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Branch Hill
London NW3

Townscape and
Visual Impact
Assessment

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been prepared in support of the planning application for the development at Branch Hill (the 'Proposed Development'). The proposals site (referred to as 'the Site') lies in Hampstead in the London Borough of Camden. The report has been prepared by Peter Stewart Consultancy, a practice which provides independent expert advice on architecture, townscape and urban design.
- 1.2 The Proposed Development comprises the demolition of the post-war building on Site, the erection of two new buildings providing residential accommodation, and the extension of the retained historic building on Site.
- 1.3 This assessment considers the visual impact of the Proposed Development on the townscape of the area around the Site, analysing the character of the surrounding townscape, and assessing the effect of the Proposed Development on views from locations around the Site (see below regarding the selection of viewpoints). A separate heritage assessment has been prepared by Steven Levrant Heritage Architecture.
- 1.4 The report sets out:
- Relevant design policy and guidance.
 - A description of the Site and its context, including nearby heritage assets.
 - An assessment of the architectural and urban design quality of the Proposed Development.
 - Consideration of the effect of the Proposed Development from eight viewpoints.
 - An assessment of the effect of the Proposed Development on the local townscape, views, and conclusions.
- 1.5 This report should be read in conjunction with the scheme design drawings, the architect's design and access statement ('DAS') and the heritage assessment prepared by Steven Levrant Heritage Architecture.

Method of assessment

- 1.6 This assessment has been carried out as follows.
- 1.7 The present-day condition of the site and the surrounding area was ascertained by site visits, supported by a study of maps and aerial photographs (available on the internet as an integrated set of data at www.google.co.uk/maps).
- 1.8 Site visits allowed the accuracy of record data to be verified. Record photographs were taken on site visits.

- 1.9 Buildings, open spaces, townscape and views that have the potential to be affected by the Proposed Development particularly those that have been previously identified as significant by designation or in other ways, are identified through this process. The study area is formed of those areas around the site on which the Proposed Development could have a significant effect in townscape terms, informed by site visits and desk study as outlined above.

- 1.10 The impacts of the Proposed Development, in the form in which it is submitted for planning permission, on townscape and views, are assessed by the townscape assessors.

Identification of viewpoint locations

- 1.11 A study was undertaken to establish a set of potential viewpoint locations from which 'before and after' views are provided. The study area is centred on the Site and is limited to locations from which the Site can be seen, or from which new buildings on the Site would be seen.
- 1.12 Within this study area, four types of viewing location, all publicly accessible, were identified:
- Views that have been identified as significant, by the London Borough of Camden or others (for example, the GLA), i.e. in planning policy and guidance documents and conservation area appraisals;
 - Other locations or views of particular sensitivity, including those viewpoints in which the Development may significantly affect the settings of heritage assets;
 - Representative townscape locations from which the Proposed Development will be visible; and
 - Locations where there is extensive open space between the viewer and the Proposed Development so that it will be prominent rather than obscured by foreground buildings. This includes areas of open space that are important in a local context, e.g. for leisure purposes, or riverside paths.
- 1.13 The set of viewpoints was chosen to cover:
- A representative range of viewpoints from different directions from which the Development will be visible;
 - A range of distances from the site; and
 - Different types of townscape area.
- 1.14 Possible locations in these categories within the study area were identified based on an examination of maps and aerial photographs; the documents referred to above; maps of conservation areas and maps and lists of listed buildings. The study area and the possible locations were then visited to establish candidate viewpoints. A photographic record was made of this visit together with a map showing photo locations. The viewpoint locations and view type (render or wireline) have been determined and agreed by the client and the

architects after consultation with London Borough of Camden officers. The Council requested an additional view from north of the Site along Branch Hill. There is no footway in this location and it is not possible to provide an AVR view from here. A photograph from this position is provided at appendix B – it illustrates that the Proposed Development would not be visible from here (or the opposite side of the road where there is a footway).

