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PROJECT: 16 FROGNAL GARDENS, NW3

DATE: May 2018

DESIGN & ACCEES STATEMENT INCLUDING HERITAGE STATEMENT

REF: FGH/6/DAH  
rev.A

## THE APPLICANTS BRIEF:

To design a stand alone single family house upon a site currently occupied by a block of 3 lock-up garages (Garage Block 2) and adjacent areas, and being at the rear end of the site address 16 Frognal Gardens, NW3. The house expected to be up to 140 q.m GIA comprising 2 or 3 bedrooms, bathrooms, reception living, dining and kitchen, utility and storage plus outdoor amenity space as a bonus.

## THE SITE, 16 FROGNAL GARDENS:

The application site is within the rear grounds of the larger site address 16 Frognal Gardens, the very rear of which is bounded by Holly Walk. The application site being at the rear of 16 Frognal Gardens, therefore in fact abuts Holly Walk rather than Frognal Gardens.

The larger site is occupied by a large brick, red tiled and pitched roof Victorian styled house. The original building has been added to and altered in the meantime including conversion to flats. The original back garden sloped up from Frognal towards Holly Walk, but in the 1960's was terraced and ground made up for the building of the current garages. The rear boundary fence was removed at that time to give access to the forecourt from Holly Walk. A side path connects back to Frognal Gardens.

The application site is located within the Hampstead Conservation Area.

It is identified within the Hampstead Conservation Area Statement (HCSA), Sub-Area Five: Frognal, which backs directly onto Sub-Area Four: which includes the Graveyard Extension alongside Holly Walk and on up past Prospect Place, towards Holly Place and beyond.

There are listed buildings on Prospect Place and Benham's Place up towards Holly Place which lie to the east side of Holly Walk within the visual vicinity of the application site.

The site is also located opposite a Site of Nature Conservation of Borough Importance: CaB108 Hampstead Parish Churchyard running along the east side of Holly Walk.

## THE APPLICATION SITE:

The application site - refer the Location Plan 'red line' - encompasses an area at the rear of 16 Frognal Gardens that is more than just the Garage Block 2 and its immediate adjacent areas. This enlargement beyond the immediate footprint of the proposed new house evolved during the Planning Process, Pre-App and Follow-up. Hampstead Conservation Area Statement (HCSA) implies a broader view to be taken of The Site and its impact upon Holly Walk. The application therefore includes associated work as an integral part of the proposed new house development - all to be seen as a whole.

#### THE PLANNING PROCESS PRE-APP, FOLLOW-UP:

An initial sketch scheme was submitted 16 December 2016 seeking pre-application advice.

#### Pre-Application Advice was issued 08/03/2017 ref. 2016/6943/PRE

The proposed application site at that stage encompassed Garage Block 2 and immediate adjacent areas only. The proposed new house was entered via a small front court off Holly Walk and with an overall height of 2 1/2 storeys over most of the plot and 3 storeys where part sunk 1/2 storey into the made up ground.

#### Follow Up to Pre-Application Advice was issued 16/10/2017 ref. 2017?4522PRE

The principal assessment advice with regard to 'design' can be summarised as follows:

#### Principal of Land Use

The proposed development for residential purposes is welcomed. The unit size proposed is a dwelling size regarded as high priority under Policy H7: 3.189 Table1: 2 and 3 bed units apply.

#### Design and Conservation

The borrowing of the nearby vertical flanking forms hard on the street was regarded as an inappropriate justification and that these established (Georgian) forms should retain dominance in the streetscape and their setting. However, borrowing rectilinear form was considered a positive contextual response.

It was considered that the height at Holly Walk should be reduced to one and a half storeys.

It was advised that massing should be moved back from Holly Walk towards the host property (16 Froggnal Gardens main house) such that the proposed new house be understood as a development in the rear garden of 16 Froggnal Gardens rather than belonging to Holly Walk.

However, the development of the enclosing wall hard on Holly Walk with a visually quite entrance on Holly Walk was thought to be acceptable.

The officer supported the approach with a solid brick base along with the proposed lighter upper storey using timber and glazed elements. And if carried out well using high quality timber, would be seen to complement the unique character along Holly Walk and be sensitive to the preferred garden context.

