
4b Hampstead Hill Gardens London NW3 2PL

Statement of Objection to planning application 2019/5835/P Revised comments July 2020

TITLE:
Heritage Statement

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CONTENTS

- 1.0 INTRODUCTION
- 2.0 SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT
- 3.0 POLICY FRAMEWORK
- 4.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSALS
- 5.0 CONCLUSION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposed development would:

- Cause demonstrable harm to the streetscene along Hampstead Hill Gardens by virtue of its height, bulk, massing, form, materials and detailed design;
- Cause demonstrable harm in views east and west along Hampstead Hill Gardens due to its more prominent and assertive scale and appearance, intruding into views of the flank elevation of no.6 and the rear roofscape of no.4 (Grade II listed);
- Undermine the setting of the surrounding Grade II listed buildings due to its greater bulk and massing, competing with the high architectural quality of the site's context;
- Detract from the spaciousness and verdant character of the southern side of Hampstead Hill Gardens;
- Fail to be visually subordinate to no.4a, a feature since the mid 20th century, increasing density on the site which was historically an infill of open garden space, thus detracting from the pattern and grain of development on the southern side of the road and inverting the historic physical and visual relationship between nos.4a and 4b;
- Intrude into and compromise views of the spire of St Stephen's Church, a Grade I listed building on Rosslyn Hill, from the street and from private vantage points;
- Obscure views of the mature copper beech to the rear of the site in views from the street and from private vantage points;
- Significantly alter the bulk and massing of no.4b in views from the rear courtyard of no.4a, eroding the visual relationship between these buildings and detracting from the established pattern of development;
- Fail to preserve the setting of the Grade II listed buildings on Hampstead Hill Gardens contrary to s.66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990;
- Fail to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Hampstead Conservation Area contrary to s.72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990;

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Fail to comply with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) in particular that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets (para 193) and that planning applications should make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (para 192).
- Fail to comply with policies D1 and D2 of the Camden Local Plan (2017), policies H21 and H22 of the Hampstead Conservation Area Statement and policies DH1 and DH2 of the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan (2018).

1.0

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An application (2019/2964/P) for 'Erection of 3 storey dwellinghouse with basement following demolition of existing' at 4b Hampstead Hill Gardens was submitted to the Council in 2019 but withdrawn following extensive objections. A revised scheme (2019/5835/P) also for the 'Erection of a 3 storey dwellinghouse with basement following demolition of existing' was then submitted in November 2019. A report raising objections to the scheme was compiled in January 2020. Further revisions to the proposals have now been incorporated and the objection report has been updated accordingly. The report has been commissioned by Mr Alex Shinder of no.9 Hampstead Hill Gardens.
- 1.2 The application site is on the southern side of Hampstead Hill Gardens and consists of a two storey dwellinghouse dating from 1966. The house was formed from an original late 1950s single storey garage that was remodelled and extended. The site is located in the Hampstead Conservation Area. The series of late Victorian detached houses at nos.1-11 (odd) Hampstead Hill Gardens, all situated in close proximity to the application site, are Grade II listed.
- 1.3 This report has been compiled following a detailed site visit which included access to the rear garden of no.4a Hampstead Hill Gardens. The Heritage Statement by Prentice Moore Heritage submitted in support of the planning application has also been reviewed, with particular reference to the historic research and archive architectural drawings contained therein. Revised drawings dated submitted to the Council in May 2020 and the submitted Design & Access Statement Addendum dated May 2020 have been considered.
- 1.4 This report has been prepared by Hannah Walker (BA (Hons) Oxon MSc IHBC) who has extensive experience in dealing with proposals that affect the historic environment. She has 15 years of local authority experience, including 10 years as a Senior and then Principal Conservation & Design Officer at the London Borough of Camden and a period as a Conservation Officer at Ashford Borough Council in Kent. She also has experience in the private sector, preparing heritage statements and appraising the significance of historic buildings. She has trained as a historian, has a Masters in historic building conservation and is a full member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC).

