that merge together to form a well wooded horizon. Refer to Figure 7 Skyline View and Photo Sheet 3, Photographs 15 and 16.

3.3.23 Between Athlone House and the nearby Caenwood Court on the eastern site boundary there is little mature vegetation. At the entrance drive accessed off Hampstead Lane, there is also a lack of vegetated enclosure or definition adversely affecting the character of the site and the overall setting of the main building from this aspect. Refer to Photo Sheet 1, Photographs 3 and 8, and Photo Sheet 2, Photograph 14.

3.3.24 The surrounding area is characterised by remnant historic park and estates, leaving a legacy of woodland belts and copses, as well as mature individual parkland trees. The presence of Hampstead Heath gives the area a semi-rural character with large expanses of rough grassland and well wooded horizons. Refer to Figure 3.

3.3.25 Mature trees punctuate the built form throughout, leading further away from Hampstead Heath and the historic estates. These give stature and maturity to the surrounding townscape and the impression of a suburban village (Refer to Photo Sheets 1 to 8).

3.3.26 Access and Rights of Way

There is no public access across the proposal site; however, Hampstead Heath that forms the western and southern boundaries is open to the public. The site sits within an area designated as Open Space in London Borough of Camden's Local Development Framework. These are described within the LDF as 'Accessible areas of open space which improve the quality of urban form by providing a break in otherwise dense urban fabric.' Refer to Figure 4 for areas of Designated Open Space.

3.3.27 Hampstead Heath provides an extremely large area of publicly accessible open space and is crossed by a series of footpaths and tracks. Figure 3 illustrates the main defined footpaths across the Heath.

3.3.28 The Capital Ring National Trail Public Right of Way (PROW) passes in an arc approximately 1km to the north west and north east, passing through Highgate Wood. A spur from this, the Dollis Valley Green walk, travels south from the National Trail and joins other PROWs near Hampstead Golf Club, approximately 1km to the North West.

3.3.29 Informal routes run through the old orchard to the North West of the proposal site and through the historic Athlone House gardens to the south.

3.3.30 Landscape Designations

The site lies within an area designated as Metropolitan Open Land, MOL, giving the same level of protection as Green Belt. MOL areas are protected from development to ensure the openness is maintained. Refer to Figure 4 for the location of the various designations.

- 3.3.31 The area of Athlone House is also designated as Open Space within the London Borough of Camden LDF. This seeks to improve public access to areas of open space and to improve their quality.
- 3.3.32 The proposal site is located within the Highgate Conservation Area which further divided into five sub-areas. The proposal site falls within the second of these: Fitzroy Park. It refers to Athlone House specifically, describing its location set into the hillside overlooking the Heath and that 'as such, it is a positive contributor to the Conservation Area.' However, it acknowledges that the house is in a deteriorated state. Athlone House Gardens are considered a non-designated heritage asset as a feature of heritage and landscape value and are described in some detail in the Local List (No 252).
- 3.3.33 To the west of Athlone House, approximately 430-490m, set within the Kenwood Registered Park and Garden lies the Hampstead Heath Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). SSSIs are protected and managed as areas of special interest by reason of its flora, fauna, geological or physiographical interest.
- 3.3.34 Hampstead Heath Woods are examples of long-established high forest woodlands with an exceptional structure comprising an abundance of old and over-mature trees, heavily dominated by sessile oak (*Quercus petraea*) and beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), uncommon in Greater London. The southern part of the Woods is also listed as an area of Ancient Woodland. Much of the woodland and heathland here also falls within the Deciduous Woodland and Wood pasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat.

3.4 Local Landscape / Townscape Quality & Value

- 3.4.1 This sets out the relative value attached to different landscapes by society, bearing in mind that a landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a variety of different reasons. Value can apply to areas of landscape as a whole, or to the individual elements, features and aesthetic or perceptual dimensions which contribute to the character of the landscape.
- 3.4.2 Value considers perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wilderness, rarity, representativeness, cultural association, recreational value or other conservation issues, providing a local, district, regional and national landscape resource. Urban sites are often perceived to be less sensitive and capable of greater capacity for change. However, even townscapes of poor condition with no special interest may be highly valued locally. In other instances, built heritage may be comprehensively recognised through Conservation Area, Listed Building and other statutory and non-statutory designations. Values attached to views experienced by people can be identified in relation to heritage assets or planning designations, or through appearances in guidebooks / tourist maps and provision of facilities for their enjoyment such as picnic and parking places, or references to them in literature or art. Table 1 below summarises Quality and Value of Landscape / Townscape Character and Visual Amenity.

Table 1: Quality and Value

QUALITY AND VALUE		
EXCEPTIONAL	Landscape Character	Rare, distinctive and or representative landscape, townscape/streetscape, often forming part of internationally or nationally designated areas such as a World Heritage Site, containing internationally recognised buildings or features. Users are often very aware of the value of the landscape. The Site is representative of the local landscape character and the structure of the landscape is intact.
	Visual Amenity	Users are often very aware of value of view over internationally or nationally distinctive areas. The quality of existing view is such that people would travel some distance to experience them.
HIGH	Landscape Character	Important components or a landscape of particularly distinctive character, containing many attractive and harmonious features and few visually intrusive or incongruous features. Often regionally designated, users are often aware of the value of the landscape. The Site contains many attributes representative of the local landscape character and the structure of the landscape is apparent. Qualities typically found within National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and Conservation Areas or comprehensive high quality modern developments.
	Visual Amenity	Viewers with proprietary interest and prolonged viewing opportunities e.g. a residential property, or a person on a bridleway or public footpath. The quality of existing view is such that local people would go out of their way to experience them. Typically considered very attractive by most people.
GOOD	Landscape Character	An attractive landscape or townscape/streetscape with some attractive features but also minor blemishes, such as unattractive buildings and property boundaries. Overall the landscape is cohesive and distinctive and buildings and streetscape generally in good condition and well maintained. The Site does not detract from the local character.
	Visual Amenity	Viewers with a moderate interest in their environment e.g. users of recreation facilities, sports grounds and public open spaces. The quality of existing views is such that there are few incongruous elements. Considered pleasant but unremarkable and moderately valued by local authority and most people.
FAIR	Landscape Character	A mix of attractive features and intrusive elements. Buildings and streetscape vary in quality. Where the existing character of the Site contains some attributes representative of the local landscape character but also incongruous elements that detract from the local landscape character.
	Visual Amenity	Viewers with a passing interest in their surroundings, e.g. workers at an industrial estate or motorists. The quality of existing views is such that there are a number of incongruous elements.
POOR	Landscape Character	Unimportant or degraded landscape, disturbed townscape with derelict buildings and open, but previously developed areas, awaiting development or working industrial areas. The existing character of the Site contains no attributes representative of the local landscape character and the incongruous elements detract from the local landscape character.
	Visual Amenity	Viewers with minimal interest in their surroundings, eg. people traveling through the area on fast transport routes (motorways or trunk roads). Where the quality of existing views is such that the incongruous elements dominate. Many unattractive and intrusive features, litter and dirt. Little or no value attributed to it.

- 3.4.3 The site and surroundings have been subdivided into areas and are described below. Refer to Figure 5 – Townscape Character Areas and Figure 6 Townscape Quality and Sensitivity.

3.4.4 Large Parkland Estates

This area covers the estates of Athlone house, Caenwood Court and Beechwood House. They represent the historic estates with strong landscape structure surrounding large residential dwellings and additional service buildings. Refer to Photo Sheet 1, Photographs 1, 2, 3 and 4. The area forms a transition zone between the rural nature of Hampstead Heath and the sub-urban Highgate village. Buildings in this area are set well back from the road and do not directly influence the character of the street. Glimpses of these dwellings can be seen from the road, particularly Athlone House and Caenwood Court. Refer to Photo Sheet 1, Photographs 5 and 6. The exceptions to this are the three small buildings that historically formed part of the grounds of Athlone House and which form part of the boundary wall with Hampstead Lane. See Photo Sheet 1, Photograph 7. One of these has been restored to a residential property in association with the Caenwood Court development and the other two remain in a semi-derelict state. Generally this character area is considered to have a 'High' quality landscape.

- 3.4.5 The proposal site is occupied by three buildings, the main house, a large estate style dwelling, and two ancillary buildings adjacent to Hampstead Lane. The eastern boundary vegetation is minimal and young, allowing clear views to the recent Caenwood Court development. Refer to Photo Sheet 1, Photographs 3 and 8. This is not typical of the character of the area in which boundaries are generally heavily wooded and houses are set and seen amongst mature trees.
- 3.4.6 The grounds still retain much of their character as the type of historic garden landscape that would be expected to accompany such a house. A terrace surrounds the House with steps down to the lawn. Neglected and overgrown, there is a pond with rock work by James Pulham (Pulhamite rock work), waterfall and stream, a dilapidated bridge and boat house. Refer to Photo Sheet 2, Photographs 9, 10 and 11. There is also a network of pathways through the garden, although extremely overgrown. The additions and demolitions of various extensions and the recent history of neglect have resulted in the landscape becoming degraded and overgrown within much of the site.
- 3.4.7 As part of the 2005 Planning Permission, a portion of the garden to Athlone House were donated to Hampstead Heath, providing an important woodland buffer between Kenwood and the Athlone House development site. Refer to Photo Sheet 2, Photographs 12 and 13. The western part of the additional land is managed as a conservation area. The southern, publicly accessible part has a new hedgerow planted and volunteers from Heath Hands have undertaken a number of projects such as cutting back bramble and opening up new glades.
- 3.4.8 The proposed site sits within the Highgate Conservation Area and Metropolitan Open Land (MOL). It is valued at local community level for its dense vegetated, enclosed character and wildlife resource as evidenced by the Camden Local List. Although Athlone House and the associated small buildings have a historic interest and make a contribution to the Character Area, their degraded state and that of the grounds detracts from the overall quality of the street scene. Refer to Photo Sheet 2, Photograph 14. The townscape quality of this area is judged to be 'fair'. Refer to Figure 6 – Townscape Quality and Sensitivity.