#### Standard of Residential Accommodation

It was acknowledged that the proposed development would provide a high standard of amenity and a good amount of daylight and sun, along with areas of private amenity space.

It was also pointed out that the proposed GIA could accommodate more than 2 beds (or 2 beds of reduced GIA).

#### Transport and Parking considerations

To provide cycle spaces in line with Policy T1.

To be 'car free' in line with Policy T1.

#### Amenity of surrounding occupiers

Observations were given with regard to daylight/sunlight and reduction in height, though a submitted assessment would be required to fully understand the proposed design impact.

The impact upon 18 Holly Walk flanking windows' outlook was considered likely to be acceptable.

A Further Modified Design was submitted having been invited to do so.

This modified design addressed all of these issues and summarised as follows:

- a red brick wall enclosing the site perimeter with a quiet single entrance gate on Holly Walk.
- the height abutting Holly Walk reduced some more such that at the top high end just 1 1/2 storeys appears above ground level.
- the mass above the brick wall facing Holly Walk pulled back by 90cm.
- timber cladding design to upper floors retained.
- garage Block 1 treatment as character of the proposed house - brick and timber above.
- green roofs fronting Holly Walk and proposed p.v panels to topmost roof.
- the house made that bit smaller at approx. 120sq.m GIA.

Having not received any negative response from the allocated Follow Up Planning and Conservation Officers, it is this scheme that forms the essence of the final developed design but with further principal modifications:

- the upper floor mass facing Holly Walk is pulled back still further approx. 1.7m from the boundary.
- the house designed approx. 0.5m into the ground (approx. 4 steps) to lower the house mass.
- the plan remains at approx. 120sq.m. GIA but with a third bedroom/study.

#### HERITAGE (& CONSERVATION) STATEMENT:

HAMPSTEAD CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENT-SUB AREA FOUR: Holy Hill/Church Row Area

“there is an unsightly garage court behind no.16 Frognal Gardens”

Buildings or features which detract from the character of the area and would benefit from enhancement:

“the open garage court behind 16 Frognal Gardens intrudes on Holly Walk”

- The proposed New House has in this application enhanced its ‘site boundary’ beyond the footprint of the new house to include associated and integral development of the whole frontage to Holly Walk, including designs for the access gate to no.20, access gates to the existing garages forecourt/courtyard, redirected path to and from Frognal Gardens, new red brick boundary wall to shield Garage Block 2, its cladding, and the proposed green roofs.

Listed buildings at Prospect Place, Benham’s Place, Holly Place have characteristics significant to the Conservation Area and should retain their dominance to preserve their Heritage settings. Prospect Place and Benham’s Place are unique exemplars of an important Georgian phase of development in Hampstead Village, and in their scale, massing and presentation of flank walls hard on the street side, are anomalous to the more established townscape of Holly Place and the need to retain dominance in the streetscape to preserve their settings. It would be inappropriate to mirror this scale, massing and arrangement for a new infill house sited in a garden plot. Furthermore, the shifting of such tall, flanking massing to the other side of Holly Walk would result in an overbearing impact and be detrimental to the setting of these listed buildings.

The Pr-App Follow-Up proposal, as previously described, did just that. It had height (2 1/2 storeys) and designed to sit hard to the pavement. The proposal had sought to associate itself with the historic forms, and in that way put itself into their context. HOWEVER, THE ADVICE GIVEN (AS ABOVE) HAS BEEN UNDERSTOOD, AND CONSEQUENTLY THE APPROACH AND PROPOSED DESIGNS IN THIS APPLICATION HAVE BEEN MODIFIED IN RESPONSE. The proposals now submitted understand the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings context and assets in a very different way.

We have taken on board the recommendation to take cues from the principal building on the site including the lower eaves of the host property along with no's 18 and 20 Holly Walk and to move the massing away from the boundary line (Holly Walk) and more towards the host property at 16 Holly Walk. These moves take away the previous effect of being in competition with the tall, flanking mass of the listed buildings and move towards being understood as a secondary development in the rear grounds of 16 Frognaal Gardens rather than a house in its own right addressing Holly Walk. A pedestrian access gate from Holly Walk into the new house property is thought to be acceptable and that this should be a visually quiet entrance if the property is to appear as a rear garden development.