Assessment

- 1.15 The assessment of individual views, and the concluding section concerning impact on townscape, which is informed by the view assessments, considers the effect on the townscape and views as they will be experienced by viewers in reality. Photographic images of townscape are no more than an approximation to this, for a number of reasons:
- Viewers have peripheral vision; their view is not restricted by borders as a photograph is, and they can move their eyes and heads to take in a wide field of view when standing in one place;
 - Viewpoints themselves are not generally fixed. Townscape is experienced for the most part as a progression of views or vistas by people who are moving through streets or spaces rather than standing still;
 - Photographs do not reflect the perception of depth of field as experienced by the human viewer due to parallax;
 - Before and after views illustrate the view in conditions that are particular in respect of time of day and time of year, daylight and sunlight, and weather, and the view will appear differently to varying degrees when any or all of these things vary; and
 - Townscape is experienced not by the eye alone but by the interpretation by the mind of what the eye sees, considered in the light of experience, knowledge and memory.
- 1.16 The 'as proposed' images are provided as a guide to the effect on views as they would be experienced on site; to act as an aide-memoire; and to assist site visits. The assessment provided in this TVIA represents a professional judgement of the likely effect of the Proposed Development on the view or the townscape, informed by site visits as well as the photographic images provided, rather than an assessment of the photographic images.
- 1.17 For the eight identified views illustrated in section 5, there are images of the view as existing and as proposed provided as 'Accurate Visual representations' ('AVRs'). AVRs are provided either as rendered (photorealistic) images or as 'wirelines' (diagrammatic representations showing the outline of the redevelopment proposal as a green line; dashed where the scheme is occluded by foreground development). Rendered and wireline images illustrate accurately the degree to which the Proposed Development will be visible, and its form in outline. Rendered images also show the detailed form and the proposed use of materials.
- 1.18 AVRs are produced by accurately combining images of the Proposed Development (typically created from a three-dimensional computer model) with a photograph of its context as existing. The AVRs were created by AVR, a firm who specialise in the production of these images, and their methodology is included at appendix A.
- 1.19 The existing house has been rendered in the proposed views to illustrate the changes.

2 Planning policy and guidance

- 2.1 This section sets out the national policy and guidance, and regional and local plan policies and guidance which are relevant to the consideration of townscape and visual impact matters.

National planning policy and guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019)

- 2.2 The Government issued the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in February 2019. The NPPF sets out planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- 2.3 The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which has three dimensions; economic, social and environmental. The NPPF states, at paragraph 11, that ‘at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.’

NPPF Section 12: Achieving well-designed places

- 2.4 Section 12 of the NPPF deals with design. At paragraph 124, the NPPF states that ‘Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.’
- 2.5 Paragraph 127 notes that ‘Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:
- a) *will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
 - b) *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
 - c) *are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
 - d) *establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
 - e) *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
 - f) *create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.’*
- 2.6 Paragraph 130 states that ‘Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions,’ and goes on to say ‘Conversely, where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development.’

- 2.7 Paragraph 131 states that ‘*In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in the area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.*’

Planning Practice Guidance, March 2014

- 2.8 The national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was launched by Government on the 6th March 2014. It provides a web-based resource in support of the NPPF.
- 2.9 The PPG includes a section called ‘Design: process and tools’ which ‘provides advice on the key points to take into account on design’. This was issued on 1 October 2019; it replaces a previous section called ‘Design’.
- 2.10 The PPG deals with the processes of the planning system with respect to design, and notes that guidance on good design is set out in the National Design Guide.

The National Design Guide

- 2.11 The National Design Guide (September 2019) (‘NDG’) states (paragraph 3) that it ‘forms part of the Government’s collection of planning practice guidance’.
- 2.12 At paragraph 21 the NDG states that well-designed places are achieved by making the right choices at all levels, including:
- ‘The layout (or masterplan)*
 - The form and scale of buildings*
 - Their appearance*
 - Landscape*
 - Materials; and*
 - Their detailing’*
- 2.13 At paragraph 35 the NDG sets out ten characteristics which contribute to the character of places, nurture and sustain a sense of community, and address issues affecting climate. These are described as follows:
- ‘Context – enhances the surroundings.*
 - Identity – attractive and distinctive.*
 - Built form – a coherent pattern of development.*
 - Movement – accessible and easy to move around.*
 - Nature – enhanced and optimised.*
 - Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive.*
 - Uses – mixed and integrated.*
 - Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable.*

*Resources – efficient and resilient.
Lifespan – made to last.*

Regional planning policy and guidance

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

- 2.14 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 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).
- 2.15 Policy 7.1, on *‘Lifetime Neighbourhoods’*, states that *‘The design of new buildings and the spaces they create should help reinforce or enhance the character, legibility, permeability and accessibility of the neighbourhood.’* 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.’*
- 2.16 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’.*
- 2.17 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’.*

The London Plan – Intend to publish (December 2019)

- 2.18 The London Plan is *‘the overall strategic plan for London.’* In December 2019 the Mayor of London issued an ‘intend to publish’ version of the London Plan which includes all changes published from August 2018 onwards. Its aim is to *‘provide a vision for how London should sustainably grow and develop in the future’.* When adopted, it will replace the current London Plan.
- 2.19 The policies most relevant to townscape, visual impact and the historic environment are found in Chapter 3, *‘Design,’* and Chapter 7, *‘Heritage and Culture.’* These chapters contain draft policies that are broadly similar to those in Chapter 7, *‘London’s Living Places and Spaces’*, in the current London Plan.