3.4.9 Hampstead Heath and Ancillary Open Space Areas

Hampstead Heath is known regionally if not nationally as an important and large open space in London. Its large natural expanses of grass heathland and woodland areas are appreciated by

locals and visitors alike for its peaceful, rural and ancient landscape, a welcome break within the urban form. Large dwellings are seen nestled within the wooded eastern boundary to the heath, such as Athlone House, Caenwood Court, St Michael's Church spire and Witanhurst. Refer to Photo Sheet 3, Photographs 15 and 16.

3.4.10 Hampstead Lane runs along the northern edge of Hampstead Heath from west of Kenwood House to Highgate Hill. Large, forest-scale trees in the verges, together with planting from the Heath create a sylvan character to the road. Refer to Photo Sheet 3, Photographs 17 and 18. A strong green structure dominates the southern side of the road, with views between mature trees and shrubs. This area is considered as being of 'high' quality.

3.4.11 Kenwood House and gardens is located within Hampstead Heath and the structure of the landscape is intact and well maintained and managed. This area is considered as being of 'exceptional' quality. Far reaching views towards the City are afforded protection, such as the Protected Vista from Kenwood Gazebo to St Paul's Cathedral. Refer to Photo Sheet 3, Photographs 19 and 20.

3.4.12 Highgate School Playing Fields and Related Open Spaces & Buildings

Directly opposite Athlone House, are the playing fields to Highgate School, creating an open space around which are large detached houses. Refer to Photo Sheet 4, Photograph 21, Views across the playing fields are unimpeded from Hampstead Lane and defined by a simple metal railing. Refer to Photo Sheet 4, Photographs 22 and 23.

3.4.13 The area around Highgate School is characterised by large, detached dwellings from the range of periods from the late 19th Century to the present day. Refer to Photo Sheet 4, Photographs 24 and 25. The houses are set back from the road at a consistent distance of approximately 5m and the streets are framed with frequent mature forest-scale trees (typically oak and beech) punctuating the skyline. This area is considered as being of 'high' quality.

3.4.14 Mixed Period Residential Areas (Sub-division A)

North of Hampstead Lane and west of Stormont Road is characterised by large detached dwellings set back from the road behind high brick boundary walls, relating to the historic parkland of Kenwood House, which is now part of Hampstead Heath. Refer to Photo Sheet 5, Photographs 26, 27 and 28. The grounds of the houses in this area contain large trees which can be seen over the high walls. The dwellings stem from a range of periods but are primarily from the 19th and early 20th Century.

3.4.15 There are several examples of dwellings from the 1960s and later and these are not considered to detract from the unity of the character area due to their similar siting and massing as the neighbouring dwellings, such as can be found on Sheldon Avenue, Bishopswood Road and Denewood Road. Refer to Photo Sheet 5, Photographs 29, 30 and 31. This area has good local distinctiveness, consistent building types and scales. There are scattered large forest-scale trees in good condition. The streetscape is well maintained and the quality of the townscape in this area is 'high'.

3.4.16 Mixed Period Residential Areas (Sub-division B)

To the east of Highgate School and north of Hampstead Lane, buildings become smaller and are terraced rather than detached, lacking the influence of the Heath and changing the character of the road in its approach to the top of Highgate Hill and the High Street. Refer to Photo Sheet 5, Photographs 32 and 33.

- 3.4.17 In the region of North Road, the character changes to that of a finer urban grain with smaller dwellings that are generally terraced. These houses are much smaller in scale than within the previous area described. Refer to Photo Sheet 6, Photographs 34, 35 and 36.
- 3.4.18 North Road has the character of a typical London street, being wide with London plane trees and a strong built frontage on both sides. Streets leading away from this are still green and leafy with tree planting but trees include smaller species such as silver birch. Refer to Photo Sheet 6, Photograph 37. There are more instances of late 20th Century design in this area.
- 3.4.19 The townscape in this area is less grand, containing smaller houses, often terraced and more often from the middle to late 20th Century. The buildings are less distinct and of lower architectural merit than within the area previously described. However, the townscape is still relatively cohesive despite the increased separation created by the cul-de-sacs. This area is therefore considered as being of 'good to high' quality.
- 3.4.20 Mixed Period Residential Areas (Sub-division C)**
The area around Fitzroy Park is informal, characterised by leafy green roads with large dwellings set back in large grounds and typically not visible from the road. Refer to Photo Sheet 6, Photographs 38, 39 and 40. This character stems from the area's history as a series of individual large estates. Dwellings range from a variety of periods, including high quality examples from the 1970s. Refer to Photo Sheet 6, Photograph 41.
- 3.4.21 Further south along Fitzroy Park, the dwellings become smaller and are located closer to the road and in less extensive grounds. An area of allotments and a series of dwellings built in the early 20th Century give the area a village-like character. Refer to Photo Sheet 7, Photographs 42 and 43. It is considered that this area is of 'high' quality townscape.
- 3.4.22 Mixed Period Residential Areas (Sub-division D)**
The small village green at the junction of The Grove, Highgate West Hill and South Grove has a distinct village-like feel, with the pub, St Michael's church and other dwellings overlooking the space. Large mansion houses are located along The Grove. Refer to Photo Sheet 7, Photographs 44, 45 and 49. Witanhurst is a distinctive built feature of red brick with stone dressings. Refer to Photo Sheet 7, Photographs 46, 47 and 48.
- 3.4.23 This area has a strong character, the hub of which is the village green with associated community facilities. The period of the buildings is considered to be more homogenous. A busy connecting road between The Grove and Highgate West Hill cuts through the green, a minor detraction from the overall impression of a village character. Refer to Photo Sheet 8, Photographs 50, 51, 52, 53 and 54. It is considered that this area is of 'high' value townscape.
- 3.4.24 Mixed Period Residential Areas (Sub-division E)**
To the south of Highgate West Hill is the Holly Lodge Gardens Estate built in the 1920s. This estate has a distinct character, separate from those already outlined and is in a separate Conservation Area. It is at the edge of the assessment area and is therefore not discussed in detail. However, the character of the area is strong with mature trees lining the streets framing views towards the City. It is considered to be of 'high' quality townscape.

3.4.25 Summary

The character of the local landscape is marked, with a generally high townscape quality. A distinct landscape structure is evident, with characteristic patterns and combinations of built form and land cover. There is an immediate sense of place, set within the wooded landscape of the large estate dwellings bordering the edge of Hampstead Heath and forming the approach to the centre of the old village of Highgate. The ridge of high ground running between Hampstead and Highgate, one of the highest points in London, provides views to the centre of the city of London which are protected through planning policy measures.

Character Area	Townscape Quality / Value
Large Parkland Estates	High
Large Parkland Estates (in the region of Athlone House)	Fair
Hampstead Heath and Ancillary Open Space Areas	High
Hampstead Heath and Ancillary Open Space Areas (in the region of Kenwood House and Gardens)	Exceptional
Highgate School Playing Fields and Related Open Spaces & Buildings	High
Mixed Period Residential Areas	High
Mixed Period Residential Areas (Sub-division 3b)	Good to High

3.5 Visual Amenity

- 3.5.1 The site and surrounds were visited during March 2016 in clear dry sunny conditions, with hazy cloud and sunshine appearing in some long distance views. The areas visited include Hampstead Lane between Kenwood House and the top of Highgate Hill, the area of Sheldon Avenue and Bishopswood Road to the north of the proposal site, the area around Fitzroy Park and Highgate West Hill to the west of the proposal site and Hampstead Heath to the south and west of the proposal site. The description of the views set out below, confirm whether they are short, middle or long distance views in relation to the site. It is a typical characteristic that in views from the Heath towards Highgate village, glimpses of large estate style dwellings are gained between the foliage of the surrounding mature landscape structure, as illustrated in Figure 7 – Skyline Views
- 3.5.2 Seven viewpoints have been agreed with the London Borough of Camden and other consultees (See Appendix IV). These have been utilised to assess visual amenity in long and medium views. An additional photomontage of views into the site from the pavement on Hampstead Lane just north of the site is also utilised as part of the assessment at the request of the local planning authority. The location of these viewpoints is shown on Figure 8. Photographs taken from those locations and the associated Computer Generated Images (CGIs) are included in Appendix I. The overall methodology used to produce those photomontages is included at the front of Appendix I and technical details for photography is found next to each photographic viewpoint.