- The proposed new house is designed to a lesser height having been reduced in height by one whole storey, and the ground floor 4 steps into the made up ground.
- The upper floor mass is pulled back from the HollyWalk boundary by approx. 1.7m.
- The highest eaves height of the new house is substantially below the lowest eaves line of the host building and of no.18. The lower eaves height of the new house is lower than the eaves to no.20.

In terms of materiality, officers support the approach of a more solid brick base with a more lightweight upper storey that uses timber and glazed elements to soften the bulk. The host property and other properties south of the site have a Character marked out with red brick and tiles. Red brick boundary treatments are an important characteristic common to several centuries of development in Hampstead.

- The proposed new house takes the red-brick cues in both material and form. The brick wall is proposed built of a red brick in flemish bond giving thickness and bonding character, and of good height so to be seen and understood as a boundary wall, opposed to a low height pavement front garden type of wall. The quiet side gate made out of timber and being styled as a gate rather than as a solid front door, will give suggestion of this being a wall through which the gate leads to another space behind that wall. This will further enhance the design's aim to appear as a house set within back garden grounds. The boundary wall treatment flanking the pavement, will be visually primary within the street setting, and the mass of the house set back, then secondary. We believe that this arrangement of materials and form will result in a streetscape which allows the taller Listed Buildings in the Conservation context to retain their unfolding view as one travels up the hill without competition from the proposed new house development.

It is strongly recommended that any redevelopment should be considered in conjunction with improvements to the external appearance of the south garage range and improvements to the boundary treatment / landscaping.

- The application extends its 'site' to include proposals for the courtyard frontage, the south garage block and also the gate entrance to no. 20 Holly Walk. A design has been developed which whilst retaining these existing necessary functions, makes for a consistent enhancing composition across the whole frontage of the site. The cue is in the approach and design of the new house itself (as outlined above), adopting the same language of solid suitably high red brick boundary wall and lighter timber element seeming to lay behind. The difficult central access gates to the courtyard are designed to appear more as a timber fence, being clad in vertical timber boarding (same as for gates) and following the slope of Holly Walk in the same fashion as those fences to the rear of the back gardens of houses further south down Holly Walk. The visible elevation of the south garage block facing the courtyard is proposed also clad in the same vertical timber cladding system. The only garage door discernible would be Garage 1, and this also remade in the same timber.

The Conservation Area is characterised with greenery towards the south at the Graveyard Extension and in the back gardens of the Froggnal Gardens houses running south from the site.

- The new house has its own landscape external terraces stitched into the arrangement of rooms behind its enclosing brick walls. The roofs of the proposed new house will however be more than a site-wide experience, especially in consideration of the taller properties in close proximity to the west, north and east side of Holly Walk, which will overlook the roofs. In understanding this, we have designed these roofs as levels upon which 'green roof' construction can be distributed around the site, extended across to include a 'green roof' overlay to the south garage block. The views from the surrounding overlooking windows will therefore be enhanced, and the landscaping will also introduce bio-diversity into an erstwhile barren site boundary, resulting in a significant visual and environmental enhancement of the whole site within the Conservation Area and as supplement to the adjacent Site of Nature Conservation of Borough Importance: CaB108.

#### THE DESIGN:

Much of the final design forming this application is grounded in the both the Planning Process Pre-App and Follow Up and then further in response to the Heritage (& Conservation) Statement as above.

#### New House Accommodation:

The proposed new House comprises 2 bedrooms,. 1 bedroom/study, 2 bathrooms, living room, kitchen/ dining, utility and storage - along with outdoor amenity areas. There is no off street car parking. Enclosed bike and bins store are provided. Access is via a 'quiet' gate off Holly Walk leading to a concealed entrance court and the house front door.

#### New House Plan:

The plan is arranged over two split levels. This arrangement enables lower levels to follow the original slope of the land down towards the host building thus reducing overall heights and impact upon nearby adjacent properties. The reception rooms are placed at the upper levels and the bedrooms below. This maximises views from and sun into the reception rooms. The main reception living room takes particular advantage of the green Graveyard views and is set back from and also partially screened from the pavement with the timber cladding system. The lower bedrooms all enjoy windows to outdoor spaces.