Local planning policy and guidance

The Camden Local Plan, July 2017

- 2.20 The Camden Local Plan was adopted on 3rd July 2017. It replaced the Core Strategy and the Camden Development Policies. It covers the period up until 2031, and will aim to help the delivery of the Council’s vision for Camden.
- 2.21 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 strategic and local views and integrate well with the streets and spaces in the surrounding area, as well as featuring details and materials that are of high quality and complementary to the local character.

Supplementary Planning Documents, Guidance and Other

- 2.22 A number of documents have been adopted or published by the London Borough of Camden, which may be considered as a material consideration to development control decisions. These include:

Camden Planning Guidance

- 2.23 Camden Planning Guidance gives additional advice and information on how the Council will apply the planning policies for the Borough. ‘CPG 1’ addresses design.

Hampstead Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

- 2.24 The Hampstead Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was adopted on 18th April 2011. It identifies a number of character sub-areas within this large conservation area (see section 3 below), and the Site lies in sub area six: Branch Hill / Oak Hill. It identifies important views within the character areas. No important views are identified within sub area six: Branch Hill / Oak Hill.

Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2033

- 2.25 The Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2033 was adopted on October 2018. The area of this Neighbourhood Plan includes the Hampstead and South Hill Estate Conservation Areas as well as the northern part of the Fitzjohns and Netherhall Conservation Area and an edge of the Mansfield Conservation Area. It identifies a number of character areas within the area, and the Site lies in Character area 4: Outlying areas. It also identifies important views within the character areas. No important views are identified within Character area 4: Outlying areas. Policy DH1 deals with design.

3 The Site and its setting

Location

- 3.1 The Site lies on Spedan Close, to the south of Hampstead Heath, in the London Borough of Camden. Hampstead London Underground Station (Northern Line) lies some 450m to the south-east.
- 3.2 The area surrounding the Site slopes down from Hampstead Heath in the north and north-east to Hampstead Village and Finchley Road in the south-west. The area has a large number of mature trees, both lining the streets and within densely planted garden and public open space areas between. The Site and the surrounding area lie in the Hampstead Conservation Area.

The Site and its immediate environs

- 3.3 The Site is roughly rectangular in shape, and slopes down to the south-west. It is bordered by a high wall to the north-east along Branch Hill. The Site's main access is through a gated entrance from Branch Hill, to the south-east. It can also be accessed via Spedan Close from Heysham Lane to the north-east.



Figure 1: The Site

- 3.4 There is a densely wooded area north of Spedan Close, which runs through the centre of the Site. The main house, Branch Hill House, which sits towards the centre of the Site, is a three storeys high red brick mansion in an Edwardian Baroque style, with an exposed lower ground floor to the rear. It has two projecting gables on the eastern elevation and a projecting canted bay to the western elevation, to the right of which is a projecting terrace at ground floor level

on brick columns, with a columned portico (with a terrace above) against the main house. It has a large mansard roof (see heritage assessment for more details). Adjoining the main house to the south is a three storeys high, post war wing, typical of municipal buildings of the time and of no merit.

- 3.5 There is a parking forecourt to the east of the main house, and the remainder of the Site is covered by gardens. A footpath runs along the southern edge of the Site, from the gateway in the south-east corner to the west side of the house.
- 3.6 At the gate to the Site lies The Gardens, the former gate lodge to Branch Hill House, designed by Teulon and dating from 1868. To the south of the Site, a wooded area surrounds allotments. South of here, a number of large houses lie on Oak Hill Way, including a 1958 house designed by Trevor Dannatt built into the hill, and Oak Hill House, a survivor of the original Edwardian houses on this road. There are construction works underway (at the time of writing) for a new dwellinghouse.
- 3.7 East of the Site on Branch Hill, lies a two storey 19th century building with a post-war extension. Adjoining it to the north is a four storeys high terrace, built in the 19th century with Gothic influences, and a three storeys high house with a fully glazed conservatory at first floor level adjoins the terrace. The site to the north has planning permission for the demolition of the existing three storeys high post-war house and its replacement with a four storeys high house. A five storeys high, post-war block of flats with tile hung panels between the windows (West Heath Lodge) lies at the junction of Branch Hill and Heysham Lane. The block is set back from the road, with gardens to the front and side, and a large rear garden which backs onto the Site.



