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# 1.0 Introduction

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1.1 This Heritage Assessment has been prepared on behalf of The Turner Stokes Family and the Springer Family in support of the application for planning permission for the proposed development at no. 55 Fitzroy Park (referred to as 'the Site') in the London Borough of Camden (LB Camden). The proposed development comprises the demolition of all existing buildings on the Site and their replacement with five detached homes (Class C3), referred to as the 'Proposed Development'.

1.2 The report sets out the following:

- Relevant legislation, national and local heritage policy and guidance.
- A description of the Site and the existing house and their heritage and townscape context.
- An assessment of the significance of the Highgate Village Conservation Area, and the contribution of the existing house and the Site to this, in light of heritage legislation, national and local heritage policy and guidance, and the wider heritage context.
- An assessment of the architectural, urban design and townscape quality of the new houses.
- An assessment of the effect of the Proposed Development on townscape and heritage significance, in light of heritage legislation, national and local heritage policy and guidance.
- Conclusions.

## 2.0 Heritage legislation, policy and guidance

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- 2.1 This section contains a brief overview of aspects of national, London-wide and local planning policies and guidance that are relevant to the consideration of heritage matters.

### **The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990)**

#### ***Conservation Areas***

- 2.2 Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that when considering applications for planning permission for buildings or land in a conservation area, *'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area'*.

#### ***Listed buildings***

- 2.3 Section 66(1) of the Act states, *"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 or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses."*

### **National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)**

- 2.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. Taken together, these policies articulate the Government's vision of sustainable development, which should be interpreted and applied locally to meet local aspirations.
- 2.5 Section 12 of the NPPF deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment. It applies to the heritage-related consent regimes under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, plan-making and decision-taking.
- 2.6 Heritage assets are defined in Annex 2 as a *'building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).'*

- 2.7 The NPPF requires an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, including any contribution made by their setting (para 128). It goes on to say that *'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.'*
- 2.8 In paragraph 131, the NPPF identifies three key factors local authorities should take into account in determining applications:
- *'the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
  - *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
  - *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*
- 2.9 Paragraph 132 states that in assessing impact, the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be given to its conservation. It notes that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting.
- 2.10 The setting of a heritage asset is defined in Annex 2 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.'*
- 2.11 Paragraph 133 states that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss (or that other stated conditions apply).
- 2.12 Paragraph 134 states 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.
- 2.13 Paragraph 135 states the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset requires a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
- 2.14 Paragraph 138 states that 'Not all elements of a...Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance' and that 'Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the

Conservation Area ...should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 133 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 134, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area...as a whole.'

***National Planning Policy Framework – Draft text for consultation (2018)***

- 2.15 An updated NPPF was issued for consultation in March 2018. The draft policies in respect of heritage considerations are similar to those in the existing NPPF.

***Planning Practice Guidance, March 2014***

- 2.16 The national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was launched by the Government in March 2014 and provides a web-based resource in support of the NPPF.
- 2.17 The PPG includes a section entitled '*Design*'. This explains, inter alia, the importance of good design, the planning objectives that good design can help to achieve, the qualities of a well-designed place, and how buildings and the spaces between them should be considered.
- 2.18 The planning objectives of design are stated to include promoting, inter alia, local character; safe, connected and efficient streets; a network of green spaces and public places; and cohesive and vibrant neighbourhoods.
- 2.19 In terms of the qualities that contribute to a well-designed place, the PPG states that a well-designed place should:
- *"Be functional;*
  - *Support mixed uses and tenures;*
  - *Include successful public spaces;*
  - *Be adaptable and resilient;*
  - *Have a distinctive character;*
  - *Be attractive; and*
  - *Encourage ease of movement".*
- 2.20 The PPG identifies the following considerations which may be relevant in terms of how buildings and the spaces between them should be considered:
- *"Layout - the way in which buildings and spaces relate to each other;*
  - *Form - the shape of buildings;*
  - *Scale - the size of buildings;*
  - *Detailing - the important smaller elements of building and spaces; and*
  - *Materials - what a building is made from".*

2.21 The PPG includes a section entitled '*Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*'. This considers the factors that should inform decision taking about developments that would affect heritage assets. It notes that "*Heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset, and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals*".

2.22 In relation to consideration of 'harm' in conservation areas, the PPG states that:

*'An unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to a conservation area is individually of lesser importance than a listed building (paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework). If the building is important or integral to the character or appearance of the conservation area then its demolition is more likely to amount to substantial harm to the conservation area, engaging the tests in paragraph 133 of the National Planning Policy Framework. However, the justification for its demolition will still be proportionate to the relative significance of the building and its contribution to the significance of the conservation area as a whole.'* (Paragraph: 018 Reference ID: 18a-018-20140306)

2.23 In relation to public benefits, the PPG states that:

*'Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress as described in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 7). Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and should not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits.*

*Public benefits may include heritage benefits, such as:*

*sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting  
reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset  
securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation'*

2.24 In respect of non-designated heritage assets, the PPG states, under the heading 'What are non-designated heritage assets and how important are they?', that they are 'buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting

consideration in planning decisions but which are not formally designated heritage assets. In some areas, local authorities identify some non-designated heritage assets as 'locally listed'.

- 2.25 In respect of non-designated heritage assets, the PPG does not provide an explicit answer to the question 'how important are they'. In a recent appeal case, however, (APP/D3830/W/15/3137838), the Inspector considered the effects of a proposed development on the significance of a listed building and also on non-designated heritage assets, and with regard to the non-designated heritage assets, found that '*For these assets the same tests do not apply as for listed buildings and any harm should make little difference to the overall balance*'.

