

Heritage Statement
138-140 Highgate Road,
London NW5 1PB



AHP Architectural
History
Practice

February 2018

138-140 Highgate Road, London NW5 1 PB

Heritage Statement

Prepared for

Design Ventures Highgate Ltd

By

The Architectural History Practice Limited

February 2018

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1. INTRODUCTION

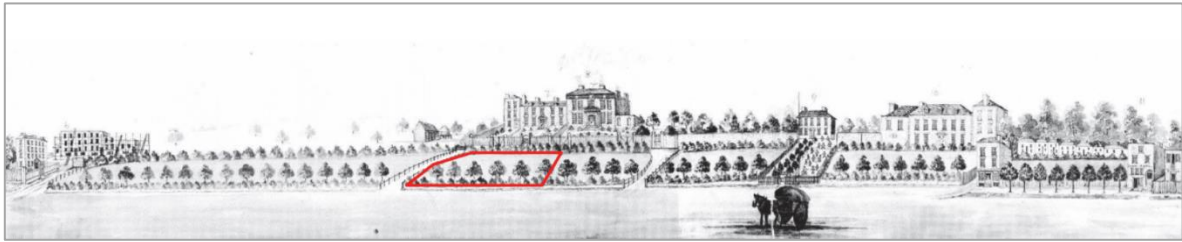


Figure 1: Highgate Road, east side, detail of panorama by J. F. King, c1850 (*Survey of London*)

1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by the Architectural History Practice (AHP) at the request of Washington Young LLP, on behalf of Design Ventures Highgate Ltd. It has been prepared to inform and accompany proposals for a small residential development at 138-140 Highgate Road, to replace the existing petrol filling and service station. The site lies within the Dartmouth Park Conservation Area, designated by the London Borough of Camden in 1992, and affects the setting of nearby Grade II listed buildings.

1.2 The statement describes the history and development of the site and environs, and assesses the contribution made by the site to the character and appearance of the conservation area and to the setting of listed buildings. It then assesses the impact of the proposed development on these heritage assets and their setting. The statement has been written by Andrew Derrick BA AA Dipl Cons IHBC, a director of AHP. It meets the requirement of NPPF paragraph 128, that:

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

1.3 The statement should be read in conjunction with the drawings and other documentation submitted with the application.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