Visual Baseline

- 3.5.3 In general the visual amenity of the assessment area is of good quality, well maintained and verdant townscape of near to middle distant views, with built form and a mature landscape structure of street trees and private garden vegetation limiting and foreshortening the views. Hampstead Heath offers large expansive views over a natural landscape, mature woodland framing views towards the City of London and strategic buildings of interest such as St Paul's Cathedral.

Agreed Viewpoints

Viewpoint 1 a – Taken from the Kenwood Gazebo in Hampstead Heath

- 3.5.4 From this middle distance viewpoint, at the western edge of Caenwood Towers Farm field, it is possible to see the tower of Athlone House set amongst the landscape structure of its grounds, as well as some of the roof. In this same view it is also possible to see the spire of St Michael's Church and Witanhurst. These buildings are characterised by their scale and their setting within a predominantly wooded skyline. The locations of these buildings are shown on Figure 1.

Viewpoint 2a – Taken from area of Hampstead Heath, south of Viewpoint 1

- 3.5.5 Viewpoint 2, a middle distance view, looks towards the site from the Heath, located at the western edge of Caenwood Towers Farm field, further south than Viewpoint 1. From this viewpoint it is possible to see Caenwood Court to the right of Athlone House. It is also possible to see the spire of St Michael's Church and Witanhurst. All four buildings are set within their landscape setting and in the context of the surrounding wooded skyline although Athlone House and Caenwood Court have no intervening landscape structure and therefore a weaker landscape setting than the other buildings.

Viewpoint 3a – from Highgate School

- 3.5.6 This middle distance viewpoint is located within the grounds of Highgate School, to the north of the proposal site. The existing building is clearly visible within the view, forming one of a number of built elements following the route of Hampstead Lane and forming a break in the mature tree line.

Viewpoint 4a – Donated Garden Land of Athlone House

- 3.5.7 This is a close view from part of the historic gardens of Athlone House, now donated garden areas for Hampstead Heath, outside of the site boundary but in close proximity to the building. It is possible to see the existing building through the trees and the visibility will likely increase during winter months when there is no foliage on the trees.

Viewpoint 5a - View from Parliament Hill

This is a distant view from a point on Hampstead Heath as indicated on Figure 8. This view is included at the request of the City of London. Dense tree cover screens most of the site, but it is possible to see the tower of Athlone House in the middle of the view above the tree line.

Viewpoints 6a – View from Hampstead Lane North-east of Athlone House

This view taken from Hampstead Lane north of the walled boundary of the site. View 6a is the taken from the east, and provides an impression of the site as viewers travel west along the Lane. From this angle, Athlone House is partly screened by existing vegetation.

Viewpoint 7a – View from Hampstead Lane Opposite Proposed Entrance

Viewpoint 7a is taken from the northern side of Hampstead Lane, and the mid-point of the wall is where the new gate and entrance would be located. This view is similar to 6a in that Athlone house is visible with a small amount of vegetation partly screening the house.

4.0 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

4.1 Overview of Development Proposals

- 4.1.1 The proposed development scheme consists of restoring the existing dwelling, Athlone House, with minor alterations and a single story ground floor extension to the north of the house. Caen

cottage and the lodge house to the north of site will also be restored and will both form a gateway to a new entrance from Hampstead Lane which will be used for deliveries. The current entrance to the house will be retained with an additional sweeping driveway leading to the main house, accessed through new gates off Hampstead Lane. For full details of the architectural restoration, refer to the design and access statement and the following drawings:

- The Site Plan – Proposed; Dwg No (817)003_PL01
- The Ground Floor – Proposed; Dwg No (817)021_PL01
- The Main Façade and Eastern Elevation – Proposed; Dwg No (817)210_PL01
- The Southern Elevation – Proposed; Dwg No (817)211_PL01
- The Western Elevation – Proposed; Dwg No (817)212_PL01
- The Northern Elevation – Proposed; Dwg No (817)213_PL01

The landscape proposals will restore and enhance the historical landscape structure with appropriate planting and the creation of additional features which are in keeping with the restored house. Specific restoration is scheduled as part of the plan and includes further work on the restoration of the Milner folly and the Pulhamite fern clad ravine, dropping well, waterfall and stream. In addition, features such as the original boathouse and bridge adjacent to the pond will be restored. A new terrace is proposed around the periphery of the house and pool hall, the west side from which steps will lead to the main garden.

4.1.2 **Restoration Proposals**

Athlone House will be extensively refurbished and repaired to enable it to be brought back to its original use as a single dwelling. The restoration of the building will require a level of detail which is not relevant to the landscape assessment. The most material consideration in landscape and visual terms is the cleaning and restoration of stone and brickwork, much of which is dirty, worn and in poor repair. The effects of this cleaning and repair of facades is of particular relevance to the assessment, particularly as to how the building is perceived. Whilst the overall massing of the building is unchanged, features such as the original Dutch gables that were removed in the early 20th century will be reinstated. Also, the castellations to the main tower and its' smaller turret will be reinstated with the height of the latter being increased by approximately 2 metres. The cupola of the south tower will also be restored to its' original style and so will increase in height by just over 2 metres.

4.1.3 Also of consideration is the restoration of the original chimney flues which have been reduced in height over time. These will restore the historic silhouette of the building and as such be more prominent features than currently exists. The existing chimney stack on the west elevation will be removed as part of the restoration which will also be relevant to the assessment.

4.1.4 Other features such as balconies and windows will be restored as well as the door to the kitchen on the east elevation. In addition, a non-original extension on the ground floor of the west elevation will be replaced with a contemporary style bay window which will visually link the restored house with the more contemporary swimming pool extension.

4.1.5 **New Additions**

While there will be some minor changes to the exterior of the building, with, for example, changes in some of the windows, the change of relevance to this assessment is the extension to the building to the north of the site. This will be built in a contemporary style and will follow

the outline of the glass house and servants quarters of the original house. The palette of materials will be the same as that which exists on the house along with a visually unobtrusive zinc roof.

4.1.6 Basement Proposals

An area to the north of the existing basement will be excavated to accommodate the proposed swimming pool, whilst all other areas will remain as existing in terms of area.

4.1.7 Comparison with 2005 Consented Scheme

The scheme consented in 2005 for restoration is similar in terms of scale and massing for the house itself when compared to these restoration proposals. The current proposal is similar to the original footprint of the house in 1881 which showed an extension to the north of the house where the glass house once stood. Like the 2005 scheme, this design will retain the character of the building but will go further in restoring the features that once existed such as the Dutch gables and original chimneys and heraldry. The design changes are a result of consultations and the requirements of the new applicant, but are not material in terms of the landscape or the visual effects of the development.

4.2 Proposed Landscape Design

4.2.1 The landscape design proposes to retain and enhance many of the historic layers that were once attributed to the site. The gardens surrounding the house have been associated with several estates and designers since the late 18th century. The original landscape was designed by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown whilst the current layout is attributed to Edward Milner with rockwork by James Pulham. (Reference should be made to Catherine Bickmore Associates: The Historic Landscape Appraisal for Athlone House.)

4.2.2 The proposals will recreate the rolling lawns and shrub beds which once existed and restore many of the elements that are in disrepair, enhancing the Highgate Conservation Area and protecting the openness of Metropolitan Open Land, as well as creating a setting which befits the restoration and refurbishment of the historic house.

4.2.3 The proposals retain all of the existing boundary vegetation which provides effective screening of the site, enclosing it and providing a degree of self-containment. The site forms the backdrop or part of the setting to the edge of Hampstead Heath and Highgate Conservation Area.

4.2.4 The relationship between the site and its surroundings will be improved upon, particularly in relation to Hampstead Heath, where, in consultation with the City of London, the proposals extend the parkland character at the southern end of the house which abuts the Heath, and will utilise only flora consistent with that found on the heath. (See Drawing no. 9135/01 - Hard and Soft Landscape Proposals for details of the design.)

4.2.5 There is a lack of significant vegetation along the eastern boundary of the proposal site to Caenwood Court and this has resulted in the loss of the setting and visual enclosure of both sets of buildings. The proposed design, carried out in consultation with Caenwood Court residents, includes the creation of a new shrub border with specimen trees which will form part of the landscape restoration as well as soften views into the site from adjacent areas. (See Drawing No. 9135/02 - Landscape Strategy.)