### **Regional planning policy**

#### ***The London Plan – Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London, 2016***

- 2.26 The London Plan is '*the overall strategic plan for London, setting out an integrated economic, environmental, transport and social framework for the development of London over the next 20-25 years*.' The policies most relevant to townscape, conservation and visual assessment are contained in Chapter Seven 'London's Living Places and Spaces'. The London Plan was updated in March 2016 to include the Minor Alterations to the London Plan (MALP).
- 2.27 Policy 7.4 expands on the theme of local character and states that '*Development should have regard to the form, function, and structure of an area, place or street and the scale, mass and orientation of surrounding buildings*'.
- 2.28 Policy 7.6 on architecture states that '*Architecture should make a positive contribution to a coherent public realm, streetscape and wider cityscape. It should incorporate the highest quality materials and design appropriate to its context*.' It goes on to set out a list of requirements of new buildings and structures including, inter alia, that they should be '*of the highest architectural quality*'; they should '*be of a proportion, composition, scale and orientation that enhances, activates and appropriately defines the public realm*'; they should include details and materials that '*complement, not necessarily replicate*' local architectural character; they should not cause '*unacceptable harm to the amenity of surrounding land and buildings, particularly residential buildings*' which is said to be particularly important for tall buildings; and they should '*optimise the potential of sites*'.
- 2.29 Policy 7.8 'Heritage Assets and Archaeology' states that '*Development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural details*'.



## Local planning policy

### The Camden Local Plan 2017

- 2.30 The Camden Local Plan was adopted in 2017 and replaced the Core Strategy and Camden Development Policies documents. It aims to ensure that Camden has policies which will respond to changing circumstances and help to deliver the Camden Plan.
- 2.31 **Policy D1** on 'design' states that development in the borough should respect local context and character, and preserve heritage assets in accordance with Policy D2. It also notes that the development must preserve significant and protected views.
- 2.32 **Policy D2** on 'heritage' aims to preserve and enhance heritage assets and their settings. It states, with relation to designated heritage assets:

*'The Council will not permit the loss of or substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, including Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*

- a. the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;*
- b. no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;*
- c. conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- d. the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*

*The Council will not permit development that results in harm that is less than substantial to the significance of a designated heritage asset unless the public benefits of the proposal convincingly outweigh that harm.'*

- 2.33 It goes on to state that, with regards to conservation areas:

*'In order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the Council will take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management strategies when assessing applications within conservation areas.*

*The Council will:*

*e. require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area;*  
*f. resist the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area;*  
*g. resist development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character or appearance of that conservation area; and*  
*h. preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character and appearance of a conservation area or which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage.'*

- 2.34 The section on listed buildings states that the Council will “*resist development that would cause harm to significance of a listed building through an effect on its setting*”.

### ***Supplementary Planning Documents and guidance***

#### *Camden Planning Guidance*

- 2.35 The Camden Planning Guidance gives additional advice and information on how the Council will apply the planning policies in the Camden LDF, including those policies relating to development within conservation areas. Updates in 2015 related to design (CPG1) and updates in 2014 related to non-designated heritage assets and the local list.
- 2.36 CPG1 states that ‘ Non-designated heritage assets may either be identified as part of the planning process (e.g. pre-application process) or on Camden’s Local List.’ In respect of the local list it states that ‘In order to ensure that the identification of non-designated heritage assets is consistent and that their significance is properly considered, the selection criteria, set out below, were developed and adopted in November 2012.’
- 2.37 The criteria are (1) architectural significance, (2) historical significance, (3) townscape significance, and (4) social significance. An explanation of each criterion is given. To be considered for inclusion on the Local List nominations should satisfy a minimum of two criteria with at least one of them being either criterion 1 or 2.

#### *Highgate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy*

- 2.38 The Highgate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (referred to as the ‘Appraisal’) was adopted in October 2007. The document describes the character and appearance or significance of the Conservation Area and sets out a management strategy for its future and is referred to in the following sections of this report. Reference is made to it in sections 3 and 4.

## Other guidance

- 2.39 The HE 'Advice note 1: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' (2016), suggests a number of questions to assess the value of an unlisted building to the significance of a conservation area, provided its historic form and values have not been eroded:

*“Is it the work of a particular architect or designer of regional or local note?”*

*Does it have landmark quality?*

*Does it reflect a substantial number of other elements in the conservation area in age, style, materials, form or other characteristics?*

*Does it relate to adjacent designated heritage assets (DHA) in age, materials or in any other historically significant way?*

*Does it contribute positively to the setting of adjacent designated heritage assets?*

*Does it contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces, including exteriors or open spaces with a complex of public buildings?*

*Is it associated with a designed landscape e.g. a significant wall, terracing or garden building?*

*Does it individually, or as part of a group, illustrate the development of the settlement in which it stands?*

*Does it have significant historic association with features such as the historic road layout, burgage plots, a town park, or landscape feature?*

*Does it have historic associations with local people or past events?*

*Does it reflect the traditional functional character or former uses in the area?*

*Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the area?”*

## 3.0 The Site and its heritage context

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- 3.1 The Site lies towards the southern end of Fitzroy Park, a private road which runs between The Grove and Millfield Lane in Highgate, in the London Borough of Camden. Highgate West Hill lies to the east. Fitzroy Park and Highgate West Hill follow the same broad alignment, running north-east / south-west at the top (north), and north-west / south-west towards the bottom (south). The 214 bus routes run along Highgate West Hill.
- 3.2 The Site is on the west side of Fitzroy Park and backs onto Hampstead Heath. The Site lies within the Highgate Conservation Area.

### The Site

- 3.3 The Site slopes down from Fitzroy Park to Milford Lane in the south. It is occupied by a 1950s house and a number of associated outbuildings and greenhouses set in a large garden plot with a pond, on the west side of Fitzroy Park. It is described in the Council's Appraisal as follows, '*No 55 is a flat-roofed two-storey red brick 1950s dwelling, with casement and tilt-and-turn painted softwood windows. There is a slightly later two-storey extension on the northern side of the property. The house is set in generous gardens containing a sizeable pond, which stretch down to the northern stretch of Millfield Lane as it skirts the Heath*'.



Figure 1: Front façade of no. 55

- 3.4 The house and most of the other structures are located close to the road side, but are screened to a large degree by the planting along the boundary (when in leaf). There is a hard-surfaced tennis court in the south-west corner of the garden, towards Milford Lane. The Site is screened by a tall boundary fence and planting along the boundary to Millfield Lane, which runs up to the Heath to the west of the Site. There are two existing access points to the site, one on Millfield Lane and one on Fitzroy Park.