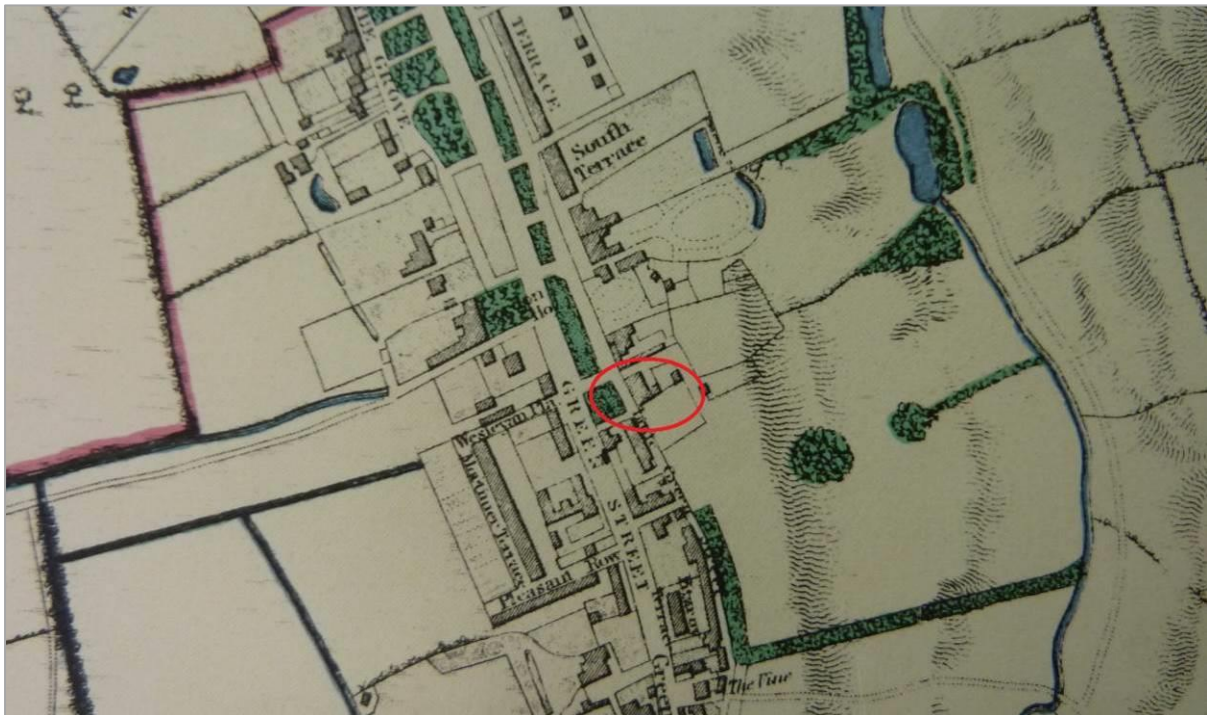


Figure 2: A map of the parliamentary borough of St Marylebone, 1834, with the location of St John's farmhouse highlighted (Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre)

- 2.1 Kentish Town developed during the Middle Ages as ribbon development along the road towards Highgate. Until the mid-nineteenth century, that part of Highgate Road near the current application site was known as Green Street, since it led past the village green.¹ By the late sixteenth-century, the estate (including the application site) was owned by Richard Platt, a brewer. His grandson William Platt bequeathed the estate to St John's College, Cambridge, the college coming into possession in 1686.² This historical connection is today reflected in the name of College Lane, which runs between Denyer House and the application site.
- 2.2 On the site of the present Denyer House was St John's Farmhouse, a house of late eighteenth or early nineteenth-century origins, which was remodelled and enlarged in the 1830s or 1840s (see figure 1). The grassed area to the west of the house was part of the remnant of the common or village green, which in 1834 survived as parcels on either side of Highgate Road (figure 1 and map at figure 2). The land behind these parcels was developed in piecemeal fashion, not least with the laying out of Grove Terrace between 1777 and 1824.

¹ Denford and Hayes, p. 32; Cherry and Pevsner, p. 393.

² Lovell and Marcham, p. 39.

2.3 The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1869 (figure 3) shows that by this time St John's 'farmhouse' had developed into a substantial residence in extensive landscaped grounds, those to the west encompassing the current application site, with gate piers and a sweeping drive (although a public right of way appears to have continued through what is now College Lane). This garden area was part of a chain of green spaces along both sides of Highgate Road. However, the 1869 map also shows the Tottenham and Hampstead Junction Railway line and Highgate Road station close by to the south; completed one year earlier, this line was to act as a major spur to further development and a transformation of the area.

