



Our Ref: MJO/LE/LN2978

mary-jane.oneill@wyg.com
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London Borough of Camden
Planning Advice and Information Service
London Borough of Camden
2nd Floor, 5 Pancras Square
c/o Town Hall, Judd Street
London WC1H 9JE

F.A.O: Charles Thuairé

Dear Sirs

Representation on behalf of the City of London Corporation re: planning application (ref. 2016/3587/P)

Address: Athlone House Hampstead Lane London N6 4RU

Proposal: Restoration and extension of Athlone House for use as a 6-bedroom single dwelling house; creation of new vehicular/pedestrian entrance from Hampstead Lane and associated part demolition of boundary wall; refurbishment and extension of Caen Cottage and refurbishment of the gate house, both to be used as ancillary residential accommodation; erection of a summer house on disused tennis court within the grounds; and associated landscaping works and restoration of historic garden.

I write on behalf of my client, the City of London Corporation ("the City"), to submit a representation to the above planning application. The City has previously objected to preceding planning applications for this site due to the scale and nature of the proposals, as well as the associated intrusion into the designated Open Space and Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) surrounding Athlone House. Having reviewed the planning documentation for the current application, we welcome the proposals to retain and refurbish the existing house and are generally supportive of the proposals. We set out further detail below.

Background

The City of London Corporation provides local government services for the City but has responsibilities that extend far beyond the Square Mile. It also provides a host of additional facilities, ranging from its Open Spaces such as Hampstead Heath to the Barbican Centre.

In the 1870s the City was concerned that access to the open countryside was being threatened and therefore promoted two Acts of Parliament. The Epping Forest Act and the City of London (Open Spaces) Act were passed in 1878 and enabled the City to acquire and protect threatened Open Spaces from future development. Since that time the City has acquired further Open Spaces under this and other legislation.

9 Mansfield Street, London, W1G 9NY
Tel: +44 (0)20 7631 9050 Fax: +44
Email: london@wyg.com Website: www.wyg.com

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Registered Office: Arndale Court, Otley Road, Headingley, Leeds, LS6 2UJ



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The City is statutorily obliged by virtue of various Acts of Parliament and, specifically, the provisions of the London Government Reorganisation (Hampstead Heath) Order 1989 as follows: -

- i. for ever to keep the Heath open, unenclosed, unbuilt upon and by all lawful means prevent, resist and abate all encroachment on the Heath and attempted encroachment and protect the Heath and preserve it as an open space;
- ii. at all times preserve as far as maybe the natural aspect of the Heath and to that end protect the turf, gorse, heather, timber and other trees, shrubs and brushwood thereon;
- iii. not to sell, lease, grant or in any manner dispose of any part of the Heath; and
- iv. to provide active and passive recreational facilities and information for members of the public.

In total, the City owns and manages over 10,700 acres (4,330 hectares) of Open Spaces in and around London. The sites are used and enjoyed by millions of visitors each year. They are important wildlife habitats but also provide many facilities for visitors, including swimming and other sports, play areas, fishing and much more. The Open Spaces Department is committed to providing the best service possible within available resources, ensuring fair and efficient management, good communications and an open, learning culture.

The City took over title ownership and the responsibility for the management and protection of Hampstead Heath in 1989, and for making it available as open space. In addition, the Local Government Reorganisation (Hampstead Heath) Order 1989 establishes a Trust Fund, the proceeds of which may be used to defray, in part, the cost of enhancing or replacing amenities on the Heath. The balance is met out of the City of London funds, at no cost to the public.

Design and Scale

The City recognises the fact that this application marks a noticeable improvement since the previous proposals, which would have significantly increased the bulk and massing on the site. The current application comprises the retention and restoration of Athlone House, together with some extensions, rather than a complete knock-down and rebuild of the house which was previously proposed. It is understood that the relatively modest extensions are proposed to create accommodation to meet the new owner's living requirements, and are proposed on the site of the previous ancillary wings. Furthermore, the proposals will restore the external features that were lost in the mid-twentieth century, as well as many of the internal features that have been lost over the years.

The City welcomes the landscaping proposals and the extensive planting and management within the grounds to benefit the nature conservation interest of the site. In particular, the City supports the extensive areas of new and retained planting to the west and south of the site, directly abutting Hampstead Heath.

In addition, and as demonstrated within the accompanying Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, we accept that the roof line will remain generally unaltered as a result of the proposals and therefore the visual impact on the surrounding area would be minimal.

The current proposals are therefore supported by the City as it is considered that the restoration of the house is appropriate in terms of making a positive contribution to the distinctive character and setting of the Highgate Conservation Area and surroundings, including when Athlone House is viewed from Hampstead Heath.



Construction Management Plan

The City notes that access to the site will be from the B519 Hampstead Lane. The City requests that no construction or delivery vehicles stop or wait on Hampstead Lane, or adjacent streets, in order to avoid traffic issues in the area surrounding the Heath.

Furthermore, the City respectfully requests that, should a condition be attached to any planning permission regarding the requirement for a Construction Logistics Plan, or if included within a s106 legal agreement, the City is kept informed of this and of any relevant documentation submitted by the applicant. This is particularly important given the number of other developments in the local vicinity that likely to come forward at a similar time.

Basement Impact Assessment

The Basement Impact Assessment (BIA) recognises that the proposed basement is not considered to pose a risk to the stability of the surrounding natural and built environment. It is understood that the proposed new rear extension will have a swimming pool which involves excavation by approximately two metres in depth. The City has no objections to the submitted BIA but would request that the proposals are undertaken in strict accordance with the advice set out within it to avoid any adverse impacts. Furthermore, and as stated within the BIA, the advice should be reviewed once the development proposals have been finalised. We understand that the Council is undertaking a separate independent audit of the BIA and would like to be kept informed on any findings in this regard.

Summary

The City is generally supportive of the proposals, which primarily seek to retain and refurbish Athlone House. The City also acknowledges the benefits the proposals will bring to the surrounding area in terms of restoring a heritage asset and protecting views to the site. The proposals will bring a dilapidated building back into use, and mark a step change to previous proposals, which were previously opposed. The City would, however, like to be kept informed in terms of construction logistics and any further iterations to the CMP.

The City of London Corporation reserves the right to supplement the above representation in respect of specific matters relating to the applications and to be re-consulted regarding any further amendments or additional documentation submitted.

Yours faithfully



Mary-Jane O'Neill

Regional Director

For WYG

mary-jane.oneill@wyg.com

Tel: 020 7631 9050