- 4.2.6 The strengthening of existing boundary vegetation with individual trees; hedgerows and large shrubs / small trees will thicken the existing or create new understorey planting where it is required. Some stock will be semi-mature for instant impact. The species selection will be predominately native to fit with the local character and to promote biodiversity.
- 4.2.7 The design shows the restoration of the sunken garden to the west of Athlone House. This includes the restoration of hedges and planting beds. Existing shrub planting is to be improved and managed. This will contribute to restoring the visual setting of the house when viewed from the Heath in the west. Proposals include the introduction of a fruit and nut terrace, an area of acid grassland, created to encourage diversity and wildlife, wildflower and native bulb planting in grassed areas and new native species planting, especially in woodland areas. Native trees will be planted, especially on boundary areas to reinvigorate the woodland edges and to take over from the mature existing specimens when they eventually die or are no longer safe. This will provide for the continued integration of the property into the surrounding shelterbelt and woodland setting. It will restore the parkland setting, complementing the replacement House and be in keeping with the Fitzroy Park characteristic of large estate houses in parkland settings.
- 4.2.8 The Pulhamite rock work around the existing lake will be restored along with a small waterfall which once existed and will include the restoration of the rustic bridge and boat house as recorded in 1881. The lake itself will be converted to a natural swimming pool whilst retaining the historically important landscape features. The fernery around the woodland pond will also be restored as well as the Milner folly to the south of the site. The existing asphalt tennis courts will be removed and a leisure pavilion will be built on the footprint, with suitable landscape planting to integrate it into its setting.
- 4.2.9 A new sweeping driveway will be built which will reinstate an appropriate entrance to the restored house. This will comprise a feature gate and be lined with an avenue of sweet gum trees (*Liquidamber styraciflua*), which are a medium sized tree with rich green summer foliage turning brilliant orange and yellow in the autumn. Swathes of native woodland bulbs and wildflowers will be planted in lawns either side of the drive. The overall effect will complement the parkland character of the renewed site. The driveway, surfaced in natural stone, will lead into a similarly paved, circular forecourt. Surface water run-off from the drive and forecourt will drain into the surrounding lawn, thus forming part of the approach for a sustainable urban drainage system. (SUDs)
- 4.2.10 The circular forecourt is proposed at the main entrance to the house. This will serve as a drop off as well as provide a focal point which will give prominence to the tower feature of the house. At the centre of the forecourt will be a graceful stone circular fountain containing a sculptural feature. The eastern edge of the forecourt will be loosely defined by an intermittent formal hedge and fastigate trees which will provide a backdrop to the water feature when viewed from the main entrance.
- 4.2.11 A kitchen garden will be created along the eastern edge of the house, close to where the kitchen is located so that the produce can be used by the owner and staff. Various plots containing herbs, vegetables and cut flowers will be defined around their edges with a low box (*Buxus sempervirens*) hedge, similar in appearance to a knot garden. Individual espalier fruit trees will be planted within each of the panels of the long north wall of the pool house extension.
- 4.2.12 The Fruit Terrace will reference the historic pattern of an orchard which previously existed. Heritage varieties of fruit trees such as apples, cherries and pears will be planted informally within

the newly created wildflower meadow which will create a pastoral landscape setting. Mown paths will meander through the orchard to complement the light, playful ambience whilst encouraging gentle strolls and stopping points for relaxation. The area will also provide both fruit for consumption and a nectar source and habitat for species including birds and invertebrates.

- 4.2.13 New lily ponds are proposed at the north and south ends of the parterre garden and will also be surrounded by tall yew hedging. Emergent plants will be primarily water lilies and flag irises, providing colour, and there will be small trickling fountains to provide further interest and to create a sense of reflection and relaxation.
- 4.2.14 The woodland edge to the north west of the house will be rejuvenated, thus enhancing the naturalistic woodland boundary treatment to the site. Walkways within this area will also be reinstated, by cleaning, restoring and re-laying the existing stone slabs to form a useable pathway. Additional native planting will supplement the existing woodland understorey. In addition, proposed multi-stemmed trees and shrub planting trees along the north eastern boundary wall recreate the historic local feature of the former lines of the parish boundaries, the former route of Hampstead Lane, and the southern boundary of the Mediaeval Bishops of London's Deer Park.
- 4.2.13 The proposals enhance biodiversity, encouraging invertebrates, birds and bats through the provision of quiet and secluded areas and log piles for local wildlife populations. While restoration may result in disturbance to and potential loss of acid grassland (a London Biodiversity Action Plan habitat), mitigation and restoration measures to conserve, restore and mitigate this will be undertaken, including protection measures in the Construction Management Plan, which is expected to be required as a condition of planning permission.

4.3 Access and Circulation

- 4.3.1 Vehicular access into the site will only be from Hampstead Lane, with pedestrian / cyclist access aligning with existing roads and footpaths. The present shared access point with Caenwood Court will be retained, but an additional access point will be created just west of the present access point, described in paragraph 4.2.9 above.

4.3.2 Car Parking Provision

A total of 7 car parking spaces will be provided on the site. These include 3 internal spaces inside of Caenwood Cottage at ground level, two in spaces adjacent to the north of the house, and adjacent to the house itself. Please see the Design and Access Statement and relevant architectural drawings for details of car parking provision.

4.4 Lighting

- 4.4.1 Lighting during construction will be kept to a minimum and directed away from any bat habitat via the use of hooded luminaires with zero upward lighting components.
- 4.4.2 Final ambient landscape lighting design will be low level, low energy light output LED luminaires with zero upward light distribution and not directed towards any known bat habitats.
- 4.4.3 Any security lighting will be PIR (Passive Infra-Red) controlled with inbuilt limited time on function and, again, be downward directional with zero upward light distribution.

4.5 Consultation

4.5.1 Consultations were undertaken during late 2015 through the spring of 2016. These were led mainly by LBC, as the applicant and the local planning authority had undertaken a PPA to ensure efficient delivery of the application and processing. As well as CBC, consultation was undertaken with The Athlone House Working Group, The City of London, and the Caen Court Residents Association. The London Borough of Haringey was also consulted. Appendix IV has the tabulated summary of all consultations and the issues arising.

4.5.2 Summary of Key Issues

- Ensure that the proposals conserve and enhance the setting of the Conservation Area and the Heath;
- The proposals should conserve the openness of Metropolitan open land and in particular, the restoration should be no larger than the agreed baseline (1948 quantum), in line with the NPPF and The London Plan;
- Upper storeys retained and restored in order to preserve the familiar and important views of the house from the Heath and the Conservation Area;
- As the proposals will retain the roofscape and exterior treatment of the original building, it was agreed by all consultees that verified views would not be necessary, but that CGIs from agreed locations would be expected as part of the planning application.
- Landscape design proposals for the gardens as previously submitted are acceptable as restoration in line with the gardens designation in the local list of non-designated heritage assets (No. 252).
- Boundary treatments highlighted by various consultees:
 - Only native species consistent with the flora of Hampstead Heath on the boundaries;
 - Low level screening of the development site boundary with Caenwood Court, but clear views across site and into the Heath maintained.
 - Protection and retention of historic boundaries on North boundary with Hampstead Lane

4.5.3 Response to Key Issues

- The overall approach to landscape design has taken into account the requirement to conserve and enhance the Conservation Area, as set out in Section 4.2 above. The design respects its setting adjacent to Hampstead Heath by the provision of only native structure planting in any relevant boundary. See landscape strategy drawing No xxx for details.
- The openness of the Metropolitan Open Land is conserved as the Restoration Proposal will be less than the baseline in terms of quantum of development; external space will not be excessively

developed so there will be no significant areas of hardstanding beyond those required for the access drive and some parking. (See Dwg No SHH (817)003_PL01 for details.)

- Views of the house from distance and nearby will be maintained, as shown in Section 5.5 below;
- Agreed Viewpoints have been provided in Appendix xx and analysed in Sections 3.5 and 5.5;
- The landscape design proposals are little changed from the previous application particularly in respect of the main gardens; the landscape design immediately around the restored house now reflects the current proposals and the aspirations of the applicant in terms of use of the grounds. See dwg No 9135/01.
- Boundary treatments reflect the concerns of the consultees and can be seen on dwg. No.9135/02

5.0 EFFECTS OF DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology

5.1.1 Introduction and Overview

The impact assessment methodology follows the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition. Landscape/townscape effects are assessed separately to the effects on visibility. The effect of the development proposals are set against the baseline conditions for both landscape/townscape and visibility, and a judgement is made in a systematic way as to what the effects might be. The drawings and designs submitted as part of the application are used to make the assessment.

Planning Policy Analysis

- 5.1.2 The relevant planning policies and other documents such as Supplementary Planning Documents / Guidance determined as material considerations in planning terms, are assessed in terms of the proposed development and compliance or non-compliance is demonstrated, where relevant to Landscape and Visual considerations.

Landscape / Townscape Analysis

- 5.1.3 The proposed development is assessed against the existing baseline character conditions of the site and surroundings, the historic and built environment and landscape designations.

Visual Analysis

- 5.1.4 The proposed development is assessed against the existing visual amenity baseline conditions of the site and surroundings, the historic and built environment and landscape designations. It can be dynamic due to the nature of landscape components or elements which contribute to screening such as vegetation or the built environment.

Sensitivity of Receptor

- 5.1.5 The term receptor is used in landscape and visual impact assessments to mean an element or assemblage of elements that will be directly or indirectly affected by the proposed development. Sensitivity is determined separately for both landscape/townscape and for visual impacts. While receptors may be obvious for visibility assessment, the effect of receptors on landscape is distinct and subtle.

Landscape Sensitivity to Change

- 5.1.6 The Sensitivity of landscape receptors depends upon an evaluation of 'their susceptibility to the specific type of change or development proposed and the value attached to the landscape', LI 3rd Edition Guidelines 2013. The susceptibility recognises its ability to accommodate change and the degree to which elements or characteristics can be replaced or substituted.