Figure 2: Branch Hill Estate

- 3.8 The grade II listed Branch Hill Estate (see heritage assets section below) lies to the west of the Site, on land which slopes to the west. It is accessed from Heysham Lane. The houses step down the sloping land set in areas of hard and soft communal landscaping. There are many trees surrounding the estate, and the Site can be seen beyond it.
- 3.9 Heysham Lane itself is a narrow, no through road, with little vehicular traffic. Mature trees line much of either side of it. To the south are the accesses to the garages and open space associated with the Branch Hill Estate (which runs along Spedan Close between the Site and the estate). The garages are built into the slope of the land, and are topped with a metal railing and large vents. Two large houses lie on the north and west side, Heysham House and Oak Tree House, and are accessed from along it. Heysham House (now converted into flats) is surrounded by a high fence. Oak Tree House (see heritage assets section) was designed by Basil Champneys and dates from 1874. A children's playground lies on the corner to the north of Oak Tree House.

History of the development of the area

- 3.10 The area of Hampstead was a village in the middle ages and inhabited by monks from the mid 14th century. The area began to attract wealthy people from London from the start of the 17th century. At the end of the century, land was gifted to the poor of Hampstead by the Gainsborough family, and a spa was developed. The growth of the area continued, and at the time of Roque's map in 1746 the village had a population in excess of 1400. In 1747 a church was rebuilt to accommodate the growing population, and by the end of the 18th century, a workhouse was built (which later developed into a hospital – New End Hospital).
- 3.11 A mansion was built on the Site in the 18th century, credited to architect Henry Flitcroft, who built other houses in the area¹. It was altered throughout the 18th century and into the 19th (it was altered by Teulon in the 1860s, and the lodge (The Gardens) was built at the same time). The present building was built on the site of this mansion, and dates from 1901².
- 3.12 By the start of the 19th century, the population of Hampstead was 4300 and large houses (many of which survive) had been constructed in the centre of the village, with working class cottages on either side. The London and Birmingham Railway cut the Primrose Hill tunnel in 1837, and the Hampstead Junction Railway (now Northern Line) opened stations at Edgware Road, Finchley Road and Hampstead Heath in 1860. This expansion of railways contributed to the development of Hampstead. The village of Hampstead spread downhill throughout the century, with Oak Hill Park (south of the Site) laid out in 1851 (only two of the original houses remain). The opening of the Hampstead Junction stations started the urbanisation of the area, and brought weekend and bank holiday day trippers to the area.
- 3.13 Planned developments within Hampstead Heath by Sir Thomas Maryon Wilson were met with resistance throughout the 19th century. His heir, Sir John, gave up his manorial rights in 1871 and the Heath and Hampstead Society was formed in 1897 to protect and expand the area.

- 3.14 In the late 19th century, the decision was made to demolish the alleyways and tenements that lay at the original village centre between Church Row and High Street and transform the village centre. The northern part of the High Street was widened in 1888 and the buildings were replaced with red brick shops and houses, and Heath Street was extended to meet Fitzjohn's Avenue. Meanwhile, streets of terraced housing (typical of the period) were being developed between the village centre and Hampstead Heath to the east.
- 3.15 During the 20th century, large houses continued to be built to the south of the Site, many in an Arts and Crafts Style which became more neo-Georgian as time progressed. The 18th century building on Site was replaced with a red brick, Edwardian one which dates from 1901. In the 1930s a number of modernist houses were built in the area.
- 3.16 After the war, the London Borough of Camden built housing estates in the area, one of the later examples of which was the Branch Hill Estate, which was designed by Benson and Forsyth and built on the grounds of Branch Hill Lodge (the Site) after the council purchased the land and converted the lodge into an old people's home. Houses and blocks of flats replaced much of the original development in the Oak Hill Park area to the south, including the seven storeys high point blocks by Michael Lyell Associates built in 1962. In the 1970s, many architects' houses were built to the south of Hampstead village, as well as some smaller scale infill development, and a number of large houses were built along West Heath in the 1980s and 1990s.

Site context

- 3.17 Hampstead Heath lies on the eastern side of Branch Hill (which joins West Heath Road), to the north of the Site. On the western side of Branch Hill lie a number of houses in differing ages and styles. Late 19th century houses (from north – south: Leavesden, Oakhurst and Lower Lodge – see figures 3 and 4) with Gothic influences lie north of the junction with Heysham Lane. Attached to Leavesden is a later house at no. 13 (Leavesden Cottage), a small modern infill. A pair of late 19th century semi-detached houses (The Chestnuts) lie to the north.

