

12 Elevations and Materials: Amendment Response

12.6

There are no changes to the materiality and external appearance of the building as part of this proposed amendment.

The structural strategy, glazing, louvres, planters, cladding and collonade remain unchanged. The external path under the collonade wraps around the North side of the building under the consented scheme. However, in the proposed amendment the North section of the external terrace has been removed - refer to Section 6 for further details.

There are also no changes to the proposed roof arrangements as part of this amendment.

13 Heritage Impacts

5.10 Heritage Impacts

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The proposed scheme for the Pears Building will preserve and enhance the setting of the two conservation areas and their character and appearance, the special architectural and historic interest of St Stephen's and other listed buildings, and the setting of the two potential locally listed buildings. The proposal will certainly alter the setting of the heritage assets described above and the character and appearance of the conservation area, but will do so in a positive and enhancing way. No harm will be caused to heritage assets. The proposed scheme will create a new building to accommodate the required facilities which is clearly and confidently contemporary while nonetheless fitting well with, and enhancing, its varied context.

The creation of built form - in the shape of an extremely well-designed and carefully contextual new building - on the site of Heath Strange Garden where it does not presently exist does not, of itself, constitute harm. The setting of the heritage assets and notably St Stephen's Church, does not rely on Heath Strange Garden being an open space. For many years the site, and thus the setting of St Stephen's, was occupied first by villas and then by the former Hampstead General Hospital. Since then, the building of the modern Royal Free Hospital has harmed the setting of St Stephen's.

However, the capacity of St Stephen's to accommodate change in its setting is considerable. Though harmful, the presence of the Royal Free Hospital has not undermined its special architectural and historic interest. It is a powerful and robust building, more than capable of accommodating a new building in closer proximity than the Royal Free Hospital, and whose tower will continue to soar above that new building. The proposed Pears Building will serve to create a new and far superior built environment context for the listed church, screening the church from the ugly backdrop of the main hospital building. It will do the same for the open space of Hampstead Green

The proposed scheme will create a series of tangible public benefits. These are set out and explained in more detail in the Planning Statement and should be examined carefully in that document. These multiple public benefits include the enhancement of the setting of heritage assets. These public benefits can only be delivered from the specific site of Heath Strange Gardens, for the reasons given here and elsewhere, principal among which is the adjacency of the site with existing facilities and the hospital services provided by the Royal Free Hospital. The benefits generated by the scheme more than outweigh what low level of 'harm' might be asserted as being caused by the presence of a new building in proximity to heritage assets.

For these reasons, the proposed scheme complies with national and local policy and guidance for the historic built environment.

Fig 39 Extract of Section 5.8 of the originally submitted Design and Access Statement - Heritage Impacts

11 Heritage Impacts: Amendment Response

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The proposed landscape redesign does not constitute a major change to the character of the proposed scheme and therefore does not alter its heritage impact as described on the opposite page.

What the proposed amendment does is to build on the strength of the consented scheme offering a significant benefit in the widening of the existing footpath to ensure it remains as close as possible to its existing footprint. At the same time the proposal retains the character of the proposed landscaping and its public benefits, including materiality, low level seating and planting proposals.

Where changes to the landscape are expected to affect existing trees, the impact has been noted. In addition, steps have been taken to mitigate the loss of existing trees through identifying opportunities for re-planting and via extending the area of soft green landscaping.