2.0

SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

- 2.1 Hampstead Hill Gardens was laid out over open fields in the 1870s, connecting Rosslyn Hill and Pond Street in a tight curved alignment. The Ordnance Survey map of 1895 shows its historic layout with large houses lining its outer edge, fairly closely spaced and set back behind modest front garden areas, providing a strong sense of enclosure to the road. This arrangement has survived largely intact and when combined with the high architectural quality of the individual houses, creates a unique townscape character, with dramatic unfolding views and a sense of anticipation as one travels around the curve. On the southern side of the road the layout of the houses is more irregular, particularly with regard to no.4 which faces west, with its large garden to the north and east, creating more of a sense of openness and spaciousness along this stretch of Hampstead Hill Gardens. The relationship between the garden of no.4 and the road persisted until the late 1950s when no.4a was constructed, thus reducing the traditional curtilage and garden setting of the house.
- 2.2 No.4a Hampstead Hill Gardens was built in the late 1950s by Roy Brearly on the site of the former tennis court in the rear garden of no.4 Hampstead Hill Gardens. A single storey garage was provided to the east of the new house. This was visually subordinate to the house, which in itself was clearly designed to be sympathetic to the neighbours in terms of its height and scale.
- 2.3 In 1966 the original single storey garage to no.4a was extended upwards to form a new two storey house, also designed by Roy Brearly. The garage originally aligned with the rear elevation of the house but was enlarged to the south at the same time to form additional living accommodation. However, the original plans for the building show that a subordinate relationship was maintained with no.4a, with its parapet height following the eaves line of the house and sitting well below the ridge height of its pitched roof.
- 2.4 The only other late 19th century Batterbury and Huxley house to be redeveloped during the 20th century is no.8 Hampstead Hill Gardens. Although the architectural language of the 1970s replacement building is modern and not entirely sympathetic to the surrounding historic buildings, the rebuild replaced an original house rather than covering over formerly open space, and re-provided a similar sense of enclosure to, and visual and physical relationship with the road.

2.0

SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

2.5

The application site is located in Sub Area 3 – Willoughby Road/Downshire Hill of the Hampstead Conservation Area. The adopted Hampstead Conservation Area Statement describes Hampstead Hill Gardens as “An area with larger detached and semi-detached house.” The stucco faced villas at the Pond Street end of the road date from the 1870s and were followed by the grand detached red brick houses by Batterbury and Huxley at nos. 1-11 (odd) in the 1880s. With regard to later development the Conservation Area Statement outlines that:

“A few small modern houses and flats have been added in recent years, which, although in marked contrast to the older villas, do not detract from the character of the area.”

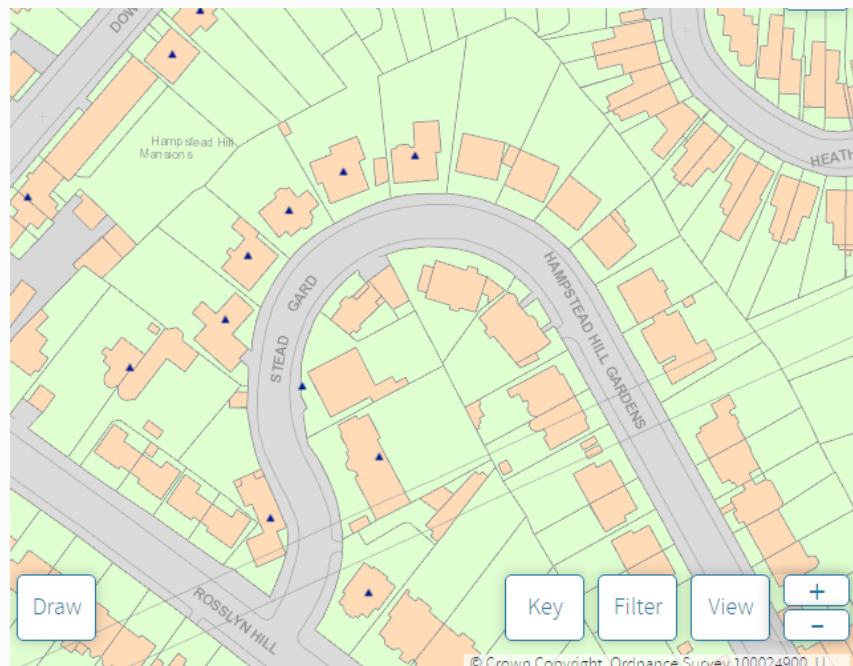


Fig 1 Statutorily listed buildings depicted on Historic England’s map by blue triangles. The map also shows how nos.4a and 4b have intruded into the original side garden of no.4 Hampstead Hill Gardens.

2.6

At page 33-34 the Conservation Area Statement includes a list of buildings or features which detract from the character of the area and would benefit from enhancement. Nos. 4a and 4b are not identified on this list.

2.0

SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

2.7

Hampstead Hill Gardens is rich in terms of its heritage and nos. 1-11 (odd) are Grade II listed, reflecting their significant architectural and historic interest. The buildings date from 1875-1883 and are constructed of red brick in a Queen Anne style. Together the buildings form a coherent group, unified by their consistent height, scale, form, roof profile, materials and architectural detailing. Each building is significant in its own right but also forms part one another's mutual setting. The relationship between the buildings and the layout of Hampstead Hill Gardens, providing a sense of enclosure in some areas and spaciousness in others, contributes to the highly significant townscape character of the road.