¹ T F T Baker, Diane K Bolton and Patricia E C Croot, 'Hampstead: Froggnal and the Central Demesne', in *A History of the County of Middlesex: Volume 9, Hampstead, Paddington*, ed. C R Elrington (London, 1989), pp. 33-42. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/middx/vol9/pp33-42>

² Cherry, B. and Pevsner, N. (2002) *The Buildings of England, London 4: North*. London, Yale University Press, pp. 230



Figures 3 and 4: Houses on Branch Hill, north of the Site

3.18 Savoy Court and St Regis Heights (see figure 5), two post-modern blocks of flats, lie on Firecrest Drive, on the west side of the junction of Branch Hill and West Heath Road. Pevsner³ describes the developments as *‘two domineering piles, eclectically detailed with Stirlingesque sloping glazed porches’*. They highlight the varied architectural character of the area.



Figure 5: Savoy Court and St Regis Heights

3.19 To the east of the Site, large detached Edwardian mansions, of red brick and usually in a Queen Anne style, lie along Redington Gardens, Templewood Gardens and Templewood Avenue. Some small pockets of post-war or recent housing lie between, such as the post-war block of Conrad Court on Redington Gardens and the recent house at no. 17 Templewood Avenue. Due to the large number of trees, and the pattern of the development and organic street layout, there are few views of the Site from this area.



Figure 6: Templewood Gardens looking towards Templewood Avenue

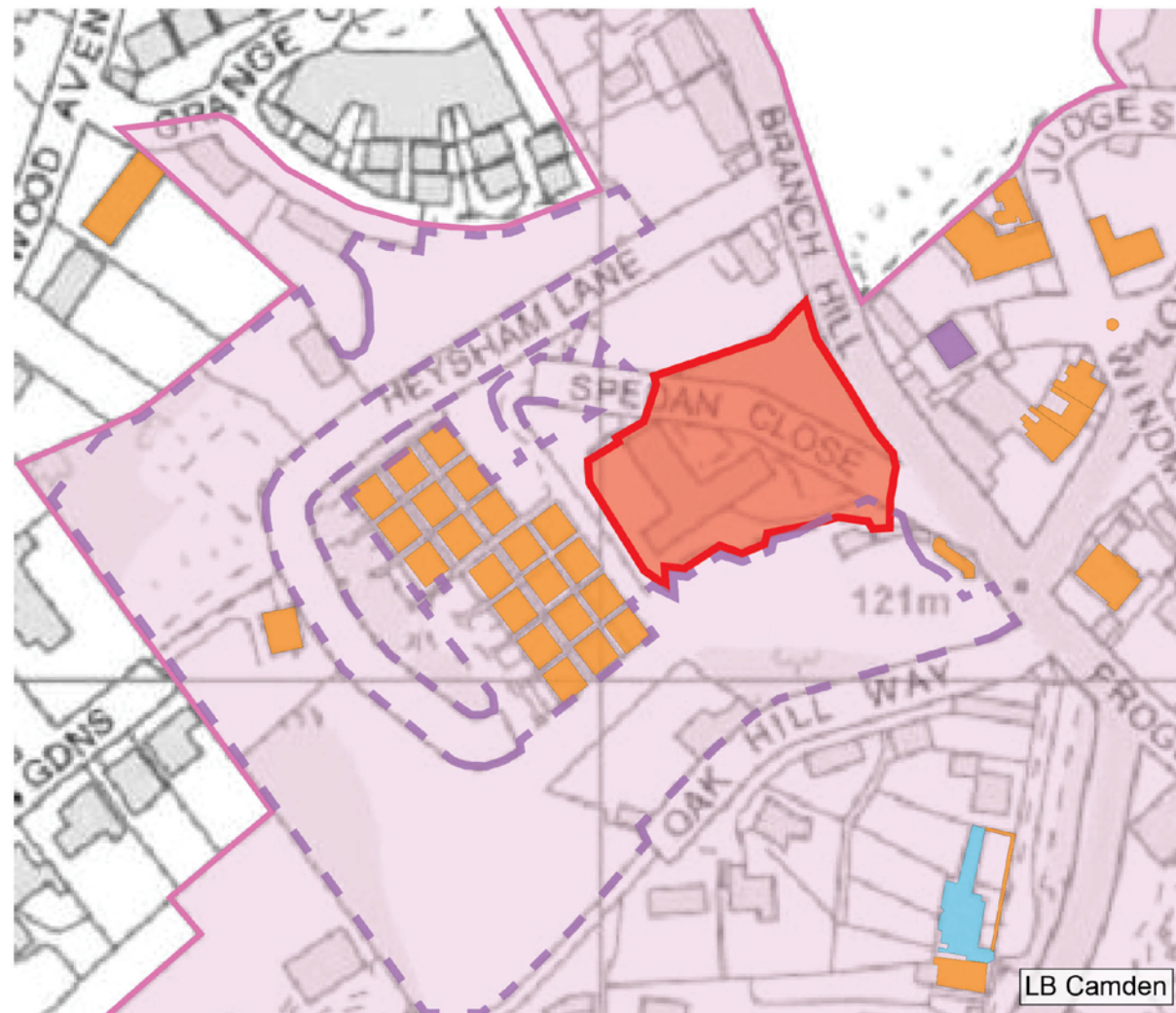
3.20 South of the Site, the townscape character is mixed. Some of the historic development of the area survives along this northerly part of Frognal (much of which is listed – see heritage assets section), but there is also a large amount of post-war development around Oak Hill Park.