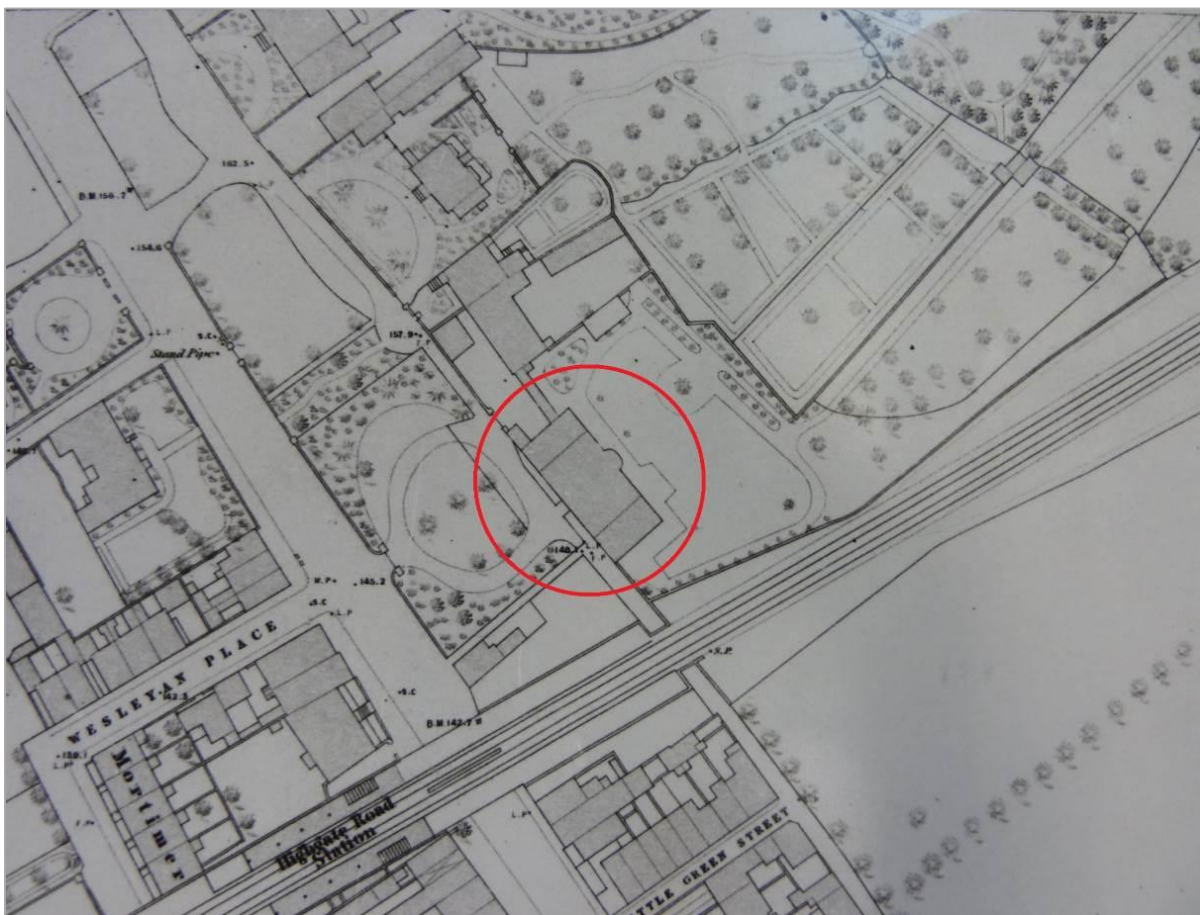


Figure 3: Detail from Ordnance Survey map of 1869, with St John's farmhouse highlighted (Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre)

2.4 St John's farmhouse was demolished at some point between 1880 (when it is shown on a map of the parish of St Pancras, figure 4) and 1895 (when the Ordnance Survey map shows a cleared site, figure 5). On the latter a central axial approach is shown leading from the position of the former gate piers, dividing the plot in two.

