22 FROGNAL WAY LONDON NW3 6XE

REVISED DESIGN STATEMENT IN RESPECT OF THE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF ALL EXISTING EXTERNAL BRICKWORK

REVISED FEBUARY 2011

APPENDICES

This document should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Heritage Statement prepared by AP(a) Ltd
- AP(a) Ltd's drawings nos. 468/111C, 112B, 113B, 114B, 115B, 116B, 117B, 118B, 119C and 120 B
- The report on the existing brickwork from Price & Myers Structural Engineers dated 27 May 2010
- Method Statement prepared by Pavehall plc dated 18 August 2010
- The revised and up-dated Advice from Ellen Wiles, Counsel dated 17 February 2011

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.01 This planning application is for the sequential replacement of all the external brickwork on the building, at all levels.

1.02 Following the grant of planning permission on 28 September 2009 to extend and alter the property, detailed assessments have subsequently been made of the existing external fabric with a view to commencing the approved works on site.

1.03 It has consistently been the view of the applicant that the quality of the external brickwork is poor, and that this has an adverse impact on the appearance of the building.

1.04 The poor quality of bricks above ground floor also raises concerns as to their long-term viability and maintenance.

1.05 Subsequent opening up on site has exposed a change of brickwork below ground floor from the above ground floor brickwork. Much of this lower level brickwork is of poor quality, and is not suitable for use below ground. After consultation with the client's structural engineers, it is clear that there will have to be wholesale replacement of this brickwork undertaken.

1.06 In addition, a variety of different type of bricks have also been used below ground, including in some instances flettons, which are not intended for exposed external use below ground.

1.07 Different types of bonds have also been used, at various points in the below ground brickwork. (See Appendix I for recent site photographs of the exposed brickwork).

1.08 For a more detailed technical and structural appraisal, please refer to the report on the condition of the bricks as exposed below ground level, prepared by the client's structural engineers Price & Myers, and which forms part of this planning application.

1.09 The disparity in the brickwork is at odds with the approved planning drawings prepared by the original architect, Philip Pank, which clearly shows the external elevations visible at basement level, on a raking line from the main garden level. The approved plans by Pank appear to show an intent that the brickwork at both levels would be seen together in certain areas of the building, and one could therefore assume that the type of brick and the bond would be the same throughout, which is not the case in the final built form.

1.10 It is known from Pank's widow that Pank was very unhappy with the way his client Harold Cooper proceeded to level the central area of the site once planning permission had been granted, thereby disregarding the grading of the site around the building as proposed by Pank (and, incidentally, as approved by the Council). Such was Pank's displeasure at Cooper's behaviour that he disassociated himself from the project, and was not involved with the site works during construction.

1.11 The changes in brick type and bonding between the main ground floor level and the basement reflects the lack of involvement in the construction by the architect.

1.12 As a consequence of the original construction, virtually all areas of the brickwork below the main grade level will have to be removed and new brickwork inserted; because of the extent of the variation in brick types used, and the extensive areas of poor construction, it would be highly impractical to retain large sections of the existing brickwork above the areas that would need to be replaced. There would also be serious concerns about health and safety maters during such works.

1.13 In taking the works forward on site now, therefore, the site owner would like to consider replacement of the exterior brickwork at both levels, in a single type of brick throughout, with a single type of bond. Given that a significant amount of the exposed brickwork will have to be replaced, it does not seem to make to sense to have new bricks made to match the existing, which are generally acknowledged to be of poor quality.

1.14 In addition, it is considered that a better quality brick would significantly improve the appearance of the building, and would also preserve and enhance the conservation area.

2 RECENT PLANNING HISTORY

2.01 In 2007 an unsuccessful application was made to English Heritage (by persons unknown) to list the property. The English Heritage refusal letter dated 17th August 2007 contains a summary list of reasons for not listing it. The Adviser's Report (prepared by Hannah Parham, a listed buildings officer with EH) dated 15th August 2007 attached to the decision letter contains the reasons for a refusal to list, and sets out the factors taken into account in relation to listing. These include:

a) [The building] is not of a sufficiently high degree of architectural interest in a national context and has been altered;

b) While the composition is largely successful, there are places where the varying heights and angles of the ranges are unresolved, for example where the south-eastern range and the garage meet the rotunda;

c) Neither the brickwork or the stained soft wood are of notably high quality.

(Our emphasis)

2.02 Ms Parham's report also sets out her reasons for concluding that it does make a positive contribution, namely:

'As a house with some architectural quality designed by a practice whose surviving buildings are located in this area, 22 Frognal Way is of local interest. The house has a number of features including the plan form, the exterior elevations and the relationship with its surroundings which distinguish it from many of the houses built in the post-war period. ***The composition of the principal elevations is mainly successful and the horizontality of the ranges, which is emphasised by the prominent fascias,*** *is carefully balanced by the central rotunda.' (Our emphasis)*.