3.21 East of the Site, Lower Terrace slopes upwards towards the Heath. Late 18th and early 19th century houses prevail in this area, either as terraces or as large detached mansions. On Admiral’s Walk is a 1970s house (Broadside) and a recent house (Fleet House), and there is a 1990s house, designed by Rick Mather, at no. 5 Upper Terrace. Otherwise the historic urban fabric in this area largely remains.

Heritage assets

3.22 The heritage assets in the area surrounding the Site are shown on the map at figure 7 and are listed below. They have informed the assessment of the townscape in the area around the Site. See the heritage assessment in respect of heritage significance.

³ Cherry, B. and Pevsner, N. (2002) *The Buildings of England, London 4: North*. London, Yale University Press, pp. 234



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Notes:

Approximate Site boundary marked in red for indicative purposes only. Heritage assets within this radius are identified. Conservation areas are marked in pink and identified below.

Listed buildings:

- Grade II* listed building
- Grade II listed building
- Locally listed building
- Locally listed natural feature or landscape

Conservation areas:

- Hampstead Conservation Area

Figure 7: map of heritage assets

Conservation areas

Hampstead Conservation Area

3.23 The Hampstead Conservation Area was designated on 29th January 1968, and has been extended several times since then - in 1977, 1978, 1980, 1985, 1988, 1911 and in 2001, when some areas of the conservation area were transferred to the Fitzjohns / Netherhall Conservation Area. The Hampstead Conservation Area Statement was published in October 2002, and splits the conservation area into eight sub areas. The Site is located in sub area 6: Branch Hill / Oak Hill.

Character and appearance

3.24 The statement describes the character of the conservation area as being *'derived from the wide range of areas within it, each of which makes an important and valuable contribution to the Conservation Area as whole'*. It notes that one of the main characteristics is *'the contrast between the dense urban heart of Hampstead and the spaciousness of the outer areas'*.

3.25 The statement describes the sub-area in which the Site lies as *'principally woodland on the western slopes of Hampstead in which buildings play a subordinate role'*, and notes that a number of the houses along Branch Hill were built in the later 19th century. Of the Site, it notes that:

'Branch Hill Lodge and its attractive Gothic gatehouse (listed) was built by SS Teulon (architect of St Stephens, Rossllyn Hill) on the site of a much older house. The Lodge was largely rebuilt in 1901 and in 1965 converted into an old peoples home and extended by Camden Council. The old kitchen gardens of Branch Hill Lodge have been turned into allotments.'

It goes on to note that the additions to Branch Hill House are identified as buildings which *'detract from the character of the area and would benefit from enhancement'*.

3.26 The statement goes on to describe the estate to the west of the Site, which cannot be seen from Branch Hill, noting the following:

'In 1978 the Council built a celebrated group of houses in the grounds of the Lodge named Spedan Close. Built against the steep incline of the grounds they are in concrete and white render with an ingenious series of roof gardens. Designed by Benson and Forsyth in a compact cluster which leaves much of the well wooded site undisturbed.'

Listed buildings

3.27 The Gardens, Branch Hill, is listed grade II. This building was formerly the lodge house to Branch Hill. The lodge house, dated 1868, is of purple brick with stone dressings and is attributed to SS Teulon.