Visual Sensitivity to Change

- 5.1.7 The Sensitivity of visual receptors, meaning the particular person or group of people likely to be affected at a specific viewpoint, depends upon an evaluation of 'their susceptibility to change in views and visual amenity and also value attached to particular views', LI & IEMA 3rd Edition Guidelines 2013. Identification of sensitive visual receptors is based on the proximity, context, expectations and occupation or activity of the receptor. This includes the extent to which their attention or interest may be focused on the views and visual amenity experienced at particular locations.

- 5.1.8 Consideration is also given to the importance or value attached to the landscape receptors and visual amenity. The value of the landscape receptors will to some degree reflect landscape designations and the level of importance which they signify, although there should not be over-reliance on designations as the sole indicator of value.

Table 1 – Sensitivity to Change of Landscape/Townscape and Visual Receptors

	Sensitivity Rating (Potential to accept the type and scale of development proposed)
Highly sensitive to change	Where the type of development proposed could greatly affect landscape/townscape character and “sense of place”, settings and/or valued views and thus permanently alter the character, quality and amenity of views for receptors such as residents.
Moderately sensitive to change	Where the type of development proposed could have an effect on landscape/townscape character and “sense of place”, settings and/or valued views and thus moderately alter the character, quality and amenity of views for receptors such as residents and workers and where views are less extensive.
Low sensitivity to change	Where most types of development of the type envisaged would be accommodated without greatly affecting landscape/townscape character and “sense of place” or valued views or visual receptors and where visual receptors are not vulnerable, because views are distant, screened or where views are partial/transient for passing motorists and people engaged in sporting activities.

Magnitude of Change - Landscape

- 5.1.9 The nature of likely landscape effects includes consideration of the scale and nature of features either removed or introduced, geographical extent and the degree to which landscape character may be altered through the duration and reversibility of the proposed development. This provides an understanding of the likely magnitude of the proposed change to the landscape character.

Magnitude of Change - Visual

- 5.1.10 The nature of likely visual effects is gauged by the degree to which specific views would change or be influenced by the size, scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility of the proposed development. This provides an understanding of the likely magnitude of the proposed change to the landscape character.

Table 3: Magnitude of Change – Landscape/Townscape and Visual

MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE		
SUBSTANTIAL	Landscape Character	Development proposals will result in a complete change to character of the landscape. Substantial loss /addition, damage / destruction of, or substantial alteration / changes to, key elements and features, characteristic of the receiving landscape.
	Visual Amenity	Development proposals are immediately apparent and highly visible, bringing about a complete change in view.
MAJOR	Landscape Character	A notable change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area. Loss of majority of key elements and features or introduction of new features dominating / incongruous in the surrounding landscape / townscape context.

	Visual Amenity	The proposals may form a visible and recognisable new element within the overall scene and may be readily noticed by the observer or receptor.
MODERATE	Landscape Character	Development proposals will bring a noticeable change. Loss of some but not all elements /addition of some elements, or moderate alteration / changes to some elements and features, characteristic of the receiving landscape.
	Visual Amenity	Development proposals will bring a noticeable change in view, consisting moderate components of the wider scene.
MINOR	Landscape Character	Development proposals will bring about a barely noticeable change. Minor loss /addition, or minor alteration / changes to, key elements and features, characteristic of the receiving landscape.
	Visual Amenity	The proposals constitute only a minor component of the wider view, which might be missed by the casual observer or receptor. Awareness of the proposals would not have a marked effect on the overall quality of the scene.
NEGLIGIBLE	Landscape Character	No discernible change to the elements and features / characteristics of the receiving landscape.
	Visual Amenity	Only a very small part of the proposals is discernible and/or they are at such a distance that they are scarcely appreciated. Consequently they have very little effect on the scene.

Significance of the Impact

- 5.1.11 To ascertain the significance of the identified impact, two elements are considered; the sensitivity or susceptibility to change and the magnitude of the proposed change to ascertain the significance. 5.1.11 This is illustrated by Table 4. The matrix indicates how a slight effect on a highly sensitive view is more significant than a moderate effect on a low sensitivity view. Significance is determined by the position of the results within the matrix: those lying on the lower right portion are unlikely to be significant, whilst those lying on the upper left portion are more likely to give rise to impacts which could be considered significant, and therefore material in planning terms.

Table 4: Significance Matrix

SENSITIVITY				
MAGNITUDE OF EFFECT		HIGH	MODERATE	LOW
	SUBSTANTIAL	MAJOR	MAJOR / MODERATE	MODERATE
	MAJOR	MAJOR / MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE / MINOR
	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE / MINOR	MINOR
	MINOR	MODERATE / MINOR	MINOR	MINOR / NEGLIGIBLE
	NEGLIGIBLE	NEGLIGIBLE /NO CHANGE	NEGLIGIBLE /NO CHANGE	NEGLIGIBLE /NO CHANGE

Nature of Effect

- 5.1.12 The effect on a visual or landscape receptor is a combined assessment of the receptor value; the nature and susceptibility of receptors (Sensitivity), and the nature of effects (Magnitude); to include the ability of a landscape to accept change, site specific duration and reversibility of effects. The greater the loss of attributes, irreversibility with increased negative effects, the greater the effect.
- 5.1.13 The effect(s) are described as beneficial (+ve), neutral or adverse (-ve). Mitigation measures incorporated as part of the development proposals are taken into account as part of this process, and can result in the reduction of the level of impact or changing an impact to neutral or beneficial.
- 5.1.14 This method using matrices allows transparency in demonstrating the assessment of Significance of Impacts. Circumstances vary with location, landscape context and with each type of proposal. Occasionally an adjustment is required to the matrix to reflect local conditions or the relative weighting of factors. Each site/proposal/context is judged individually and there are no absolutes in the impact assessment process.

5.2 Planning Policy Analysis

- 5.2.1 The key element of this proposal is that it seeks to retain and restore Athlone House, its grounds and its gardens. It will thus accord with local policy and stakeholder aspirations generally, and meet the spirit of the 2005 Section 106 Agreement, although the proposed restoration is different to the previous consent. The key considerations in planning terms are:

- Does it accord with national, regional and local plan policy
- Does it give rise to any reduction in openness of the MOL

Policy Compliance - NPPF

- 5.2.2 The relevant Chapters of the NPPF have been set out in Section 2 above. The proposals comply with the intent of Chapters 1, 7 and 11 as they clearly represent high quality and sustainable design that “contributes to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment” (Chapter 1) and the proposals, in restoring a locally important site and landscape asset, “promote local distinctiveness.. and integration of built development into the natural environment...”. (Chapter 7). In terms of the conserving and enhancing the local environment, (Chapter 11), the proposals will protect and enhance a valued landscape.
- 5.2.3 **National and Regional (London) Policy (7.17) Compliance - Protection of Green Belt Land / Metropolitan Open Land** – The restoration of Athlone House will protect MOL openness in this location and in comparison to the 2005 consented scheme it is somewhat smaller, although it aims to restore the original building in character with only minor changes and additions. As the restoration will keep and enhance the architectural form of the original Athlone House, it will not affect openness.
- 5.2.4 **The London Plan**
Sections 2.2.4 – 2.2.25 set out in some detail London Plan (Regional) policies applicable to the restoration proposals. These include general development guidance, Metropolitan Open Land Policy (discussed above) and the London View Management Framework Policy and its SPG.

5.2.5 London Plan – General Development Policies

These include Policy 1.1 on Strategic Vision and Objectives, Policy 2.8 on Green Infrastructure, Policy 3.5 on Quality and Design of Housing, Policy 7.1 on Lifetime Neighbourhoods, Policy 7.4 on Local Character and Policy 7.8 on Heritage Assets and Archaeology. Policy 7.18 Open Space, 7.19 Biodiversity and 7.21 Trees and Woodland are also considered within this category. The restoration of this locally important heritage asset and its landscape setting meets the criteria set out in the above development policies.

5.2.6 The London Plan – View Management Framework and its Implementation – Policies 7.11 & 7.12

Policy 7.11 identifies as **Panorama View 3: Kenwood House to St Pauls Cathedral** as one of three Views of strategic importance in the Plan. - The view is particularly sensitive to development breaching the tree line in the Middle Ground, as it would inhibit views of the panorama. Athlone House sits within the foreground and is outside of the Protected Vista, located at between -40 degrees and -60degrees, towards the periphery of the 120degree field of vision. (See Figure 2). The existing house does not dominate or detract from the view. Key recognisable features of this existing roofline are the different articulations of the roof and gable ends, along with the tower that stands tall above the main roof ridge heights.

5.2.7 With the restoration of Athlone House, there would be no change in the perception of the dwelling in this view, and it thus restoration would be policy-compliant. The only changes (extensions, etc.) occur at ground floor level and would not be perceived in this panorama.

5.2.8 Local Plan Policies – Core Strategy

The Adopted local plan policies of relevance to this application are set out in paragraphs 2.3.3-2.3.20 and include Core Strategy Policies CS-1, CS4, CS5, CS6, and CS14. These are essentially strategic policies that ensure the right mix and appropriate design are part of any development proposal, and proposals are appropriate to their location. CS14 in particular is relevant to this application as it directs “preserving and enhancing Camden’s rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings...”

5.2.9 Local Plan – Development Policies

Policies DP24 & DP 25 are relevant to this application, and seek to secure high quality design and to conserve Camden’s heritage. The restoration of Athlone House and its grounds will meet the criteria set out in these two policies, making a positive and policy-compliant contribution to the Borough.