2.03 In an appeal decision against the demolition of the existing house, the Appeal Inspector agreed with Ms Parham's assessment, and he concluded that the building made a positive contribution to the conservation area. In his letter dated 20th October 2008 dismissing the appeal, Inspector Andrew Jeyes made the following point:

"In conclusion, the building is of interesting and distinctive design and appearance, being designed by an architect of some local importance following a commission, and its form and design are assimilated into the site without detracting from the adjoining house and with little impact on important local views of Church Row and surrounds. As a commissioned house, it continues and adds to the theme of individual houses in Frognal Way which define its character. It falls within the English Heritage Buildings of England criteria contained at Appendix 2."

(Paragraph 12 c) v) of the appeal decision refers).

2.04 It should be noted that the Appeal Inspector, in line with the views of English Heritage, did not make any reference to the materials of the building when assessing its quality for the purposes of concluding that it made a positive contribution to the conservation area.

2.05 Moreover, when setting out her reasons for concluding that it does make a positive contribution to the local area (as opposed to setting out her views as to why the building shouldn't be listed), Hannah Parham of English Heritage omitted to mention the exterior materials at all; she focused solely on the form and structure, and its date (the fact that it was an example of an architect-designed building from the 1970s).

2.06 It is also notable that, in relation to the previous planning application, the Inspector specified the Council's main concerns as being in relation to the 'height, build and massing' of the proposed houses and their impact on surrounding views, specifically the landscaping of the garden and nearby gardens.

2.07 One can therefore infer that the colour/ texture of the exterior of the Property is *not* a significant concern when assessing the existing building qualitatively. And indeed, the Inspector himself did not place any particular focus on the exterior of the property when describing its features; his focus was on its distinctive form and low height and prominence.

2.08 A planning application was submitted in May 2010, for the replacement of the whole of the external brickwork (application reference 2010/2938/P). The

proposal was for a new Roman brick to be installed in phases, and numerous examples of bricks were included with the planning application.

2.09 At the time the first application was submitted, an actual replacement brick had not yet been identified, although various readily available hand-made options were suggested.

2.10 Officers felt that none of the bricks proposed were a close enough match to the existing brickwork in terms of the base colour, and they were therefore concerned that the building would take on a different overall appearance in the conservation area.

2.11 It was therefore concluded that a customised brick would have to be developed specifically for this site, and discussions were opened up with The York Handmade Brick Co. Ltd., a brick manufacturer in Yorkshire who specialise in custom made bricks.

2.12 Upon advice from officers, application reference 2010/2938/P was subsequently withdrawn to allow time for customised brick samples to be procured, and to allow for assessment of the proposals under the new PPS5.

2.13 This present application is a result of the new research undertaken into the production of customised bricks specifically manufactured for this site, to match the existing brick in terms of overall colour.

2.14 We subsequently worked with Camden's Design & Conservation Area officer to progress the selection of the appropriate colour and form for the new bricks, and this planning application is the result of these consultations.

2.15 Appendix III sets out the range of colours experimented with before a satisfactory overall colour was arrived at.

2.16 After much experimentation with mineral colours, it was determined that colour references known as '7' and '11' were the best matches to the existing colour. Three samples panels of each colour were erected on site, using

Roman sizes 450mm x 50mm and 329.5mm x 50mm, plus the standard UK brick size of 215mm x 65mm.

2.17 At a site meeting on 7 January 2011 with the Design & Conservation Area officer it was agreed that the most appropriate and elegant size of brick for the building was the 'intermediate' Roman brick size of 329.5mm long. A joint width of 8mm was preferred over the standard 10mm joint, and consequently the height of the new brick is to be 52mm.

2.18 The architect's drawings were amended to reflect the preferred new brick sizes.

2.19 A set of draft planning application documents was sent to the Design & Conservation Area officer on 14 January 2011, for the officer's comments ahead of a planning application being submitted.

2.20 The officer responded by email on 14 February 2011, and commented: "…*I've now looked over your documents which seem to me to be comprehensive from a heritage point of view.*"

2.21 A new sample panel of brickwork was prepared on site, showing the new 'intermediate' size Roman bricks, with 8mm joints. This sample panel was inspected with the Council's Design & Conservation Area officer on 18 February 2011, and the officer confirmed that she felt this was an appropriate and acceptable response to the problem of having the replace the existing poor quality and defective brickwork, and it was agreed that an application should now be submitted proposing this brick.

2.22 An assessment under PPS5 – a 'Heritage Statement' - is also now included with this application.

3 BRICK OPTIONS: THE DESIGN CONTEXT

3.01 The brick selected by Harold Cooper appears to have been more influenced by cost than quality and appearance. The brick is (at least above ground) a basic, wire cut brown brick, with surface colouring added after manufacture. The brickwork has not weathered well.

3.02 We have consulted with brick specialists Modular Clay Products regarding the provenance and quality of the existing bricks, and to assess the viability of matching the existing bricks.

3.03 Modular Clay Products are of the view that the existing brick is a relatively poor quality brick that was probably never frost proof, and that it cannot in any case be replicated, given that the original manufacturer no longer exists.