Figure 2: The Site, viewed from the rear garden

- 3.5 The history of the Site and its context are considered below. The contribution of the existing house and its Site to the significance of the Highgate Conservation Area are considered in section 4.

### **Historical development of the area**

- 3.6 The village of Highgate was originally a hamlet which was part of the Bishop of London's estate from the 7th century, before becoming divided between the parishes of St Pancras and Hornsey. The area was used for hunting by the Bishops from 1227 until the 1530s, when Henry VIII confiscated the church lands.
- 3.7 A route leading northwards from London, around the area of Highgate Hill, was opened as a toll road in 1386 by the Bishop of London. The tollgate at the top of the hill (at the location of the present day Gatehouse public house at the junction of North Hill and Hampstead Lane) is believed to have given

Highgate its name<sup>1</sup>. The tollgate was closed in 1876 and was removed in 1892. In Highgate Village, there is evidence of buildings existing from the 15<sup>th</sup> century from the Canteloves manor court rolls<sup>2</sup>. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth I in the latter half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Highgate Hill was developed as a main route and by this time there were five licenced inns, suggesting a high number of travellers along this route. By the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries there was some development along Highgate Hill, which was a popular area for the wealthy to build country retreats. Until the construction of West Hill in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, Millfield Lane (to the west of the Site) was the main route linking Hampstead Road and Highgate Road.

- 3.8 By the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, the first large brick houses had been built, such as nos. 1-6 The Grove (built by William Blake to raise money for an orphanage)<sup>3</sup>. The 18<sup>th</sup> century saw the main period of development in the area and the hamlet of Highgate expanded into a small town. The town was centred around the ponds at Pond Square, which were created in 1845 and supplied drinking water until they were filled in, in 1864. The spread of the town was limited by the large estates facing the Heath. Millfield Lane had a few cottages and farm buildings by this time, and large mansions were built, such as the Palladian villa of Fitzroy House.
- 3.9 Fitzroy House was built c.1780 for General Charles Fitzroy, Lord Southampton. It stood on the site of Sherricks Hole Farm, whose lands covered the south slope of the ridge between Highgate and Kenwood. In 1811 the house was acquired by the Duke of Buckingham. Fitzroy House was demolished in 1828 and the land was sold in lots. Fitzroy Park (the route) was originally the carriageway to Fitzroy House<sup>4</sup>.
- 3.10 During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, smaller houses were built amongst the larger, 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings and Highgate remained a desirable place to stay. Highgate West Cemetery dates from 1838 and was consecrated in 1839 by the Bishop of London, after which it became immediately successful. The large mansions of The Elms (listed grade II as is its lodge) and Beechwood (both designed by George Basevi) were built in the grounds of the former Fitzroy House. These can be seen on the 1896 OS map below. By the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, the benefits of close proximity to Hampstead Heath had resulted in the building of larger villas on the south facing slopes on land that was previously market gardens.

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<sup>1</sup> Weinreb, B., et al. (2008): *The London Encyclopaedia*. London: Macmillan – p.399

<sup>2</sup> London Borough of Camden (2007): *Highgate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy*. P.8