Fig 2 Nos. 3, 5, 7 and 9 Hampstead Hill Gardens looking west.

3.0

POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 There are a number of statutorily listed buildings surrounding the application site. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that:

"In considering whether to grant planning permission or permission in principle 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."

3.2 The site is located in the Hampstead Conservation Area. Consequently any proposals must comply with s.72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which requires that:

"....special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area."

3.3 The Courts have established that the decision maker must give 'considerable importance and weight' to the statutory duties at s.66(1) and s.72(a) and that the finding of harm to the setting of a listed building or to a conservation area gives rise to a strong presumption against planning permission being granted. Justice Lindblom in *The Queen v Sevenoaks District Council* [2014] EWHC 1895 (Admin) stated that *"Having "special regard" to the desirability of preserving the setting of a listed building under section 66, and paying "special attention" to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of a conservation area under section 72, involves more than merely giving weight to those matters in the planning balance. "Preserving" in both contexts means doing no harm..."*

3.0

POLICY CONTEXT

3.4

The revised National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies and how these are expected to be applied. There is a general presumption in favour of sustainable development within national planning policy guidance. Paragraphs 189, 190, 192, 193 and 200 are relevant to this application.

Paragraph 189

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.

Paragraph 190

Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Paragraph 192

In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- 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.*

Paragraph 193

When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

3.0

POLICY CONTEXT

3.4 cont'd

Paragraph 196

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, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Paragraph 200

Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

3.5

Policy D1 – Design of the Camden Local Plan (2017) outlines the Council's commitment to securing high quality design which respects local context and character; preserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets, comprises details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character and preserves local views.

3.6

The supporting text to Policy D1 at paragraph 7.2 contains a useful checklist against which all development will be considered, which includes:

- character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings;
- the prevailing pattern, density and scale of surrounding development;
- the impact on existing rhythms, symmetries and uniformities in the townscape;
- the composition of elevations;
- its contribution to public realm and its impact on views and vistas; and
- the wider historic environment and buildings, spaces and features of local historic value.

3.0

POLICY CONTEXT

3.7

Paragraph 7.4 also contains useful and relevant guidance that highlights the importance of local distinctiveness and the degree to which this is valued, as well as how areas and sites have evolved over time.

“Good design takes account of its surroundings and preserves what is distinctive and valued about the local area. Careful consideration of the characteristics of a site, features of local distinctiveness and the wider context is needed in order to achieve high quality development which integrates into its surroundings. Character is about people and communities as well as the physical components. How places have evolved historically and the functions they support are key to understanding character.”

3.8

Policy D2 – Heritage outlines that the Council will seek development which preserves and where appropriate enhances Camden’s heritage assets and their settings. In relation to conservation areas the Council will require development that preserves or enhances character or appearance and with regard to listed buildings will resist development that would cause harm to the significance of a listed building through an effect on its setting, reflecting both the section 66 and section 72 statutory duties contained in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

3.9

The supporting text to policy D2 at paragraph 7.60 is also relevant with regard to setting and the potential for harm to its value.

“The setting of a listed building is of great importance and should not be harmed by unsympathetic neighbouring development. While the setting of a listed building may be limited to its immediate surroundings, it can often extend some distance from it. The value of a listed building can be greatly diminished if unsympathetic development elsewhere harms its appearance or its harmonious relationship with its surroundings. Applicants will be expected to provide sufficient information about the proposed development and its relationship with its immediate setting, in the form of a design statement.”

The London Plan

3.10

Policy 7.8 - Heritage Assets and Archaeology of The London Plan 2011 (revised and altered 2013 and 2015) is also relevant and requires development which affects heritage assets and their settings to conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.

3.0

POLICY CONTEXT

3.11

Area specific policy

The Hampstead Conservation Area Statement includes a series of area specific policies relating to new development and policies H21 and H22 are relevant to the assessment of this application.

Policy H21 - The UDP provides the context and guidance for proposals for new development with regard to appropriate land uses. New development should be seen as an opportunity to enhance the Conservation Area and should respect the built form and historic context of the area, local views as well as existing features such as building lines, roof lines, elevational design, and where appropriate, architectural characteristics, detailing, profile, and materials of adjoining buildings.

Policy H22 - Hampstead has a variety of building types, ages and styles. There are striking examples of modern architecture and design, however modern development has not always taken account of the area's history and its context. Modern architectural design will not be resisted per se, but it should be considerate to its context.