- 3.28 Branch Hill Estate, Branch Hill is listed grade II. These twenty one semi-detached houses date from 1974-76 and were designed by Gordon Benson and Alan Forsyth of the London Borough of Camden's Architects' Department. They are arranged in three rows stepping down a slope.
- 3.29 Oak Tree House, Redington Gardens is listed grade II. This red brick, detached house (now converted to flats) dates from 1873 and is to designs by Basil Champneys.
- 3.30 No. 14 Templewood Avenue is listed grade II. This large detached house dates from 1910-11 and was designed by CHB Quennell. It is of red brick and is in a symmetrical, free Baroque style.
- 3.31 Frogna! Rise, on Frogna! Rise is listed grade II. This yellow brick detached villa dates from the early 19th century, with an 1884 wing added by Marshall N Inman who is thought to have extended the house around c.1900 in an Art Nouveau style.
- 3.32 No. 1 Lower Terrace is listed grade II. This semi-detached house is of yellow stock brick and stucco and dates from the late 18th century.
- 3.33 Nos. 2 and 3 (and attached railings) Lower Terrace are listed grade II. These terraced cottages date from the early 19th century and are of yellow stock brick.
- 3.34 Fountain House, no. 4 Lower Terrace is listed grade II. This semi-detached house dates from the early 19th century, with 20th century additions and alterations. It is of grey brick with stucco to the ground floor.
- 3.35 The five lamp posts on Lower Terrace are listed grade II. These cast iron lamp posts date from the 19th century, some with 20th century reproductions of the lanterns.
- 3.36 Upper Terrace House and the attached walls, Upper Terrace, is listed grade II. This red / brown brick detached house dates from c.1740, with some alterations dating from c.1800, 1931-2 (by Oliver Hill) and 1937-8 (by James Forbes).
- 3.37 No. 1 Upper Terrace is listed grade II. This brown brick house dates from c.1740 and has an early 19th century multi coloured stock brick extension to the east.
- 3.38 Nos. 2, 3 and 4 Upper Terrace are listed grade II. These terrace houses are of brown brick and date from c.1740, with 20th century alterations. Nos 3 and 4 have alterations by Basil Champneys dating from c.1882, and 1888 and a rear extension by Lutyens dating from c.1925-30.
- 3.39 Capo-di-Monte, Windmill Hill is listed grade II. This stuccoed house dates from the late 18th century and has many alterations, including a 20th century portico.
- 3.40 No. 103 Upper Frogna! Lodge, Frogna!, is listed grade II. This stucco house dates from c.1745-50 and has alterations dating from the early 19th and late 20th centuries.
- 3.41 Nos. 105-111 (odd) Frogna! Grove, including the former stable range, Frogna!, are listed grade II*. This large painted brick house dates from c.1745-50 and was designed by Henry Flitcroft for himself. It is much altered and has later additions, and is now four houses.

- 3.42 The front garden walls, railings, piers, gate and mounting block to nos. 105-111 Frogna! are listed grade II. These are thought to date from the 19th century, although the mounting block is perhaps older.

Locally listed buildings

- No. 5 Upper Terrace

Locally listed natural features or landscapes

- The Branch Hill Woodland, including Branch Hill allotments, Branch Hill / Oak Hill Way / Spedan Close / Heysham Lane (all of which used to be part of Hampstead Heath until the erection of Branch Hill House).

Townscape: conclusions

- 3.43 The Site is located to the east of Branch Hill, in Hampstead. The existing buildings on Site comprise a red brick building in an Edwardian Baroque style (Branch Hill House), dating from 1901, and a post-war block which adjoins it.
- 3.44 A grade II listed lodge house lies to the south-east of the Site, and allotments lie to the south. The grade II listed Branch Hill Estate and Oak Tree House are to the west. A large detached house (now flats) lies to the north-west of the Site, and a post-war block of flats lies to the north-east. Predominantly late 19th century houses lie along Branch Hill to the east.
- 3.45 Development in the surrounding area is mixed. A number of 18th and 19th century buildings survive and early 20th century mansions are common, particularly to the east of the Site, where they prevail. There are also a number of post-war developments in the area, including those on Oak Hill Park to the south and Savoy Court and St Regis Heights to the north. Hampstead Heath lies to the north-east.
- 3.46 The area as a whole has a large number of wooded areas and mature trees within large gardens. This, combined with the topography of the area and the pattern of development, means that views of the Site from the wider area are limited.
- 3.47 The Site lies in the Hampstead Conservation Area, and is described in the Appraisal as being principally woodland. The post-war additions to the original house on Site are noted as detracting from the character of the area.
- 3.48 There is an opportunity on Site to provide a development of high quality to replace the post-war building on Site, which the Council have noted would benefit from enhancement.

4 The Proposed Development

4.1 A brief description and an assessment of the architectural quality of the Proposed Development is given below. The design evolved after extensive preapplication discussions and following a review by the Council DRP.