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p.8

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p.9

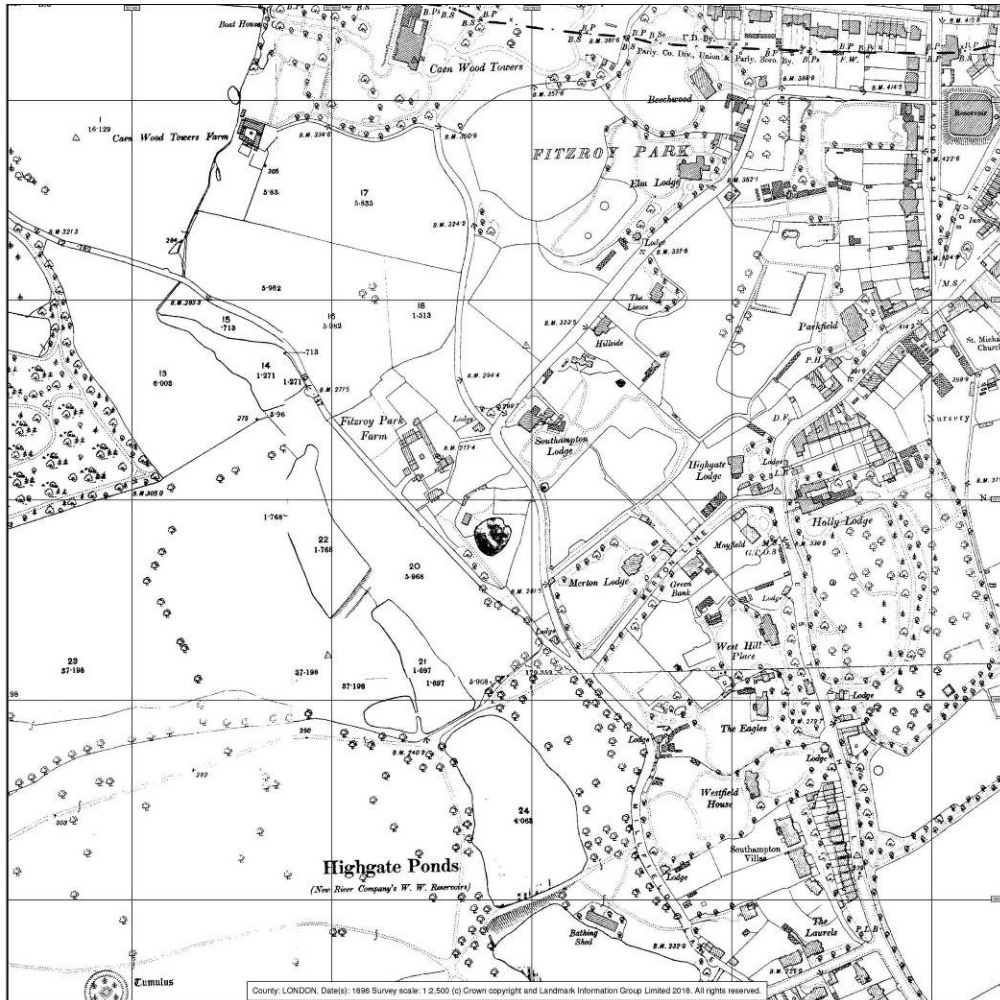


Figure 3: 1896 OS Map

- 3.11 The 1896 OS map (above) illustrates how the area around the Site was largely fields or grounds associated with large houses, on the edge of Hampstead Heath. The Fitzroy Park Farm buildings can be seen (on the site of the current bowling Club House and Fitzroy Farm) with a patchwork of relatively small fields or enclosures running down to The Lodge to the south, at the junction of Fitzroy Park and Millfield Lane. The pond is evident, and the Site is shown as divided into a number of smaller plots, the larger two of these to the south possibly separated by a drain. At this time, there were no houses on either side of the southern end of Fitzroy Park in the area around the Site.
- 3.12 During the 20th century, development continued in the area, although Fitzroy Park retained the character of a country lane until the latter half of the century. Many of these houses have become positive and valued additions to the conservation area and The Highgate Conservation Area Appraisal notes that after the Second World War, houses were built in the Fitzroy Park, Millfield Lane area, as well as in the Village, several designed by architects as their own homes. These include nos. 8A and 10 Fitzroy Park.

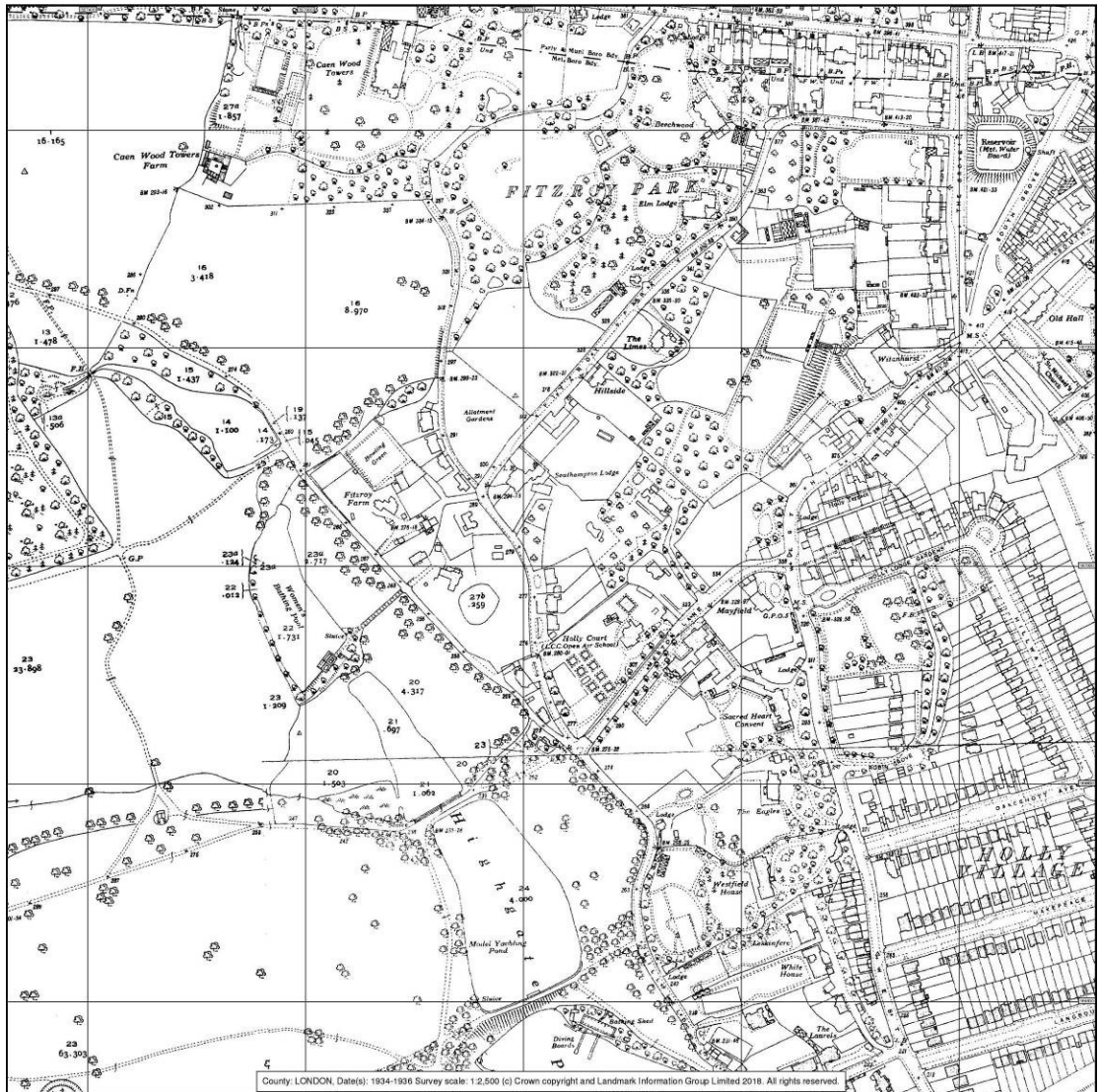


Figure 4: 1934-36 OS Map

3.13 The pace of development had picked up by the 1930s, with regular streets of semi-detached houses to the west at Holly Village. The area around Fitzroy Park remained relatively consistent, with a number of large detached houses appearing along the street; including Sunbury, Ashridge and Kenview close to the street edge on the opposite side of the Site (these are set close to each other); and Fitzroy Lodge directly south of the Site. The Water House, close to the north-east side of the pond was also built by this time (changing the Site boundary in this location). The extent of the farm has reduced and the Bowling Green has appeared at this time. A note from the Camden Archives, dated 1941<sup>5</sup> states that the North London Bowling Club acquired the land incrementally from 1891 onwards.