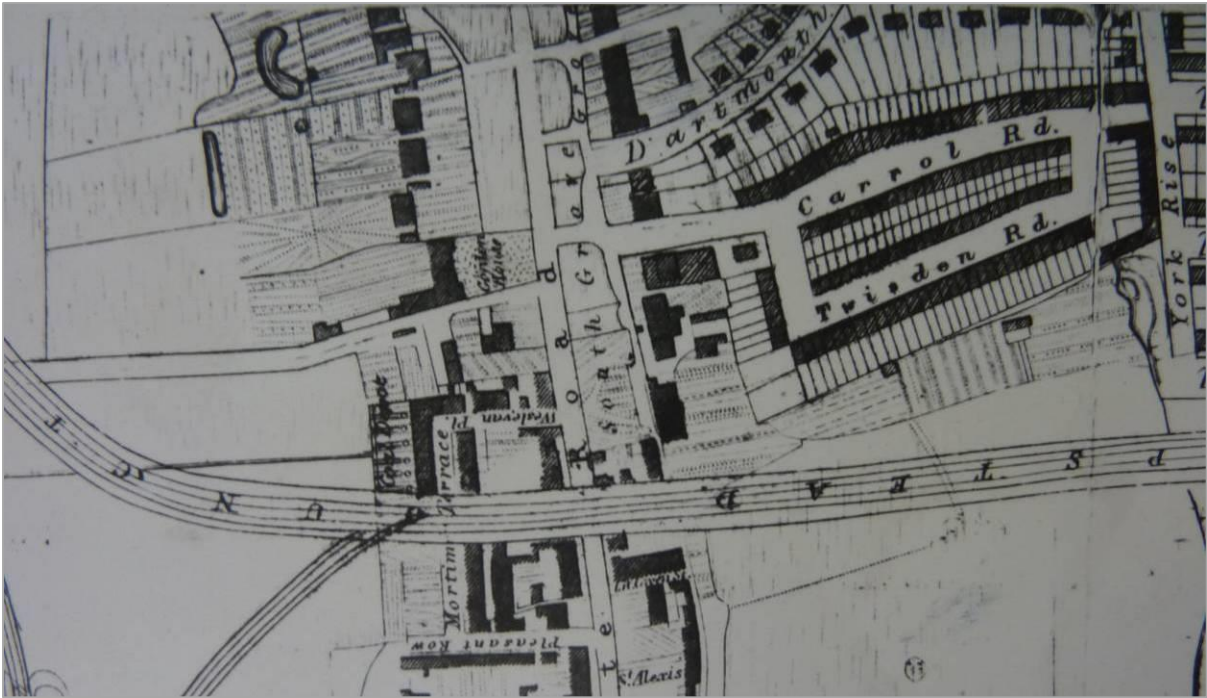


Figure 4: A map of the parish of St Pancras, 1880
(Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre)



Figure 5: Ordnance Survey map of 1895
(Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre)



Figure 6: Municipal map of London (LCC), 1913
(London Metropolitan Archives)

- 2.5 The London County Council’s 1913 municipal map of London (figure 6) does not identify this divided plot as a green space, unlike the remnants of common land to the north, and in the early 1920s a garage was built on its northern part. This first appears in the Post Office directory for 1924: ‘138 – Martin & O’Donnell Brothers, automobile engineers’.³ The site was therefore developed *before* the housing block of Denyer House, which opened in 1936. Both developments are shown on the Ordnance Survey map of the same year (figure 7). That part of the former garden to the south of the axial drive was (and remains) undeveloped.
- 2.6 A garage and petrol station has been on the site ever since, expanding over time. After the Second World War it was known as Maradon Garage (figure 8), but by 1967 it had become Parliament Hill Service Station. In that year planning permission was granted for the erection, and retention for a limited period, of a single-storey workshop, repair and office building (figure 9).⁴ The architects were the well-known commercial firm of R. Seifert & Partners. In 1972, planning permission was given for a canopy over the pump island and for concreting over of part of the landscaped area in front of the service bay.⁵ In 1973 consent was given for raising the level of the rear forecourt, removal of the existing island and pumps and construction of two new pump islands with a new canopy (figure 10).⁶ Again, the design was by R. Seifert & Partners.

³ Post Office Directory, 1924.

⁴ Camden Council, online planning database, planning application E11/13/A/4040.

⁵ Camden Council, online planning database, planning application E11/13/A/14015.

⁶ Camden Council, online planning database, planning application CTP/E11/13/A/16228.