5.2.10 **Camden Highgate Conservation Area:** An essential part of the character of Highgate Conservation Area is the open aspect. Looking into the Conservation Area from the Heath close to Hampstead Lane, Athlone House can be seen sitting in an elevated position with the spire of St. Michael’s Church beyond the trees. . The restoration of the house and grounds will enhance and reinforce the character of the Conservation Area. Therefore there is no conflict with Policy.

5.2.11 **City of London - Hampstead Heath Management Plan** - The overriding theme of this management plan is to retain the Heath as open countryside within the urban environment. To this end the objectives of the Plan aim to ‘protect the Heath from developments that threaten its views and ambience’. With the restoration of Athlone House and the retention and enhancement of the historic landscape of the site, protecting its setting and important elements of the landscape structure around the edge of Hampstead Heath, the objectives of this

management plan are supported in retaining the relationship of the site with the open space of Hampstead Heath. Therefore there is no conflict with Policy.

5.3 Landscape/Townscape Impacts

- 5.3.1 The development proposals will result in the restoration of the site in a way that is congruent with the character of Fitzroy Park: spacious individual homes in parkland settings. The key recognisable features of the roofline will be retained, with a renewal of many of the important architectural details. Aspects of the restoration will not be seen outside of the site, but the new entrance with its avenue of trees will provide an enhancement to the streetscape with an increased perception of trees and greenery.
- 5.3.2 The redevelopment includes landscape proposals that will revive the gardens and implement thick vegetative boundaries, in particular the eastern boundary to the recent Caenwood Court development. This will enhance and improve the quality of the setting within the Highgate Conservation Area; the designed landscaped grounds surrounding the restored house will be in keeping with the local character and neighbouring large estate dwellings.
- 5.3.3 Through the improvement and enhancement of the designed landscape gardens, the green and open nature of the area immediately adjoining Hampstead Heath will be retained. Open nature in this context refers to the sprawling breaks between the built form created by the large estate dwellings, a transitional zone between the natural expanse of Hampstead Heath and the tighter urban grain of Highgate. The table below summarises the landscape/townscape impacts of the restoration, and has found that the proposals would be largely beneficial:

Table 5 Summary of Predicted Landscape/Townscape Impacts

Landscape Receptor	Sensitivity to Change	Magnitude of Impact	Significance of Impact	Nature of Impact
Local Townscape Character	Low	Intermediate	Minor/Moderate	Beneficial
Local Landscape Character	Low	Intermediate	Minor/Moderate	Beneficial
Character of the Site	Low	Large	Moderate/Major	Beneficial

5.4 Magnitude of Landscape/Townscape Effects

- 5.4.1 The magnitude of the effects of the restoration proposals upon the Heath would be 'negligible to minor'. This is because neither the scale and nor style of the building will change as a result of restoration, and the improvements to the site in landscape terms would be consistent with the immediate context, harmonious with both the Heath and the proposed new house.
- 5.4.2 The magnitude of effect upon Viewpoint 1, the Kenwood Gazebo would be 'minor'. The current dwelling and landscape setting is in a degraded state and therefore the restoration would enhance the area and have a long term beneficial effect upon the view.

5.5 Visual Impacts and Their Significance

- 5.5.1 The section assesses the potential effects of the proposed development on visual amenity and key views including the strategic London Panorama: Kenwood to St Paul's Cathedral. Reference is made to Figure 1, 5 and 6 along with the Verified View CGIs in Appendix 1. The assessment of the visual baseline showed that all of the receptors assessed were of 'minor' or 'negligible' sensitivity. This is because the overall visual impression of the building from these locations will be essentially the same, with a subtle improvement of view due to the restored landscape and boundary planting.
- 5.5.2 Magnitude on all but one of the views was showed to be of 'minor' or 'negligible' magnitude. This is because the restoration will not change the overall perception of the application site in distant views, particularly when viewed from the Heath. Impacts on the view from Highgate School were shown to be 'minor' in magnitude for similar reasons, with a beneficial effect arising from the increase in tree cover.
- 5.5.3 Significance of impacts on all but one of the viewpoints was shown to be 'minor/negligible' and from Highgate School, to be 'minor'. These are due to the issues raised above. All effects on visual amenity will be beneficial.
- 5.5.4 Viewpoints 1b to 2b represent views of the proposals from within Hampstead Heath where visual receptors would include locals and visitors, taking part in everything from sedentary activities, walking, running, cycling and other activities not listed here, some enjoying the relaxed atmosphere and admiring the views, others more intent on their leisure activity. Viewpoint 3b represents the view from the grounds of Highgate School, a semi private space where typically receptors would include only those members of the school community, pupils and teachers alike, during term time school hours. They may only have a passing interest, being otherwise engaged in school activities. Viewpoint 4b represents the view from the strip of donated gardens that form a buffer to the edge of Hampstead Heath. Visual receptors here will typically include locals walking between Caenwood Court and Hampstead Heath and those sitting quietly contemplating the garden areas, with a prolonged viewing experience. Viewpoint 5b represents the view from Parliament Hill on Hampstead Heath. Viewpoints 6b & 7b represent two views of the proposals at close distance from locations along Hampstead Lane. Figure 8 shows the position of all Agreed Views.

Agreed Viewpoints

Viewpoint 1b – View from the Kenwood Gazebo in Hampstead Heath

- 5.5.5 The restored landscape setting to the house will reinforce the surrounding mature vegetated screen and will be barely noticeable from this viewpoint. The most visually distinct elements include the restored stonework, making the building slightly more visible and the increased height of the cupola. While there is a small but noticeable change in both prominence of the building and its overall height, this arises from the restoration of an important historic building and thus brings positive benefits overall. The Magnitude of the change in view from this location is Minor (beneficial).
- 5.5.6 Strategic View 3, London Panorama: Kenwood to St Paul's Cathedral (from the London View Management Framework) will not be effected with only a slight change in roofscape; it will remain as an interesting and varied roofscape set within a well wooded horizon line, framing the view towards the City of London. The Magnitude of the effect of the proposals on the LVMF key View 3 is Negligible.

Viewpoint 2b – Taken from area of Hampstead Heath, south of Viewpoint 1

- 5.5.7 This will be a similar view to Viewpoint 1 in that it is considered that the nature of the view will not change. The restored stonework makes the house appear very slightly more prominent in the landscape and the cupola is perceived as higher. As this effect (increase in prominence and perceived height) arises from the important restoration of a heritage asset, this change is considered positive. Overall, the Magnitude of the visual impact is Minor (beneficial).

5.5.8 Viewpoint 3b– from Highgate School

From this viewpoint the house is slightly more visible due to restoration of the stonework; the higher cupola can also be seen. This increase in prominence is balanced by the fact that users of the playing fields are engaged in sporting and recreational activities and skyline views form at best a backdrop to these. The roofline of Athlone House is only one of a multitude of buildings seen looking south from this location, thus the change to the build does not stand out, as it does in Views 1 & 2. Thus the Magnitude of the impact here is Negligible.

5.5.9 Viewpoint 4b – Donated Garden Land of Athlone House

From this viewpoint, users, who would be engaged in recreational activities that could be affected by the ambience of the setting, the impression would be of the restored southern elevation, and a well-maintained landscape. This contrasts with the present view where it is evident that the building is un-occupied. The cupola cannot be seen, so there is no impression of increased height; there is, however a slight increase in massing in this view. Overall, the restoration of this important heritage asset would be likely to enhance the visitor's perception of their surroundings. The Magnitude of the impact would be Moderate (beneficial)

5.5.10 Viewpoint 5b – Parliament Hill

This is a distant view analysed at the request of the City of London. See Figure 8 for its location. Only the tower of Athlone House is visible in the mid-point of this view. The restored stone and brickwork would not be discernibly different from existing at the distance. The increase in height of the cupola would be apparent, but given the incidental nature of the tower as an element in the view, the Magnitude of the impact of this visual effect would be Negligible.

5.5.11 Viewpoint 6b – Hampstead Lane – North of Development Site

This view of the house and grounds beyond the boundary wall is already well screened by existing vegetation. There would be some increase in screening due to introduced tree planting, especially on the east side of the view. It might be possible to detect the increased height of the cupola from this view, but would be an element glimpsed through trees, even in winter, and would not be prominent or easily discerned. The Magnitude of the impact of this visual effect would be Negligible.

5.5.12 Viewpoint 7b – Hampstead Lane Opposite the Development Site

From this Viewpoint there would be a change in the street view, with the introduction of a drive and feature gate. The drive would not typically be seen, but the gates would form a new element in the view. The introduction of such of feature would not be discordant and is typical of the entrances to large houses in parkland settings within Fitzroy Park, such as Beechwood east of Athlone House. This is illustrated in the Design and Access Statement. It would not be unlike the current entrance to the site (See Photograph 5 on Photosheet 1 in Appendix II). The gatehouse building would be refurbished so there would be a reduction in dereliction which is a characteristic of some views of the house. As in Viewpoint 6b, the new planting within the grounds would be apparent on the eastern side of this view. The cupola, restored chimneys and

cleaned brickwork would be detectable, but there is much vegetation screening the house views from this point, so the change would not be visually intrusive. Overall, the Magnitude of the impact of this visual effect would be Minor Beneficial.