<sup>5</sup> Walton, W.A., (1941): *North London Bowling Club: Fifty Years*. Camden Archives



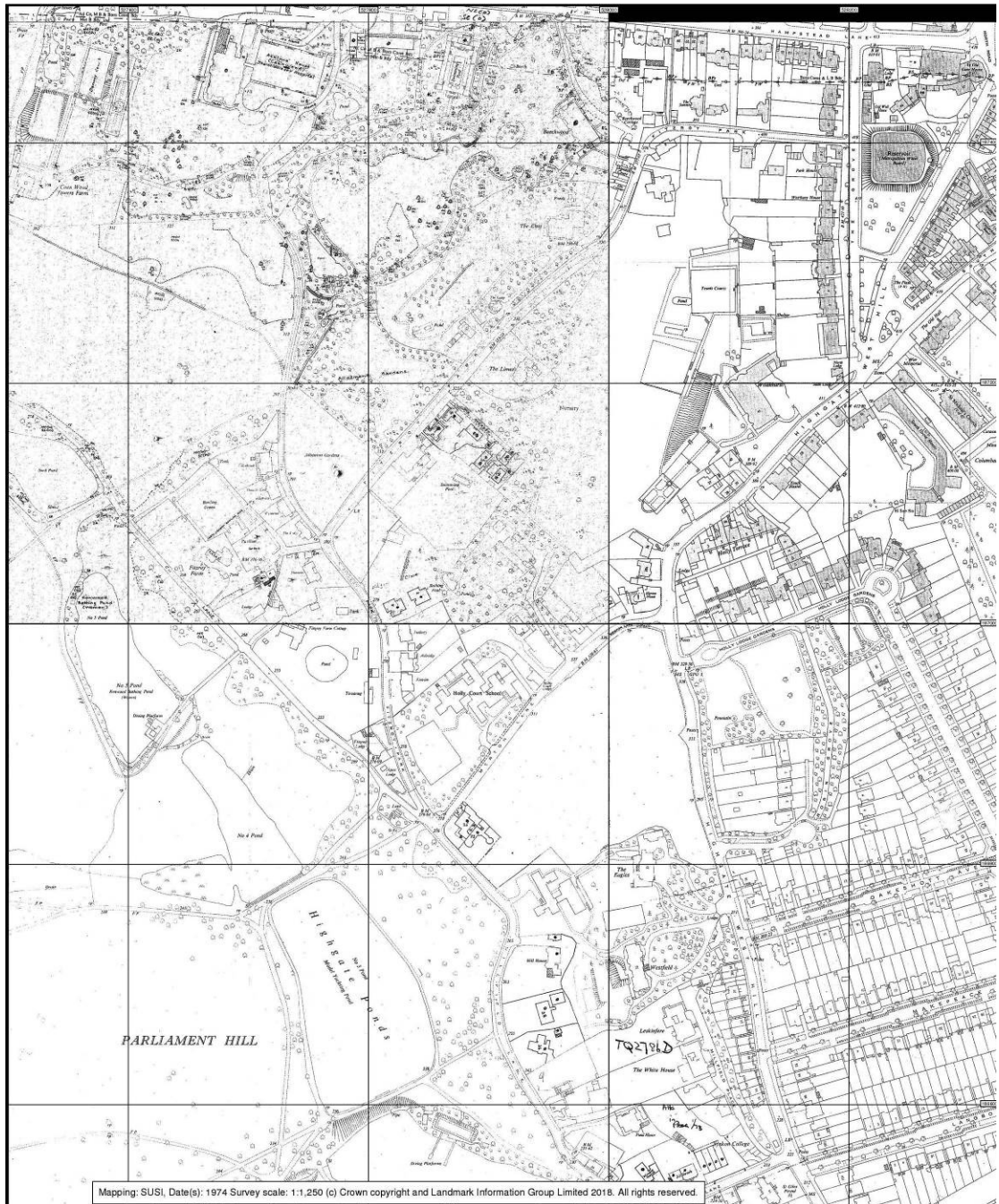


Figure 5: 1974 OS Map

- 3.14 The 1974 OS map shows the existing house on Site (built in the 1950s) and some of its out buildings, as well as Fitzroy Close, a side street to the north-east close to the Site. The pattern of infill continued in the 1960s with six houses on The Hexagon, to the north-east of the Site (built to designs by Leonard Michaels); and no. 53, a modest house adjoining the Site to the north. However, even at this time, much of the area remained open fields or grounds, illustrating that the majority of the infill housing seen today postdates the designation of the conservation area.

- 3.15 In the 1980s (after the conservation area was designated) the Highfields Grove development was built in the grounds of the grade II\* listed Witanhurst, and the Westhill Park scheme was built to the east of Merton Lane. More recently a new house was built on land immediately south of North London Bowling Club, and no. 51 was redeveloped. However, the historic network of roads, lanes and footpaths remains largely unchanged today.

### Site context

- 3.16 The southern end of Fitzroy Park is lined by a variety of large, 20th century houses, mostly interwar or post-war in date. Those on the east side of the road, where the land rises, tend to be more visible.



Figure 6: Fitzroy Park, showing the entrance to the Site on the left (facing)

- 3.17 Close to the Site is Fitzroy Close, lined by three houses set behind two houses looking on Fitzroy Lane. East of here on a secluded back land site is a large modern house, Heathfield Park designed by Alan Power Architects.
- 3.18 To the north along Fitzroy Park, are the Bowling Club and Fitzroy Farm, a large private house. To the north-west are the Fitzroy Park Allotments.
- 3.19 Hampstead Heath lies close to the Site, and has a densely treed edge following the route of Millfield Lane: beyond are the Kenwood Ladies Bathing Pond and Bird Sanctuary Pond.
- 3.20 To the east are a number of infill residential schemes including along the winding route of Highfields Grove, accessed off the northern end of Fitzroy

Park; and Westhill Park to the south, accessed off Merton Lane. Many are gated and include relatively dense estate developments of large houses from the c.1980s.