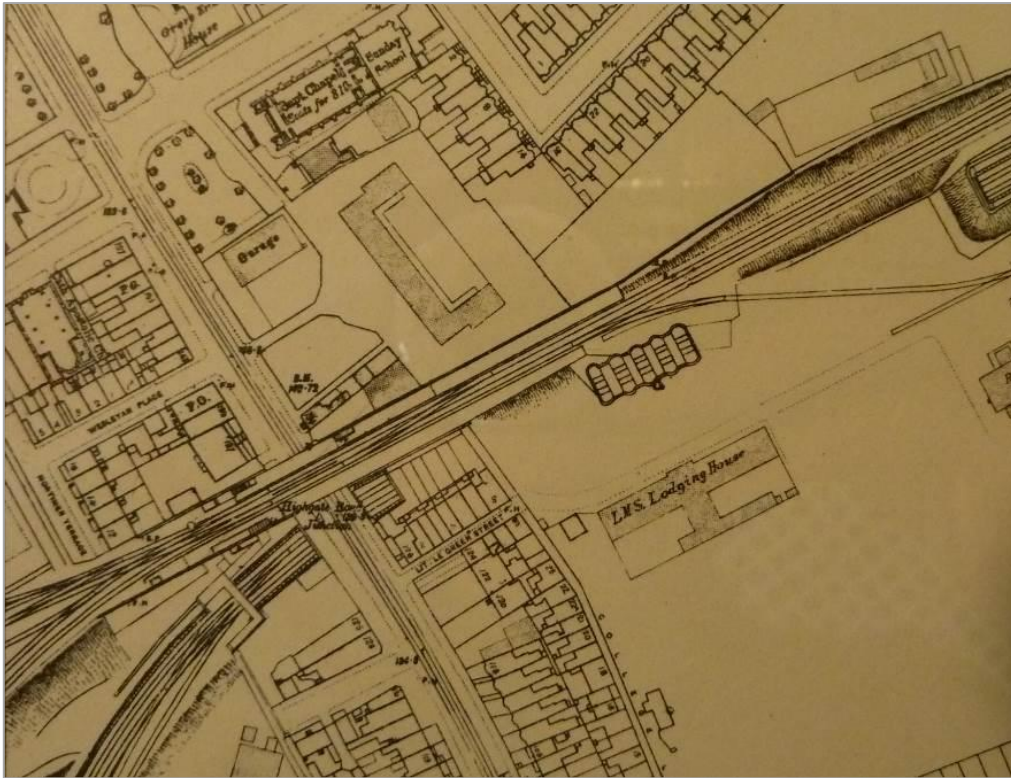


Figure 7: OS map revised by the LCC, 1936
(London Metropolitan Archives)

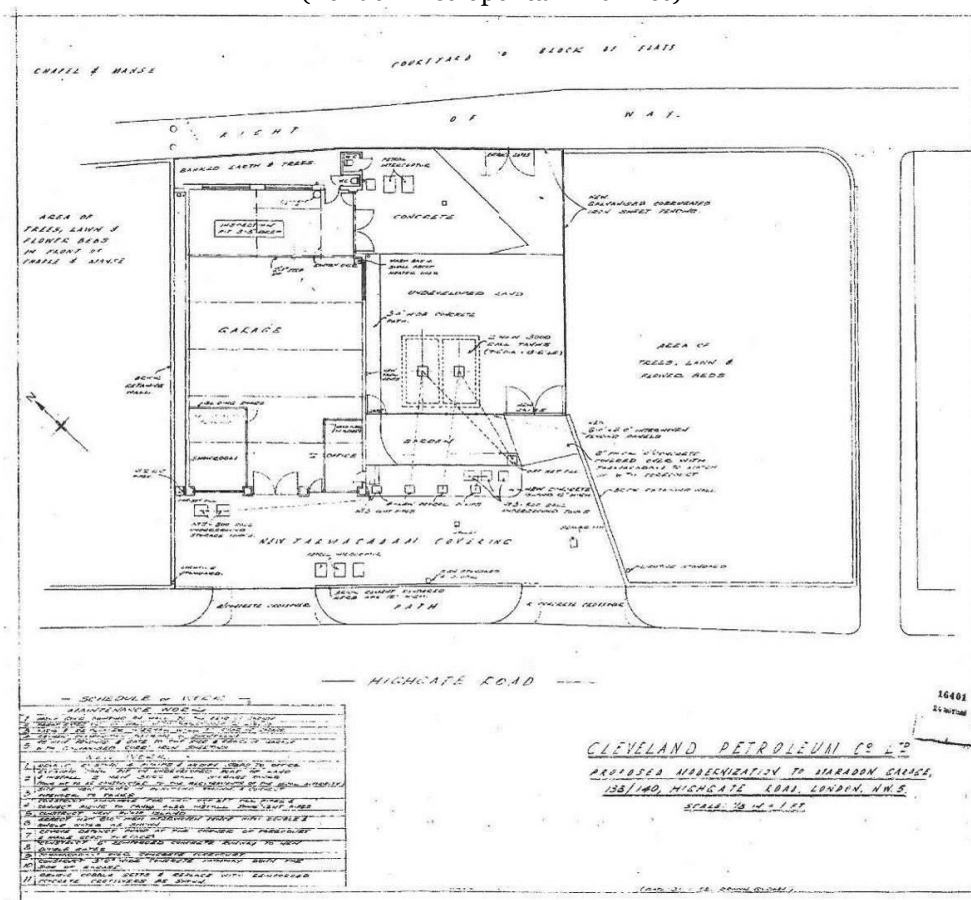


Figure 8: Proposed modernisation of Maradon Garage, 1958
(Camden Council, online planning database, planning application 23367/11401)