Summary of Visual Analysis

- 5.5.11 In evaluating the susceptibility of the **visual receptors** to the restoration proposals, the proximity, context, expectations and occupation or activity of the receptor and the extent to which their attention or interest may be focused on the view, are assessed along with the importance attached to that view. This aspect comes into play particularly in the analysis of Views 3, 4 & 5 above and influences the Magnitude of the impact.
- 5.5.12 The proposals will have a marked internal and highly positive effect on perception at the site level, but most of the restoration will not be apparent from key views. There are two elements of the proposals that influence change in visibility: restoration of the facades and especially the cleaning and restoration of the brickwork, restoration of some chimneys, and the increase in height of the cupola, restoring it to its original height. This will make Athlone House slightly more visible, but will be a beneficial, as it will eliminate the sense of dereliction that is evident at present and is part of the overall intention to restore the house to reflect the original design.
- 5.5.13 While the analysis does not find that the proposals give rise to a large beneficial change in visual impact, the importance of the change being small should not be understated. The existing house is valued locally as a familiar feature in the landscape; the retention of it as a landscape feature more or less as it exists at present should be seen as greatly in its favour. The visual improvement arises from the perception that a derelict and somewhat neglected landmark is now being restored.
- 5.5.14 The table below provides a summary of the individual Viewpoints and the likely effects of development.

Table 5 – Visual Impacts Summary

Viewpoint & Distance	Description	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance	Nature
1b - Mid Distance	Kenwood Gazebo in Hampstead Heath	Low	Minor	Minor/ Negligible	Beneficial
2b - Mid Distance	Area south of Kenwood Gazebo in Hampstead Heath	Low	Minor	Minor	Beneficial
3b - Mid Distance	Highgate School	Low	Negligible	Negligible	
4b - Near Distance	Donated Garden Land	Low	Moderate	Minor	Beneficial
5b – Long Distance	Parliament Hill	Low	Negligible	Negligible	
6b- Near Distance	Hampstead Lane	Low	Negligible	Negligible	
7b Near Distance	Hampstead Lane	Low	Minor	Minor	Beneficial

6.0 MITIGATION MEASURES

6.1 General

6.1.1 Following this appraisal, effects on landscape character and visual amenity can be addressed to avoid/prevent, reduce or offset (or compensate for) the impacts of development. Refer to Drawing No. JFAL 9135/02.

6.1.2 The proposals for the site have progressed through various iterations, taking on board the findings of this assessment, to become embedded into the proposed design and site layout. In practice such mitigation measures fall into three main categories:

- Primary Measures, developed through the iterative design process, which have become integrated or embedded into the project design;
- Standard Measures for construction and operational management practices, avoiding and reducing environmental effects; and
- Secondary Measures, designed to address any residual adverse effects remaining after primary measures and standard construction practices have been incorporated into the scheme.

6.2 Primary Mitigation Measures

6.2.1 In summary, the Primary Mitigation Measures would include the following;

EXISTING VEGETATION

- Retention of the wooded edge to the north western, western and southern site boundaries.
- Retention and protection of vegetation to the northern site boundary, particularly individual mature trees.
- Arboricultural surgery and management practices to ensure health and longevity of trees to retain dense vegetated boundaries.
- Identification and retention of areas of acid grassland and mitigation via translocation where necessary.

ACCESS

- Vehicular access into the site will only be from Hampstead Lane.
- Pedestrian / cyclist access should align with existing roads and footpaths.

BUILT FORM

- Building alignment to broadly follow the existing Athlone House, to retain the openness of the Metropolitan Open Land with views into the open spaces formed within the site and as breaks between blocks of built form.
- Building height to accord with the existing dwelling, nestling amongst the existing tree canopies and with recognisable elements such as the tower.
- Avoid dominance of building mass in views from Hampstead Heath, in particular the LVMF strategic London Panorama View 3: Kenwood to St Paul's Cathedral.

- Built development should not extend to the full site to retain historic landscape gardens and setting to the house as well as the openness that contributes to MOL and Highgate Conservation Area.
- Avoid visual clutter of bin / cycle stores and ensure suitable position for regular refuse collections.
- External lighting to be of suitable orientation and lux level to reduce lighting effects outside of site boundary and to avoid glare and disruption of potential bat foraging through mature wooded areas surrounding the site.

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

- Retention of the existing boundary vegetation which provides effective screening of the site, enclosing it and providing a degree of self-containment. The site forms the backdrop or part of the setting to the edge of Hampstead Heath and Highgate Conservation Area. It is therefore essential that the strategy retains and enhances existing boundary vegetation, with particular reference to the enhancement and creation of a vegetated north eastern corner and eastern boundary, to include suitable management.
- Strengthening of existing boundary vegetation with hedgerows and or large shrubs / small trees to thicken existing or create new understorey planting where required.
- Species selection to fit with the local character and to promote biodiversity.
- Continue to encourage use of site by invertebrates, birds and bats through the provision of quiet and secluded areas and log piles for local wildlife populations.

6.3 Standard Mitigation Measures

6.3.1 The Standard Mitigation Measures will be outlined in full by the developer, however they would typically include the following;

- No works to take place until all Ecological Surveys and any translocation actions completed, to the satisfaction of the LPA.
- Application of Arboricultural advice to apply special construction measures, to include elements such as No-Dig for driveways.
- Removal of vegetation and other clearance works are to avoid bird nesting season (March to August).
- Detailed Landscape Proposals to include plant species and a management plan for structural vegetation and open space areas.

6.4 Secondary Mitigation Measures

6.4.1 The Secondary Mitigation Measures would include additional measures to reduce residual adverse effects of development following the incorporation of Primary and Standard mitigation measures. If the above measures are all incorporated it is unlikely that Secondary Mitigation Measures will be required.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 General

- 7.1.1 This document has assessed the existing landscape, townscape and visual baseline, following consultation with the local planning authority and others, and with the agreement of the Applicant in terms of the design and layout of the site. It has addressed the issues raised as part of consultation and pre-application meetings with the LPA. It has also addressed the relevant local and national planning policy and non-statutory planning guidance.

7.2 Landscape Policy

- 7.2.1 The proposed development is shown to accord with the relevant local and national policy. It demonstrates that the restoration will not have a detrimental impact upon the local landscape and townscape, including the MOL and the Conservation but, conversely, it will have a beneficial impact on both.
- 7.2.2 The London View Management Framework (LVMF) View 3 Kenwood House to St Paul's Cathedral is a strategically important view from the ridge of high ground between Hampstead and Highgate looking towards the City of London. The proposals will restore the features of the existing house and is considered appropriate to the local context, neither dominating nor distracting the viewer from the vista towards the City and St Paul's Cathedral.

7.3 Landscape / Townscape Character

- 7.3.1 An assessment of the local townscape demonstrated that its character was not derived from a particular period of building but from the type and setting, i.e. a large, architecturally distinct dwelling set in a mature landscape. The restoration will re-instate Athlone House as a single large dwelling house in a parkland, landscaped setting, and as such, it will be in character with the local townscape.
- 7.3.2 The assessment also demonstrated that the current state of the proposal site and Athlone House has a detrimental impact upon the character of Hampstead Lane. This is due to the degraded state of the current building and the loss of the landscape structure within the site through its recent history. As a result, the proposed scheme with its strong landscape design including the restoration of the historic landscape and the setting of the house is shown to be of beneficial impact to the local townscape and the setting of Hampstead Lane. The restoration will enhance and protect the character of the Conservation Area.
- 7.3.3 The character of the eastern boundary of Hampstead Heath with the proposed development site is defined by a wooded landscape punctuated with distinctive buildings, including Athlone House. This will be restored, in keeping with the character with the local area. The restoration of the landscape setting of Athlone House is shown to be of beneficial impact to the local landscape.
- 7.3.4 The landscape of the proposal site is also shown to be in a degraded state with the loss of mature tree planting resulting in a lack of a distinct setting to the building and no definition between the proposal site and Caenwood Court to the east. The landscape scheme seeks to restore the setting of the building and Hampstead Lane in the vicinity of the proposal site. It also redefines the boundaries between Athlone House and Caenwood Court, enclosing each site and restoring their settings.

7.4 Visual Amenity

- 7.4.1 The visual assessment demonstrated that the sensitivity of local visual receptors to the type of change posed by the proposed scheme was low. This was due to the similarity in type of development to that which presently exists on site.
- 7.4.2 Magnitude of effect was shown to be 'moderate', 'negligible' or 'minor' for all of the Viewpoints. This is because the restoration will maintain the scale and massing of the existing building, resulting in no perceptible change in view. A 'minor' magnitude of effect was demonstrated on from Highgate School due to the proximity of the two sites and the current lack of landscape structure in the north of the proposal site and along Hampstead Lane. The proposals will have a beneficial effect.
- 7.4.3 The nature of all impacts was shown to either be neutral or beneficial. Beneficial impacts stem from the restoration of the landscape setting of the site and the contribution to the arboreal character of this stretch of Hampstead Lane. The restoration of Athlone House will also have beneficial visual effects.