### **Wider Area**

- 3.21 Due to the topography, the historic street pattern and the dense tree planting the Site is relatively visually contained. To the west, as noted above, is the large expanse of Hampstead Heath.
- 3.22 To the north-east, Highgate West Hill joins the junction of Hampstead Lane, Highgate High Street and North Road in the centre of Highgate (at the boundary with L B Haringey); and to the east is Highgate Cemetery. Highgate Hill runs into Highgate Road and then into Dartmouth Park and Gospel Oak to the south.

### **Heritage Assets**

- 3.23 The nearest listed building is no. 10 Fitzroy Park (listed grade II), some 200m away along the lane; and the nearest Registered Park or Garden of Special Historic Interest is Kenwood, some 375m away (screened by trees).
- 3.24 The ***Highgate Conservation Area*** was designated in 1968 and has been extended twice since designation; it was extended in 1978 to include West Hill, the eastern part of the cemetery and Holly Village, and again in 1992 to include the Whittington Hospital site.
- 3.25 The Highgate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy was adopted in October 2004. Section 4 of this report includes a statement of significance of the conservation area, and assesses the contribution of the Site to this.

## 4.0 Significance of the Highgate Conservation Area and the contribution of no. 55 Fitzroy Park

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- 4.1 This section assesses the heritage significance of the Highgate Conservation Area and the contribution of no. 55 Fitzroy Park to this. The assessment is proportionate to the significance of the conservation area, the interest of the building, and the nature and extent of the Proposed Development. It is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposals, i.e. the redevelopment of the Site, on heritage interest.
- 4.2 The assessment below is based on the LB Camden's Highgate Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan (the 'Appraisal'), desk-top research and a site visit. It uses Historic England ('HE') and LB Camden guidance where appropriate (as set out in section 2 of this report).

### **Significance of the Highgate Conservation Area**

- 4.3 This is a large conservation area and were it not for the borough boundary with the LB Haringey, would form a very large conservation area with The Highgate (LB Haringey) Conservation Area to the north.
- 4.4 The conservation area has a varied character. Houses vary in type, age, scale and style; some of the houses are significant examples of 18th century architecture. It is the landscape character and mature trees that help unify this area of the southern slope of Highgate Hill. To the south and south-west close to the Site, Hampstead Heath is an important element that contributes to the significance of the conservation area, and views in and out of it.
- 4.5 The Appraisal describes the character of the conservation area as a *'close-knit village crowning one of the twin hills to the north of London'*. It goes on to note that the character *'is formed by the relationship of topography, open spaces, urban form and architectural details'*. The Appraisal notes there are key views of London from Fitzroy Park looking south; this relates to the northern end of the street, which is on higher ground than the southern end where the Site lies.
- 4.6 The Appraisal splits the conservation area into five sub-areas. The Site lies in the *'Fitzroy Park'* sub area, which it notes *'was developed within the framework of the boundaries of older estates'*. The Appraisal goes on to note that the character is *'derived from the close relationship between the topography, the soft landscape and the groups or individual houses built within it'*. It notes that Fitzroy Park retains its character of houses with large gardens with mature trees, and describes the street as having an *'informal,*

*unmade style, giving it a rustic appearance'* which is important to the setting of the conservation area.



Figure 7: Fitzroy Park

- 4.7 The Highgate Conservation Area Appraisal notes that during the 20th century there have been some important architectural contributions to the conservation area. It goes on to say that after the Second World War, houses were built in the Fitzroy Park, Millfield Lane area, as well as in the Village, several designed by architects as their own homes. No. 10 Fitzroy Park dated from 1932 and was designed by E Vincent Harris for himself. It is built of narrow red bricks and has a graded hipped slate roof with exceptionally tall stacks rearing behind high parapets. No. 8A Fitzroy Park was built as a private house in 1965-7 and designed by Hal Higgins of Higgins and Ney for Peter Epstein, engineer.
- 4.8 The historic network of roads, lanes and footpaths remain largely unchanged today and provides a distinctive townscape character in the area, particularly combined with the topography and mature tree planting. Fitzroy Park has a country lane character, despite the large houses, achieved through the mature and lush boundary planting and mature trees in the large gardens.
- 4.9 Infill has come to define the character of much of the Fitzroy Park area, with large scale gated developments and very large single houses apparent nearby, as well as inter war and post war schemes. The Site, with its pond, whilst part of the historic field pattern which survived to a large degree into the 20<sup>th</sup> century (as were most of the sites now occupied by large 20th century houses), does not read as an important landscape feature locally.

4.10 Regarding the existing house on Site (no. 55 Fitzroy Park), the Appraisal notes, *'No 55 is a flat-roofed two-storey red brick 1950s dwelling, with casement and tilt-and-turn painted softwood windows. There is a slightly later two-storey extension on the northern side of the property. The house is set in generous gardens containing a sizeable pond, which stretch down to the northern stretch of Millfield Lane as it skirts the Heath'*.

4.11 The house is not identified as a positive building by the Council in the Appraisal. The following buildings on Fitzroy Park are identified as positive buildings:

- Apex Lodge,
- Fitzroy Lodge,
- Kenview,
- Ashridge,
- Burnbury, Dormers,
- the Wallace House,
- Fitzroy Farm,
- The Bowling green and Club house,
- The Lodge,
- Westwind,
- Dancers End,
- Kenbrook,
- the wall to No. 10,
- No 6, 7, 7a,
- Elm Cottage,
- Beechwood Cottage,
- wall to Beechwood,
- The Summit,
- Brett House,
- Nos. 1, 2

#### **Contribution of no. 55 Fitzroy Park to the significance of the Highgate Conservation Area**

4.12 No. 55 Fitzroy Park is described in section 3 at paras 3.3 and 3.4. It is smaller than most of the other houses nearby, and is not prominent in the street scene.