4.2 A detailed description of the Proposed Development and the evolution of its design can be found in the architect's (Stanhope Gate Architecture) Design and Access Statement ('DAS'). The relationship between the new building and the retained Brach Hill House is assessed in the Heritage Assessment. The landscape DAS, provided by Planit-IE should also be referred to in conjunction with this section. The design has evolved in response to pre-application discussions and design review panel feedback.

Description

4.3 The Proposed Development comprises the demolition of the 1960s building on Site, and its replacement with two new buildings ranging in height from three to five storeys. The new building is located to the south and south-west of the existing Branch Hill House, which will be extended and altered (see below), and residential units will be provided across the three buildings. Bike storage, parking, refuse and plant will be provided at basement level.

4.4 The new building is expressed as a series of elements, ranging in height from five storeys (the fifth storey is in the roof space) close to the original house, to three storeys at the east. It adopts architectural elements and decoration typical of the late 19th century. It is faced in red-multi brick (laid in Flemish bond) and Portland coloured stone and features crenellations, gables, projecting triple height canted bay windows and windows with stone mullion surrounds. The clay tiled roofs are pitched and there are distinctive gabled dormers and chimney stacks. A squared tower with parapets and a projecting stone porch at ground floor level lies at the south-east corner of the existing Branch Hill House. It has an entrance at ground floor level.

4.5 There are two communal entrances from the northern side of the building, and one from the south. There are also three private entrances to single units, one from the north, one from the north-east and one from the south.

4.6 The grounds around the buildings will be landscaped, and will include gardens, a play area private terraces and a woodland trail. A detailed description of the landscape proposals can be found in the landscape DAS.

4.7 Alterations and extensions to Branch Hill House will include the lowering of the external ground levels to expose the lower ground floor and the demolition of the existing terrace to the western elevation and the construction of a new extension here. The windows in the principal eastern elevation will be altered to provide a more balanced composition across the façade; and the chimney stacks will be reduced in height. A more detailed account is given in the Heritage Assessment.

Assessment

4.8 The Proposed Development has had clear regard to Branch Hill House and the history of the Site. The new building replaces a post-war building, of no architectural merit, which has a poor relationship with Branch Hill House; and the alterations to Brach Hill House seek to enhance its appearance (as set out in the Heritage Assessment).

4.9 The new building sits comfortably alongside Branch Hill House, and the stepped massing and angled plan form ensure the latter remains prominent on Site. The highly articulated elevations and roof form adopt traditional architectural features and detailing, complementary to the design of the main house. It is the gables, dormers and chimneys, and stepped pitched roofs that will be most evident in views into the Site.

4.10 The facades of the new building are ordered and well balanced. The south-west elevation mimics detailing seen in adjoining elevation of Branch Hill House, providing a unified composition; elsewhere a less ornate architectural language is used. High quality materials which will complement the existing historic building are proposed throughout.

5 Views Assessment



Viewpoint locations

- 1 Spedan Close, north-west of the Site
- 2 Spedan Close, south
- 3 Froggnal Rise
- 4 Spedan Close, east of Branch Hill House
- 5 Heysham Lane / Spedan Close
- 6 Footpath north of Oak Tree House
- 7 Heysham Lane south
- 8 Froggnal Rise / Froggnal

Figure 8: Map of viewpoint locations



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1.6 m above ground

11:00 28 November 2019

View 1 – Spedan Close, north-west of the Site

View as existing

- 5.1 This viewpoint is located on Spedan Close, to the north-west of the Site and looking in a south-easterly direction towards the existing building on Site.
- 5.2 Prominent in the foreground of the view are the undercroft parking of the Branch Hill Estate and the large vents which project above it, seen in the centre of the view. The Site lies beyond; Branch Hill House is seen behind the vents and the post-war block can be seen to the right of the view (facing).



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1.6 m above ground

11:00 28 November 2019

View 1 – Spedan Close, north-west of the Site

View as proposed

- 5.3 The highly articulated form of the Proposed Development will be apparent. The distinctive gables and traditional architectural elements will complement the design of Branch Hill House. The high quality materials and detailed design can be appreciated in this close range view.



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1.6 m above ground

10:50 28 November 2019

View 2 – Spedan Close, south

View as existing

- 5.4 This viewpoint is located on Spedan Close to the west of the Site, looking in a northerly direction towards the Site.
- 5.5 The undercroft parking of the Branch Hill Estate lies in the foreground of the view. The Site is seen beyond, the post-war block prominent in the centre of the view, with Branch Hill House partly seen beyond it to the left (facing).