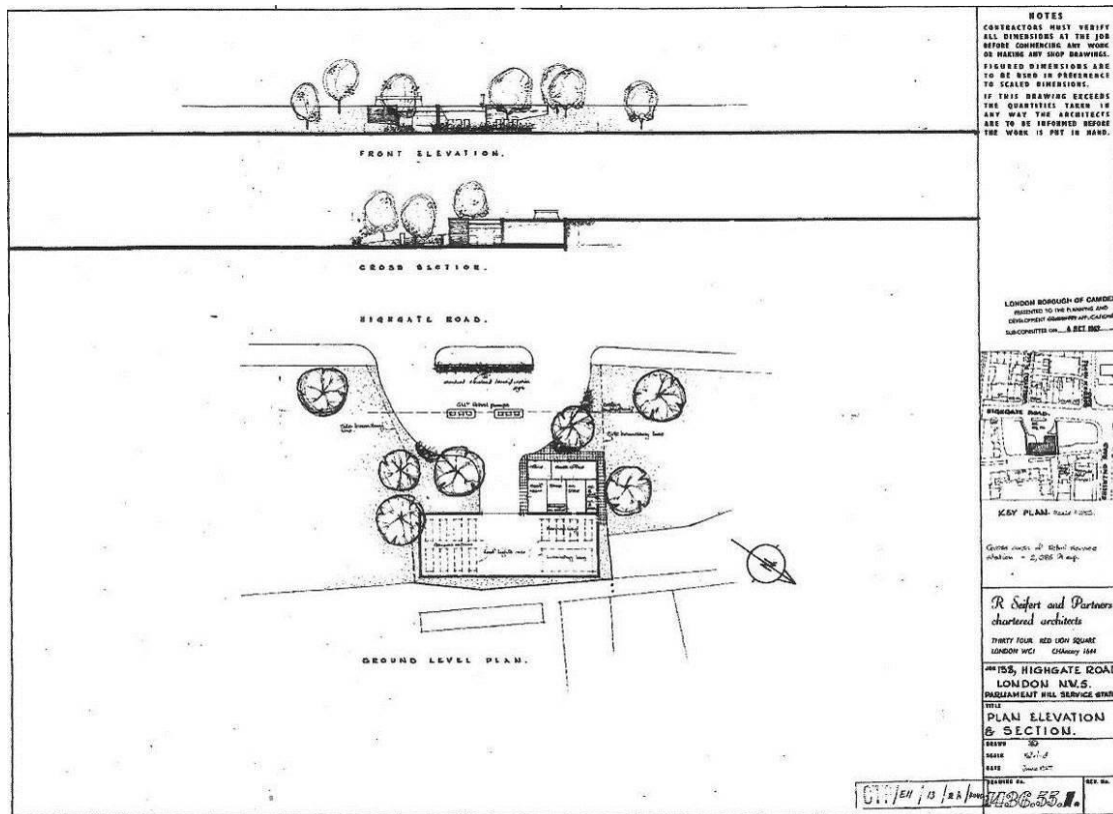


Figure 9: Plan, elevation and section of the proposed redevelopment of the Parliament Hill Service Station, R. Seifert & Partners, 1967
 (Camden Council, online planning database, planning application E11/13/A/4040)

