



Historic England

LONDON OFFICE

Mr Charles Thuaire
London Borough of Camden
Development Control Planning Services
Camden Town Hall
Argyle Street
LONDON
WC1H 8ND

Direct Dial: 020 7973 3765

Our ref: P00517080

5 July 2016

Dear Mr Thuaire

**Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2015 &
T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015
ATHLONE HOUSE, HAMPSTEAD LANE , LONDON, N6 4RU
Application No 2016/3587/P**

Thank you for your letter of 1 July 2016 notifying Historic England of the above application.

Athlone House, originally known as Caen Wood Towers, has been the subject of a long and complex planning history.

Historic England (formerly known as 'English Heritage') has consistently remained of the view that Athlone House, an unlisted building, makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of Highgate Conservation Area (see my letter reference P00306650 submitted in relation to the 2013 scheme). We raised serious concerns regarding 'mothballing' of the building as part of a proposed scheme in 2007 and highlighted the need for a timetable to restore it for several years prior to that application. We also objected strongly to the proposed 2009 and 2013 schemes which sought the total demolition of the house.

I am very pleased that the Planning Inspector agreed with my view that whilst the building has suffered some neglect over time, it continues to make a clear and positive contribution to the distinctive character and appearance of the Highgate Conservation Area (Report of 8 June 2015 (APP/X5210/A/14/2220872 paragraph 57) and concurred with my conclusion that the loss of the building would lead to substantial harm to the significance of the CA as a designated heritage asset (his report paragraph 59).

It is against this background that I therefore welcome the current scheme which seeks to retain and repair Athlone House. Whilst there will be some changes and extensions to the building to enable it to be brought back into use, any harm these may cause the designated heritage asset (i.e. the conservation area) would, in my view, be less than substantial. Similarly, I consider that the current proposals would have little impact on



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the London View Management Framework (LVMF) protected view 3A from Kenwood Gardens.

I appreciate that there are other matters which must be assessed by your authority in considering the planning balance of these proposals including development in Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) and public benefits of the proposals. I would, however, ask that you consider the retention and repair of Athlone House as a heritage-related public benefit. This was the case when your authority considered the 2007 'enabling development' scheme which was meant to secure the repair of this building via a S106 agreement. I would also remind you that the NPPF affords 'great weight' to preserving the significance of a heritage asset when considering the impact of a proposed development (paragraph 132).

In conclusion, I support these proposals and trust that they will be implemented, securing the future of Athlone House and preserving the character and appearance of Highgate Conservation Area, its setting and views.

Please note that this response relates to historic building and historic area matters only. If there are any archaeological implications to the proposals it is recommended that you contact the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service for further advice (Tel: 020 7973 3712).

Yours sincerely



Breda Daly

Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

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