3.04 In addition, it is thought that the original bricks were made from red clay, and then surface colour was added after firing of the bricks, in order to produce the appearance of a dark brown brick. Because the colour did not form an integral part of the manufacture of the brick, the surface colour has been leeching out over the past 40 or so years, giving the building its present rather mottled colouring. In some places, where climber plants have been allowed to grow up the brickwork, the surface colour has been pulled off by the plant's suckers; this is a particularly graphic illustration of the poor manufacturing quality of the existing bricks.

3.05 There would not, in any case, be any point in replicating the existing brickwork, given its poor quality. The only viable option, therefore, is to replace all the brickwork at both levels in its entirety. However, it was considered important to replicate the original colour of the brickwork, in order to preserve the appearance of the building in the conservation area.

3.06 In considering options for a replacement brick, it is important to consider also the provenance of the design, and the distinctive horizontally of the building's form. Any new brick should respect and enhance this.

3.07 Much of the design provenance of the original building is derived from Frank Lloyd Wright's domestic architecture, particularly his Prairie and Usonian houses. In determining to create an American architecture (free, as Wright saw it, of all European classical influences) he gradually developed a horizontal form for his houses. In his mind, this created a profound link with the land upon which the architecture stood, and out of which the architecture grew, and it resonated with the prairie landscape that characterises the central area of the United States.[1]

3.08 The influence of Wright's domestic architecture on Pank's generation of architects in Britain was pronounced; in particular, Pank's friend and colleague Edward Cullinan has consistently cited Wright as a major influence on his work.

3.09 Following the disastrous experiments in mass housing in Britain in the 1950's and 1960's, based upon an inappropriate and pared down version of the urbanism promoted by Le Corbusier and CIAM, often referred to as the International Style, Wright's architecture was seen as more humane example of modernism by Pank's generation. In addition, the richness of forms and materials which characterised Wright's work also allowed Pank's generation to develop a more varied modern architectural language, and one that could be more easily adapted to local conditions than the restrictive formulations of the International Style.

3.10 It is also clear from other domestic projects by Pank that he considered Wright a major influence on his work.

3.11 These influences are understandable in the context of 22 Frognal Way, because it has a form that Pank clearly wanted to sit into and form part of the

[1] This experiment culminated in the Robie house in Chicago, completed in 1909. In this house, as in many others, Wright used a shallower, that is to say a flatter, brick than the norm, in a form similar to that used by the Romans, and from which the generic term 'Roman brick' is derived. For Wright, this emphasised the horizontal form of the building, an effect accentuated by his habit of leaving the horizontal mortar joints in their natural colour, with the vertical joints in coloured mortar to match the brickwork. By emphasising the horizontal joints, Wright was also creating the effect of strata, or of layering of the land in the form of the house itself.

landscape of the garden. However, the materiality of the building has always been problematic, as has been outlined above, and this was partly because Pank was not involved in with the construction of the building.

3.12 The rotunda would also benefit from a more horizontal form of brick, and such a brick would give this key element of the building a better sense of scale.

3.13 We looked at various options for the format of the Roman brick to be used and after various drawn studies we concluded that the optimum profile of a new brick for this house was 50mm x 490mm. After subsequently erecting sample brick panels on site, and in consultation with the Conservation Area officer it has now been determined that the optimum brick size for the replacement bricks is 52mm x 329.5mm.

3.14 Changing the external brickwork would also allow a higher standard of insulation to be installed between the new brickwork and the retained internal blockwork.

3.15 It should be noted that the proposal to change the brickwork extends to the front boundary wall onto Frognal Way, which we believe was constructed at the same time as the house itself.

3.16 It does not, however, extend to the boundary walls on the north, east and south sides of the site, where there are historic walls that relate more to the adjacent properties than to No. 22.

3.17 Having discussed the matter with the project's structural engineers Price & Myers, the changing of the brickwork would be undertaken in a series of stages once the lower ground floor structural works were complete, and prior to the installation of the new roof coverings.

3.18 A detailed Method Statement has been prepared by the applicant's contractor Pavehall plc, which shows the sequences by which the existing brickwork will be replaced one wall at a time. This Method Statement forms part of this planning application.

3.19 It is suggested that this Method Statement and the AP(a) drawings form part of a Section 106 agreement in the grant of any planning permission.

3.20 We believe that we have considered the architectural, historic and conservation area issues in formulating these proposals, and we feel that they will result in a significant improvement to the property, and that they will preserve and enhance the conservation area.

APPENDIX I :

Examples of brick types and coursing exposed on site

APPENDIX II :
Minutes of Site Meeting 26 August 2010

APPENDIX III :

Samples of brick commissioned from The York Handmade Brick Co. Ltd.
showing colour options developed

APPENDIX IV :

Sample control panel of the final selected brick, as erected on site

APPENDIX V :

Views of the Robie House in Chicago by Frank Lloyd Wright