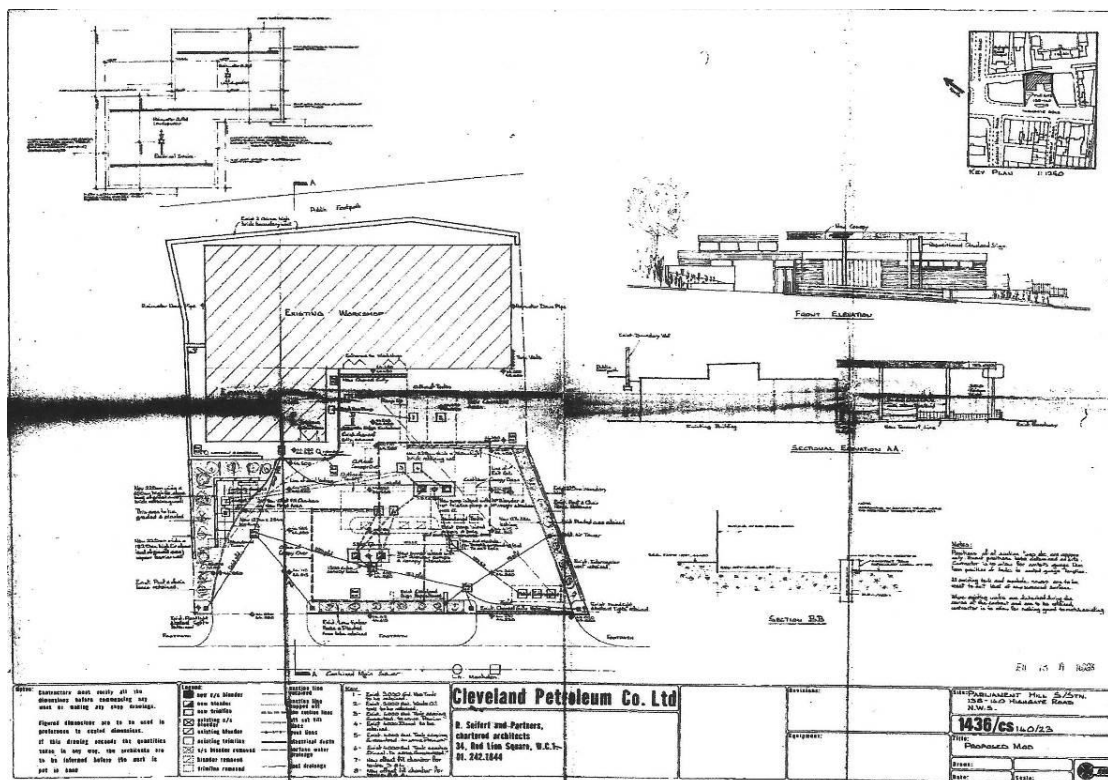


Figure 10: Plan, elevation and section of the proposed alterations to the Parliament Hill Service Station, R. Seifert & Partners, 1973
 (Camden Council, online planning database, planning application CTP/E11/13/A/16228)

3. SIGNIFICANCE



Figure 12: Application site, February 2018

3.1 The application site lies within the Dartmouth Park Conservation Area (Sub-Area 1: Highgate Road). This is described in the Council’s Conservation Area Appraisal (2009) as follows:

This sub-area spans the busy Highgate Road which carries traffic up from Kentish Town and Central London. It starts in the south at College Yard and extends north of Grove Terrace to Croftdown Road.

Undoubtedly Highgate Road dominates this sub-area’s character and appearance with its mix of uses and building types. Unlike other parts of the conservation area there is more of a commercial feel to the sub-area due to the ground floor shops and other commercial activities. This leads to much more activity during the day and to a lesser extent in the evening.

As the Highgate Road is one of the oldest streets in the area this is reflected in the built form which features many fine 18th Century Georgian terrace houses. Development took place in an *ad hoc* manner and this is clearly seen in the age and styles of building that have sprung up along the road. Although differing in terms of their design the buildings are linked by many common themes such as materials and plot width which gives the street an informal character.



Figure 13: Looking north from the application site

- 3.2 North of the railway line, the east side of Highgate Road acquires an open character, with a sequence of green spaces in front of the building line, designated as Green Public Open Space and protected under the London Squares Preservation Act of 1931. These open spaces (figure 13) makes a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and to the setting of nearby listed buildings in Grove Terrace, as well as non-designated heritage assets such as the 1877 former Highgate Road Chapel (now flats) and (to the south) Denyer House. This was built in 1936, was designs by Albert J. Thomas FRIBA and continues the building line established by earlier development, but is on a larger scale. It is designed in the LCC's characteristic interwar neo-Georgian style, with a mansard roof and deck access balconies at the rear. This building also makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area (figures 12 and 14). In front of it is the petrol station and forecourt, identified by the Council as a negative feature in the conservation area. To the south of this is a further railed off green space, owned by Camden Council; this is designated as public open space in the development plan.
- 3.3 In her 2015 report (paragraph 9), the appeal inspector wrote of the petrol station site:

...the functional workshop and plastic canopy do not sit comfortably alongside the generally more attractive and traditionally constructed buildings. Moreover, its position on the Highgate Road frontage makes it conspicuous in near views and this detracts from the strength of the main building line to the east.

- 3.4 While endorsing the council's view that the petrol station and forecourt were negative features in the conservation area, she continued (para.10):

Nevertheless, the petrol station building is set right at the back of the site, leaving the area adjacent to the highway relatively open. It is also single storey and cut into the rising ground so that Denyer House is elevated above it as well as being substantially taller [...]. Whilst the canopy at the appeal site remains an incongruous feature on the frontage, it permits views through the site from north to south and east to west. Thus it is still possible to perceive a degree of connectivity between the areas of green space that the site separates and a clear view of Denyer House from the road remains [...].