#### ***HE criteria***

4.13 The HE document, 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' (2016), suggests a number of questions to assess the value of an unlisted building to the significance of a conservation area. They consider

that any one of these characteristics could provide the basis for considering that a building may make a positive contribution to the special interest of a conservation area i.e. its significance, subject to consideration of whether or not these values have been compromised. The existing house has undergone limited external alterations, unsurprisingly given its relatively recent date. To the rear, brickwork has been painted and some of the eaves boards changed but these are minor mostly cosmetic changes (these alterations are complementary to its self-build character).

- 4.14 The contribution of the no. 55 Fitzroy Park, to the significance of the Highgate Conservation Area is assessed below.

*Is it the work of a particular architect or designer of regional or local note?*

**No** – the architect is not known.

*Does it have landmark quality?*

**No** – the building sits on a private road and is only apparent from close by, being largely screened by boundary planting and the winding nature of the road.

*Does it reflect a substantial number of other elements in the conservation area in age, style, materials, form or other characteristics?*

**No** – there are a large number of houses of a wide variety of designs from the early 18th century up to current times. The most notable buildings nearby either date from the earlier 20th century or are recent in date.

The house is of no interest in its own right and offers nothing of interest to the local townscape.

*Does it relate to adjacent designated heritage assets (DHA) in age, materials or in any other historically significant way?*

**No** – there are no DHAs adjacent or close to the Site

*Does it contribute positively to the setting of adjacent designated heritage assets?*

**No** – there are no listed buildings adjacent or close to the Site

*Does it contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces, including exteriors or open spaces with a complex of public buildings?*

**No**

*Is it associated with a designed landscape e.g. a significant wall, terracing or garden building?*

**No**

*Does it individually, or as part of a group, illustrate the development of the settlement in which it stands?*

**Yes** – but only as much as any form of development would and not in any significant way. It is an unremarkable example of a post-war private house infill. Other 20th century houses nearby are more impressive in their design including nos. 6A and 10 which are listed grade II and the many others identified in the Council's Appraisal as positive buildings (see para 4.11).

*Does it have significant historic association with features such as the historic road layout, burgage plots, a town park, or landscape feature?*

**No** - It sits on a large plot of land that once formed part of Fitzroy Farm in an area that remained largely unbuilt until the mid 20th century. The Site does not follow the land or field divisions of the farm (as show in the OS maps in section 3); and has since been divided to form the plots for a number of houses. The pond is a pleasant feature but has no important associations with the garden area of no 55.

*Does it have historic associations with local people or past events?*

**No** – no significant historic associations are known.

*Does it reflect the traditional functional character or former uses in the area?*

**No** – it is in residential use, but it is not of the grand scale of the large houses typical of the area, nor does it have the appearance of a subsidiary service building such as a former coach house or garage.

*Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the area?*

**Yes** – as a private house, but only as much as any residential building would.



- 4.15 No. 55 Fitzroy Park meets two of the HE criteria as assessed above, but only to a limited degree. This is based on its use conforming to the prevailing residential character of the area, and illustrating the development of the area. The prime contribution of the Site to the significance of the conservation area are the planted edges to both Fitzroy Park and Millfield Lane. The house itself is of no interest (it has not been identified by the Council as a positive building)

### **Summary**

- 4.16 Many of the buildings in Fitzroy Park could be said to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, but no. 55 makes at best a neutral contribution to the significance of the conservation area.
- 4.17 No. 55 Fitzroy Park is not of architectural interest. It is primarily the residential use that could be said to contribute to the significance of the conservation area. New buildings on Site could contribute to the significance of the area to an equal if not better degree. A well-designed replacement house or houses could enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 4.18 In respect of the Site, which is bigger than that of many of the nearby houses, it is the green edges that contribute most to the significance of the conservation area. The pond on Site, whilst a picturesque feature dating from the time of the former farm, is screened from the street.

## 5.0 The Proposed Development

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- 5.1 This section describes the design of the Proposed Development as relevant to the heritage assessment and goes on to assess its architectural and urban design quality. The scheme has been reviewed twice by the Camden Design Review Panel ('DRP'), reference to which is made below.
- 5.2 The context led design approach is set out in detail in the comprehensive Design and Access Statement ('DAS'). The DAS, application drawings and planning statement should be consulted in conjunction with this section.

### **Description**

- 5.3 The Proposed Development comprises the redevelopment of the existing dwelling, associated outbuildings and hard surfaced tennis court on Site, to provide 5 new brick built detached houses and landscape enhancements to the large garden plot. Three houses (plots 1 to 3) will be sited along Fitzroy Park, in the location of the existing house and outbuildings; and there will be two houses to the west, located in the general area of the tennis court.
- 5.4 The houses on plots 1 to 3, all of different detailed designs, have been designed as a group by architects Piercy and Co. These three buildings run along the Fitzroy Park Site edge, set back by 5.7 to 8.4 metres. Each building is two storeys high to the street frontage (continuing the prevailing height of neighbouring houses); with three storeys, incorporating a lower ground floor, to the rear. Each house is arranged as a series of cubic volumes, articulated with set backs and terraces, and large deep set windows. Gaps between the houses (and neighbouring plots) will allow views into the Site and the enhanced landscape.
- 5.5 The house on plot 4 has been designed by Fathom Architects. It is a simple 2 storeys high volume which is sunk into the ground at the lowest part of the Site. It has three banded brick walls with minimal openings and a curved northern corner, and a glazed southern façade overlooking a lawned area.
- 5.6 Building 5 (also designed by Piercy and Co) is a simple 2 storeys high form set in the landscape. A single storey element extends the northern part of the ground floor plan out to the south-east; the 1<sup>st</sup> floor overlooks the pond to the north-east (the house will appear as a simple single-storey pavilion in views from the north-east). The form is further articulated by large window opening, and the use of metal fins, with glass and opaque panels, to the first floor.

## London Borough of Camden Design Review Panel

- 5.7 The scheme was first reviewed by the DRP on 2 March 2018 and then again on 11 May 2108. The panel minutes of the second scheme review meeting note that the Panel '*feels that the proposals have improved significantly since the previous review*', but that further refinements were required, principally in respect of the effect on landscape, including moving the house on plot 5 further away from the pond. In respect of architecture the panel found '*much to admire*' in the designs of the houses on plots 1 to 3 and suggested adjustments to the design of the house on plots 4 and 5. This is considered in detail in the DAS.