FIGURES

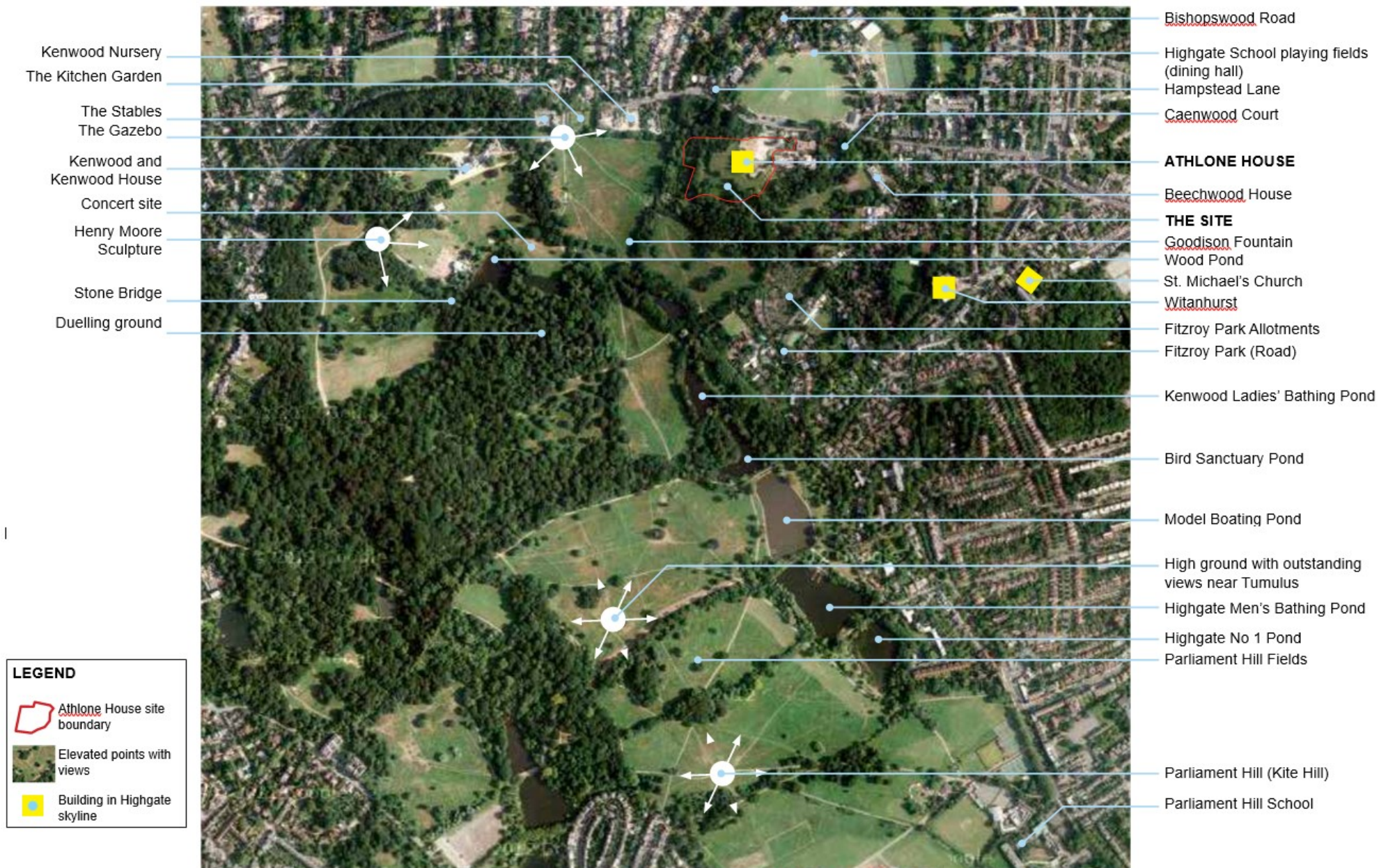
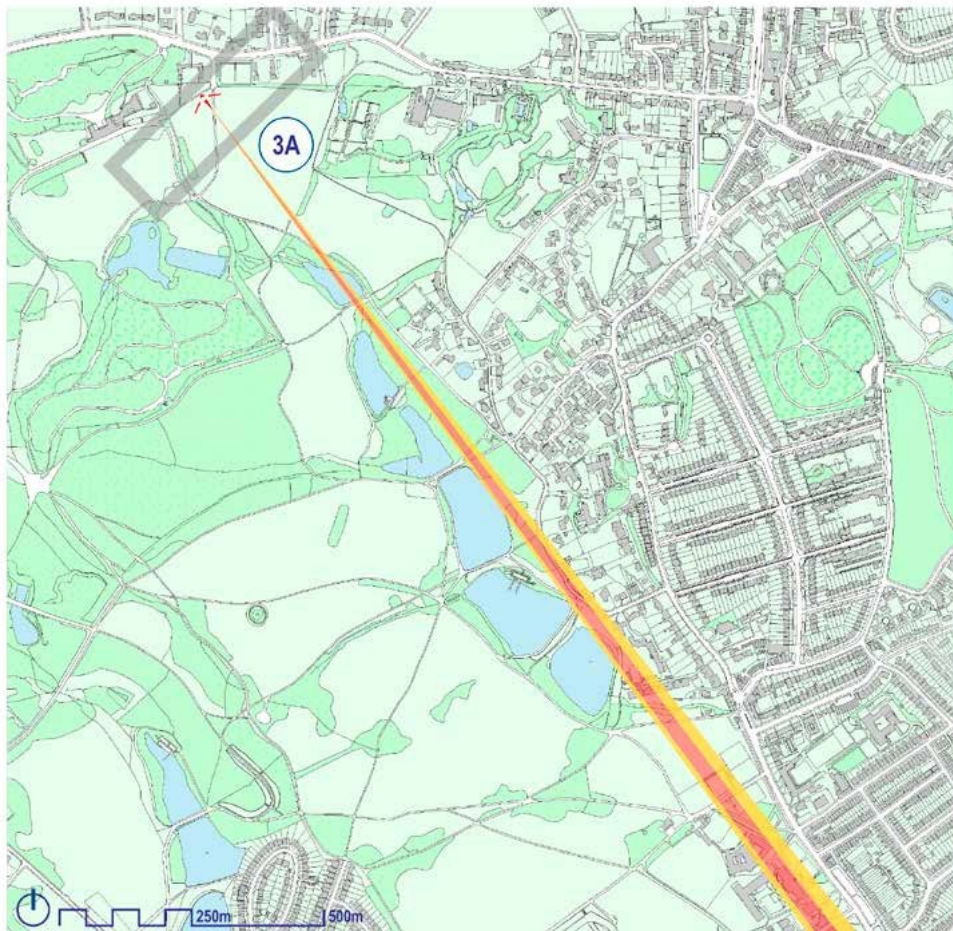


Figure 1: Landscape Context



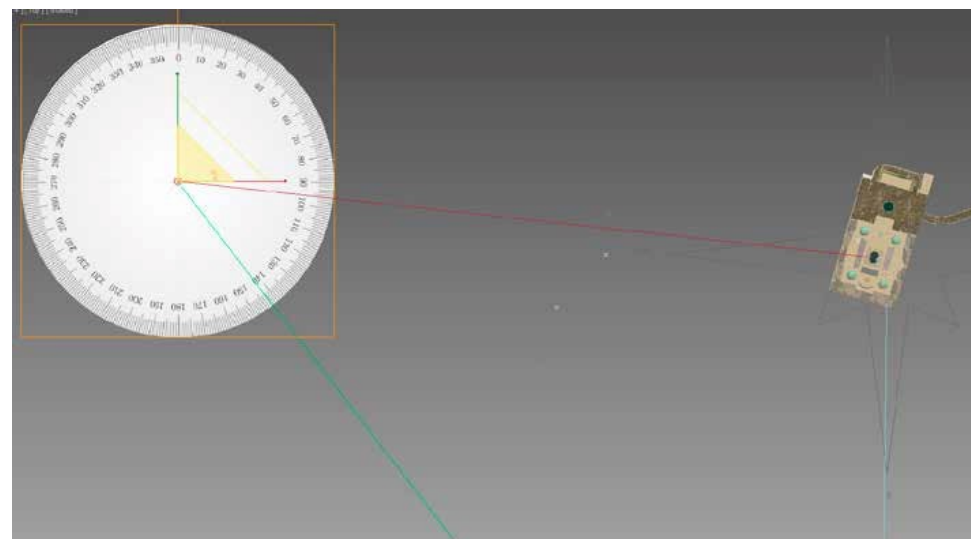


Extract from London View Management Framework - View 3 London Panorama: Kenwood



Panorama from Assessment Point 3A.1 Kenwood: the viewing gazebo – in front of the orientation board

Extract from London View Management Framework - View 3 London Panorama: Kenwood



An extract to illustrate the measured angle from the centre point of Panorama 3A to the mid-point of Athlone House which is 47 degrees.

(From the centre point of Panorama 3A to the centre of St Paul's Cathedral is just under 143 degrees (green line on the above). From the centre point of Panorama 3A to the centre line of the proposed building is 96 degrees giving a difference of 47 degrees (red line on the above. Measured utilising a 3D program and dropping in the location of St Paul's Cathedral using known coordinates).

Figure 2: London View Management Framework - View 3