- 3.5 The degree of connectivity is diminished by planting and the forecourt structures of the service station (see figures 12 and 14). Nevertheless, it was the loss of the relatively open character and degree of connectivity which led the inspector to conclude that the appeal proposals would result in substantial harm to designated heritage assets and their setting.



Figure 14: View south towards application site

4. CURRENT PROPOSALS: IMPACT ASSESSMENT



Figure 15: Proposed development, Highgate Road elevation
(D*Haus Company)

- 4.1 The current proposals should be seen in the context of the overarching legal requirement of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. Section 66 (1) states that:

In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting [...]

- 4.2 Section 72(1) states that:

...in the exercise of functions under the Planning Acts, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

- 4.3 Setting is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, paragraph 56) as:

The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

- 4.4 NPPF paragraph 126 enjoins local authorities to recognise that designated heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and to conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. Paragraphs 132-4 state:

When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a Grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance [...] should be wholly exceptional. [...] Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

- 4.5 These national legal and policy requirements are reflected in local plan policies.
- 4.6 Please refer to the application drawings prepared by the D*Haus Company, and other planning documentation. The proposals have taken designed to take account of the appeal inspector's findings in 2015, and have been informed by pre-application advice received from officers of Camden Council and the Camden Design Review Panel. A local public consultation exercise also took place on Saturday 24 February 2018.
- 4.7 The proposals involve:
- Demolition of the petrol forecourt buildings, identified as negative features in the conservation area
 - Construction of a terrace of residential houses, their design revised to follow a less complex and more linear form than earlier proposals (following the comments of the Design Review Panel)
 - Also following the comments of the Design Review Panel, the number of new residential units has been reduced to six, and the non-residential element (a café) removed from the proposals
 - The design of the terrace will be a modern reinterpretation of a traditional London brick terrace, like Denyer House representing a sympathetic and imaginative response to the historic context

- The houses will be set back from Highgate Road, thus reclaiming a more open quality and reclaiming the north-south views lost or obscured by the construction of the forecourt structures
- The Highgate Road frontage will be landscaped as a green space, connecting to the public open spaces to north and south
- The entrance to the houses will be from College Lane, creating a mews-like character, and introducing greater life into the street scene here (in place of the modern and featureless brick wall)
- The houses will be built in to the slope of the site, thus not impinging on the views towards Denyer House
- No harm to the setting of listed buildings will result; rather, their setting will be enhanced by the design, scale and layout of the new development, and the proposed landscaping.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The application site was once an open space, the remnant of common land, but became part of the former garden of St John's farmhouse in the late eighteenth or early-nineteenth century. This house was demolished in the late nineteenth century and part of it became a garage in the 1920s. It is therefore nearly 100 years since it ceased to be an open space, and during that time the garage has expanded in an ever more visually discordant manner. These garage structures are negative features in the conservation area, and detract from the setting of nearby listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets.
- 5.2 The current proposals envisage the removal of these structures and their replacement with a new residential terrace development, its design a modern reinterpretation of a traditional London terrace. It will be set back from the road to allow for the north-south views across the open spaces lining the east side of Highgate Road to be preserved and enhanced. New landscaping will connect the area in front of the houses with the public open spaces to north and south. The houses will be built into the slope of the site so as not to appear dominant when experienced from College Lane, or in the views towards Denyer House, and the provision of entrances from College Lane will enliven the street scene here.
- 5.3 The scheme takes account of the criticisms levelled by the appeal inspector against the scheme refused in 2015, and has also incorporated pre-application advice from officers of Camden Council and the Camden Design Review Panel.
- 5.4 The scheme does not seek to preserve the character of this part of the conservation area, since there is little about the present character which demands preservation. Rather, it enhances that character, as well as the setting of nearby heritage assets, by removal of negative buildings and features and their replacement with a development that responds more sensitively to the site in terms of scale, design, location, materials and landscaping.
- 5.5 The scheme therefore accords with the relevant local plan policies and national guidance and legislation. As such it constitutes sustainable development which should, following the advice of NPPF paragraph 14, be approved without delay.

SOURCES

Unpublished

Camden Council, 'Dartmouth Park Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Statement', January 2009

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Lovell, Percy and William McB. Marcham (eds), *Survey of London, vol. 19: The parish of St Pancras part 2: Old St Pancras and Kentish Town* (London: London County Council, 1938)

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