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Joshua Lawlor
London Borough of Camden
Planning Department
5 Pancras Square
London
N1C 4AG

12th November 2019

Dear Josh,

**Re: 45 Highgate West Hill Planning Reference: 2019/4092/P / 2019/4270/L
SPAB e-mail dated 11th November 2019**

We have reviewed the e-mail you were sent by Ms Christina Emerson of SPAB, uploaded onto your website on the 11th of November.

We note that the thrust of this letter and the opinion of Ms Emmerson and her colleagues is very different from the responses we have received from Historic England, the Georgian Group, the Highgate Society and the Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee. The response from all other statutory consultees has been broadly positive with SPAB offering the only negative comments in respect of our proposal.

In response to the specific issues raised in Ms Emmerson's e-mail:

The Relationship between our extension and the 1729 house.

45 Highgate West Hill is part of a cluster of buildings with nos. 46 and 46a. These buildings collectively form a continuous, faceted composition, focused on nos. 45 and 46. 46a and the existing side extension of no. 45 form a gentle curved massing which steps up in the middle. Historic research shows that the relationship between these buildings is a historical quirk of this shared plot, born from its relationship with the reservoir and Highgate West Hill. The clearly defined footprint of an outbuilding to the west of no. 45 can be seen on the OS of 1803, and the naive sketch plan of 1813 shows this to be a substantial building, both contained within the Heritage Appraisal of the site.

Our scheme respects this historical massing and goes some way to reinstating the historic relationship between these buildings. Our proposed extension is further away from 45 than 46a is from 46 as the plots are not symmetrical. Our extension sits approximately on the plot of a historic outbuilding shown on the 1913 OS map. The connection between the 1729 house and our extension, which was revised following consultation with Historic England, steps back from the facades of both the 1729 building and our extension, emphasising each building as its own separate structure as was historically the case. We do not agree that setting the extension at the historically accurate angle is awkward. It deflects attention back onto the main house and accepts the historic geometry of the site, reinforcing one of the plot's unique characterises.

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London Studio Partners: Chris Dyson RIAS, RIBA, FRSA, Gideon Purser RIBA & Mathew Witts RIBA

Changes to long views of the building across the Reservoir.

Whilst we accept that view of the 1930s extension and closet wing are changed by our proposal we feel that our proposals rationalise the house's nineteenth and twentieth century accretions, improving the composition of the cluster refocusing attention back onto the 1729 house.

At present when viewed from across the reservoir the 1729 house is underscored by the white concrete balustrade of the 1970s extension and then partially bookended by the 1930s extension and then covered by the first floor of the closet wing. None of these structures relate architecturally to the 1729 house. Our proposed provides a unifying façade which is quiet and respectful of the 1729 house, and when combined with the proposed improvements to the house's gable wall, improve views across the reservoir substantially.

This opinion was reinforced by the Georgian Group in their letter of the 1st of October. In the 4th paragraph they say *"...the public benefit will be an improved visual aspect due to the removal of unsympathetic concrete balustrade and roof terrace"*

Architectural Design

We do not agree with SPAB that the two storey connection between the extension and the house is unacceptable, that the proposed extension creates a jarring horizontal note or that the chimney pots are inexplicably long.

As noted in the opening paragraphs of this letter SPAB's design concerns do not align with the recommendations of other statutory consultees. As discussed earlier in this letter the massing of our proposed extension and its connection back to the 1729 house were substantially revised following our initial meeting with Historic England. In their letter of the 20th September Historic England acknowledge and welcome the changes made.

It has always been our intention to design a robust, respectful piece of architecture that speaks to the 1729 house whilst being distinctly of its own time. Our architecture takes its cues from the existing building but avoids a slavish pastiche of its Palladian detailing. We have restricted the material pallet to brick and stone and timber, the most traditional of London materials. We have detailed the facades ensure that each element has a structural purpose and that this purpose is clearly expressed. The window openings on the front façade are of the same proportion as those of the 1729 house. The proposed extensions façade is capped in stone and the roof is set back behind a parapet, both details are found on the 1729 house. In carefully referencing these details we have created a contemporary version of the load bearing masonry architecture of the 1729 building, making our extension part of the continuing the evolution of brick construction.

Adopting a contemporary design approach is in-line with LB Camden planning guidance which, at paragraph 7.3 of the justification for Policy D1 Design, the Council sets out that it, *'will welcome high quality contemporary design which responds to its context...'*. Pastiche and imitation are not encouraged, except in homogenous groups such as Georgian Squares.

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Buildings Areas

The existing house is not 146 square meters as suggested in SPAB's letter. The existing the house has a GEA of 451.7m2 and our proposed scheme increases this by 154m2 GEA, of which only 89.9m2 are above ground.

Conclusion

In conclusion, and to emphasise again, the proposals have received the support of all of the amenity and historical societies/ groups consulted aside from SPAB. Furthermore, a letter of support has recently been received from Graham Stirk, Senior Partner at Roger, Stirk, Harbour and Partners, along with letters of support from other neighbours around the site.

If you need any additional information regarding the above, please do let me know, otherwise we look forward to receiving your officers report in due course.

Yours Sincerely,

,

Mathew Witts

Partner

For and on behalf of Chris Dyson Architects