### Assessment

- 5.8 The Proposed Development is a high quality, site specific response that will enhance the appearance of the Site and its contribution to the local area, adding to the rich legacy of impressive family homes in the area. The homes have been designed by two architectural practices, and the distinct detailed design of the houses, and in particular houses 4 and 5, will ensure an appropriate grain and character to the Site. The scheme will enhance the significance of the conservation area as discussed in section 6.
- 5.9 The topography and landscape character of this large Site, as well as the location of existing structures on it, have informed the Site planning; and the scale and type of development responds directly to the built and landscape character of neighbouring sites. Each of the new houses will sit within its own landscape setting and has been carefully positioned to respond positively to the existing landscape features, including the planted boundaries and the pond (the house on plot 5 having been set back from the latter as a result of 2<sup>nd</sup> DRP comments).
- 5.10 The architecture is of high quality and has a distinctive modern character with crisp detailing which will fit well within the conservation area. Each of the houses is of a distinct design (those on plots 1 to 3 designed as a group). The use of brick for all five houses will provide a cohesive appearance to the development, well suited to the conservation area, and there is a restrained palette of high quality materials overall.
- 5.11 The existing landscape features of note on the Site are retained and enhanced. The pond will become the principal landscape feature on Site. The boundary edges will be enhanced with a high-quality native mixed wild hedge, combined with a mixture of semi-mature and heavy standard trees. The openings in the hedgerow along Fitzroy Park required for access have been coordinated with the gaps between the buildings, one of which will allow a view through to the pond.



## 6.0 Assessment of effects and conclusion

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- 6.1 This section assesses the effects of the Proposed Development on the townscape character of the Site and its surroundings, and the significance of the Highgate Conservation Area. Section 3 of this assessment has described the townscape character of the Site and its heritage context, and section 4 sets out the significance of the Highgate Conservation Area and assesses the contribution of the Site to this.
- 6.2 The Proposed Development is assessed in section 5 of this report. The DAS sets out how the design is based on a clear appreciation and thorough understanding of the Site and its context.
- 6.3 The principal NPPF policy considerations in determining an application for the replacement of the existing house on Site are its contribution to the significance of the Highgate Conservation Area and the level of harm, if any that its loss and replacement would cause to the significance of the designated heritage asset i.e. the Highgate Conservation Area.
- 6.4 The NPPF notes that not all elements of a conservation area will necessarily contribute to its significance. We have assessed the level of the contribution of the existing house to the conservation area's significance and found it to make at best a neutral contribution. The existing house is of no architectural interest in its own right, and such positive qualities as it possesses, as assessed in section 4, could be equally if not better provided by a new building / s on Site, of a higher architectural quality.
- 6.5 It is our view that the existing house does not make a positive contribution to the Highgate Conservation Area and that its demolition would not harm the significance of the Highgate Conservation Area.
- 6.6 In respect of the scheme, the Proposed Development will enhance the conservation area, with five new homes of a high quality of design, and significant landscape enhancements on Site; most notably in respect of the site boundary (in terms of both the quality of planting, and through allowing views into the enhanced landscape with the centre of the Site); and through the retention and enhancement of the pond as the main landscape feature.
- 6.7 The scale of the new houses and their positioning on Site (in respect of both the Site topography and the edge conditions; as well as their relationship with neighbouring gardens, houses and the Heath) are both aspects of the scheme that have been given careful consideration.
- 6.8 The new houses, designed by two architectural practices, are of a high quality of architecture, deploying an appropriate palette of materials and crisp detailing. They will contribute positively to the overriding character of the area derived from the large private houses set in generous gardens, that follow the

green route of Fitzroy Lane. The new houses will appear as appropriate elements following the long tradition of infill housing development in the area from the beginning of the 20th century onwards. This is illustrated in the accurate visual representation view images ('AVRs') prepared by Cityscape and included in the DAS.

- 6.9 The two houses to the west, on the lowest part of the Site (occupying to a large degree the site of the former tennis court), have been positioned to minimise their visual impact on the wider area. The AVR images in the DAS illustrate they will be barely visible from the surrounding area and, importantly, from Hampstead Heath. If seen in glimpsed views, they will simply appear as the other large houses in established garden landscapes in the local area do today.
- 6.10 The landscape masterplan has ensured that the character and quality of the landscape have been maintained; it has positively informed the approach to the Site planning and individual house design. Those aspects of the landscape that contribute positively to the conservation area today have been retained and enhanced as part of the scheme
- 6.11 The scheme, which will enhance the significance of the conservation area as described above, is in line with policy CS14 of the LB Camden Local Development Framework and policy DP25 of the LB Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies (or emerging policy D2), which amongst other things seek to preserve and enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets, including conservation areas. A full assessment of the proposals as against relevant national and local planning policy is set out in the Planning Statement accompanying the application.

## **Conclusion**

- 6.12 No. 55 Fitzroy Park is an unremarkable building of no notable architectural quality, that makes at best a neutral contribution to the significance of the Highgate Conservation Area. The Proposed Development offers 5 new houses of an architecture of a high quality, designed by two architectural practices, which hold out the promise of becoming valued additions to the rich history of 20th century and later homes in the area.
- 6.13 The landscape of the Site as found today, including historic elements which predate the current house on Site, have informed the scheme. These include the planted site boundaries and the pond.
- 6.14 In respect of the design considered in its own right, and the relationship between the Proposed Development and its surroundings, the effect will be entirely positive. The Proposed Development will enhance the quality of the townscape of the area and the character and appearance and significance of the Highgate Conservation Area. There will be no effect on the setting of any

listed buildings. In respect of design and built heritage considerations, it is in line with the policies and guidance on design set out in the NPPF and PPG; London Plan policies; local policies CS14, DP24 and DP25 and SPDs.

Peter Stewart Consultancy  
Somerset House  
Strand  
London WC2R 1LA

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