#### New House Enclosing Wall;

The house is enclosed on all four sides rising from ground level with a solid red-brick wall. There are many potentially adverse impacts which this wall then overcomes in a single positive gesture and expression. It secures privacy both into and from adjoining residential properties. It acts as a sound barrier, not least from the adjacent parking courtyard. The red-brick wall takes its cue from the big red host building and red brick boundary treatments which are an important characteristic over centuries of development in Hampstead.

#### New House Outdoor Areas:

The rooms and the staircase are arranged around an external terraced open amenity space. This is a precious space which enables the house to breath. All principal rooms have both a large patio door and also a small ventilating window let onto the outdoor spaces. The upper floor reception rooms are further enhanced with small interconnected balcony terraces within this open space. There is scope for greenery, planting beds, hanging pots to supplement the proposed green roofs.

#### Materials:

The red-brick enclosing walls have been described and to be built of carefully considered brick, mortar and bonding. The upper structures are proposed of highly insulated timber construction and vertical board cladding system. The cladding timbers are envisaged out of high quality graded timber, untreated naturally weathering, such as iroko or w. red cedar. Windows are proposed ppc metal with slim lines and framing. The detailing overall is envisaged to be technically contemporary and precisely articulated to ensure long life and environmental performance above the norm standards. The roofs are flat to falls with 'green roof' build-ups and the top roof housing pv. panels set on a gravel finish. Guarding and railings are proposed traditional metal painted using simple sections as slim as possible. (note: to provide exact material specifications is not practical at this stage and is presumed that opportunity to deposit and seek approval of materials would be attached to permissions granted)

#### Garage Block 1

The visible elevation facing the parking courtyard is proposed refaced with timber cladding to be same as used for the new house. The elevation facing Holly Walk to be shielded with the red-brick boundary wall treatment - seen as a whole approach to the conservation area enhancement design. A small gravel topped canopy decks the in between space housing a bin store associated with the host building. This canopy also marks the existing redesigned entrance to 20 Holly Walk along with bike and bin store. The design purposefully scales down the red-brick wall and lets the timber character increase in line with the new proposed same timber clad sliding gates to the parking courtyard.

#### ACCESS:

It is proposed that access is designed in accordance with the Building Regulations Part M4(1).

#### CONCLUSION:

Though not contained within the Camden Local Plan document policies, The Hampstead Conservation Area Statement, Sub Area Four makes quite clear that the the garage court behind 16 Frognal Gardens would benefit from enhancement. The applicant has in this application given rare opportunity for that to happen. In commissioning the proposed development and through the ensuing planning process, the applicant has taken on board the proper need to enhance the whole frontage to Holly Walk and the applicant's commitment to that is confirmed through means of this application.

The Camden Local Plan requires proper attention to the needs of Conservation Areas and heritage assets in general. The applicant has invested in and received much energy and response from the allocated planning and conservation officers and their guidance has been thoroughly considered and stage by stage been fully adopted into the designs in support of this application.

We have acknowledged the proximity of a Site of Nature Conservation of Borough Importance in making greenery an integral part of our design.

We have sought to design a new house that can stand on its own two feet and in doing so can stand on its own plot, and that the plot it sits in is clearly seen to be at the back (the once back garden) of its host building's demise, 16 Frognal Gardens.

We have sought to understand the character and context of the conservation area and nearby listed buildings, and in listening to the allocated Conservation Officer observations have made the right moves to reduce the mass impact upon Holly Walk thereby avoiding overbearing and obstruction of views up and down and that the historic grain be preserved.

We have worked hard to retain a viable house development to the applicant's terms yet not let this overrule our obligations towards respecting the planning process. We firmly believe the proposed design supporting this application is in compliance with Camden planning policies when applied to the particulars of this really rather difficult unforgiving site. We are encouraged to know we have made a design which has minimal impact upon neighbouring residential properties especially with regard to light, views, and privacy.

We do believe the design, as is committed to the site as a whole, is a positive enhancement in its self, and then enhancement of the conservation area within which it sits, and thereby for Hampstead as a whole. It is our opinion that the new house will be a fine, contemporary dwelling and in its enhanced setting, a comfortable and peaceful home.

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