3.12

The Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in October 2018 and the following policies are relevant:

Policy DH1: Design

1. *Development proposals should demonstrate how they respond and contribute positively to the distinctiveness and history of the character areas identified in Map 2 and Appendix 2 through their design and landscaping.*
2. *Development proposals should demonstrate how they respect and enhance the character and local context of the relevant character area(s) by:*
 - a. *Ensuring that design is sympathetic to established building lines and arrangements of front gardens, walls, railings or hedges.*
 - b. *Incorporating and enhancing permeability in and around new developments to secure safe and convenient access for pedestrians and cyclists, and avoiding lockable gates and fencing that restricts through access.*
 - c. *Responding positively and sympathetically to the existing rhythm, proportion, height, scale, massing, materials and storey heights of surrounding buildings.*
 - d. *Protecting the amenity and privacy of neighbouring properties.*
 - e. *Demonstrating how the proposal protects and enhances the views as shown on Map 4.*

3.12 cont'd

3. *All development proposals which are required to produce a design and access statement will need to produce additional information on how the proposal conserves and / or enhances the relevant character area(s) relating to that proposal.*
4. *Development proposals that fail to respect and enhance the character of the area and the way it functions will not be supported.*

Policy DH2: Conservation areas and listed buildings

1. *Planning applications within a Conservation Area must have regard to the guidelines in the relevant Conservation Area Appraisal(s) and Management Strategies.*
2. *In reference to NPPF paragraphs 131 to 136, the Plan provides further guidance on the application of these policies below.*
3. *New development should take advantage of opportunities to enhance the Conservation Areas by protecting and, where appropriate, restoring original architectural features, including walls, windows, doors, etc., that would make a positive contribution to the Conservation Areas.*
4. *Development proposals must seek to protect and/or enhance buildings (or other elements) which make a positive contribution to the Conservation area, as identified in the relevant Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Strategies (see Appendix 3).*

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The proposals for the site includes the demolition of the existing house and its replacement with a new four storey building, with a basement floor and three floors expressed above ground level. The facades would generally be of red brick, with reconstituted sandstone and portland stone dressings and off-white windows. The roofscape would be clad in standing seam zinc.
- 4.2 The current house on the site is of two storeys and replaced a single storey 1950s garage which was ancillary to the adjacent house at no.4a Hampstead Hill Gardens. The proposed three storeys of accommodation which will be visible from the street are considered to be entirely inappropriate within their context and fail to respect the historic evolution of the site. The Heritage Statement by Prentice Moore submitted in support of the scheme acknowledges at page 11 that *"The wooden-shingle-clad low garage was originally a subservient addition to the main building"* and concludes that even in its current form and height *"....the present 4B with its zinc cladding and flat roof tends to overpower the house at 4A."*
- 4.3 It thus appears that the supporting Heritage Statement acknowledges the need for a subordinate relationship between the application site and no.4a. Therefore if in its present form it is considered to "overpower", it is difficult to see how the incorporation of a further visible storey of accommodation would not exacerbate this impact. An increase in height would invert the traditional and ancillary relationship of height and scale between no.4b and the main house at no.4a, which has been a feature of the streetscene since the mid 20th century. The Heritage Statement depicts at page 10 the original architectural plans for the extension of the original garage to form a house in the 1960s and shows that its height was limited at that time by no.4a, with their eaves in alignment and a flat roof to no.4b ensuring its overall height was below that of the ridge line of no.4a.
- 4.4 The Heritage Statement clearly identifies at page 13 that *"The house at 4A and the extension/house at 4B are both modest in scale, and are significantly lower than the surrounding Batterbury & Huxley houses."* However, the author concludes that the horizontal emphasis of the buildings adds to their 1950s/60s character and therefore *"....detracts from the considered mix of 1870s/80s houses which characterise the northern end of Hampstead Hill Gardens."* On the contrary, their low slung appearance, horizontal emphasis and contrasting architectural style clearly differentiate the current structures at nos.4a and 4b as later additions to the urban grain and fabric of the area and make no effort to compete with the surrounding Victorian buildings. Their subordinate height and scale are critical in allowing the original buildings to maintain their dominance and visual primacy within the streetscene.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSALS

- 4.5 The profile of the roofscape has been altered and reduced to take the form of a pitch, with square dormers to the front and rear slopes and a chimney stack on the eastern flank wall. However, the overall scale and massing of the building are broadly similar to the previously proposed scheme, with an increase in the height of the ridge when compared with the previously proposed parapet walls. The metal cladding is still proposed to be zinc, which fails to reflect the warm tones of the surrounding traditional weathered red/brown clay tiles.
- 4.6 Notwithstanding the amendments that have been made to the scheme, the proposed front elevation will still jut forward of the existing front building line of no.4b in the northern corner of the site at ground floor level. This will erode the existing pattern of setbacks along the street, which is a relatively uniform feature, at the shallowest point of the front garden of the site. Consequently, when compared with the existing building the overall height, bulk, form and design of the proposal is considered to have a harmful impact in fixed and unfolding views along Hampstead Hill Gardens. The subordinate and recessive character of the current house would be replaced by a far more dominant and assertive building which would draw attention to itself due to its height, massing, form, materials and detailed design.
- 4.7 The proposed scheme has been revised from its original contemporary architectural design to a more traditional approach. Further revisions have been incorporated to the front facade however overall the proposed elevational treatment is considered to be less successful than previous iterations. Efforts have been made to link the proposed front facade with that of no.4a through the introduction of a wide sandstone band above the ground floor windows. However this is a wholly arbitrary relationship to choose as other key datum points have not been respected, including the eaves and ridge height of no.4a. The proportions and scale of the proposed building are entirely different to those of no.4a and only serve to highlight the lack of subordination which is required on this site given the urban form and grain along Hampstead Hill Gardens and the need to preserve the setting of surrounding historic buildings.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSALS

- 4.8 Overall the proposed front elevation has a more classical composition than previously, with an inappropriate sense of grandeur derived from features such as the use of high architectural status sandstone for dressings and embellishment and the pronounced Portland stone eaves detailing – string courses and horizontal banding on surrounding buildings is in brickwork and less visually assertive. With regard to the proposed fenestration, the full height openings at ground floor level are a new feature and replace the previously proposed window serving the study. The newly proposed ground floor fenestration is incongruous feature and does not reflect the pattern along the street whereby ground floor rooms are lit by deep sash windows. At 1st floor level the paired windows also fail to reflect the prevailing character of large vertically proportioned sash windows and their paired arrangement creates broadly square apertures, with a solid to void ratio to this part of the facade which is out of keeping. This effect is heightened when combined with the proposed over-scaled, square dormer to the front roof slope. It is worth noting that the recently constructed development at no.23a Hampstead Hill Gardens also takes a traditional approach but much more closely follows the fenestration proportions, configuration and solid to void ratio of surrounding historic facades.
- 4.9 Looking east towards the site the proposed development will partially obscure the flank wall of the attractive building at no.6 which has a prominent chimneystack and decorative brickwork to its flank wall. These features were clearly designed to be highly visible within the streetscene given the originally open garden to the north and east of no.4 (see Figs 3 & 4). Looking west from the highest point in the curve of the road the proposed development will also obscure the attractive and prominent gabled rear roofscape of the Grade II listed building at no.4 (see Figs 5 & 6).
- 4.10 Whereas the northern edge of Hampstead Hill Gardens has a fairly tightly packed grain with visible vegetation restricted to the front gardens, the south side of the road is much more open with extensive areas of soft landscaping behind the boundary wall between the garden of no.6 and the road. At present the boundary greenery almost obscures no.4b in views westwards and as one moves east the screening results in a feeling of spaciousness and the sense of a void to the townscape. However, the proposed building will rise above this green screening and form a far more prominent and assertive element within the streetscene. Looking straight at the application site from the northern pavement the large and impressive copper beech to the rear makes a significant contribution to the amenity value of the street. As a result of its height and bulk, the proposed development will substantially obscure this important tree and thus undermine its contribution to the visual character of the streetscene (see Figs 8 & 9).

ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSALS



Figs 3 & 4 The application site looking east towards no.6 Hampstead Hill Gardens and a CGI of the proposed scheme demonstrating its visual impact upon views of the gable of no.6.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSALS



Figs 5 & 6 The application site looking west with the rear roofscape of no.4 Hampstead Hill Gardens visible and a CGI of the proposed gable end demonstrating its prominence within the streetscene.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSALS



Fig 7 Soft landscaping obscuring the existing building in views from Hampstead Hill Gardens.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSALS



Figs 8 and 9 CGI of the proposed development and a photograph of the site from the northern pavement of Hampstead Hill Gardens. It should be noted that the CGI is taken from closer to the site and thus the roofscapae appears more recessive than in views from the northern pavement and from houses on the opposite side of Hampstead Hill Gardens. Note also the visual dominance of the dormer in this view.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSALS

4.11 At present the spire of St Stephen's Church on Rosslyn Hill, a Grade I listed building, can be seen in winter views from the pavement of Hampstead Hill Gardens, visible in the gap between the SW corner of no.6 and the house at no.4a. The additional height and bulk of the proposed scheme will intrude into this view, detracting from the character of the street which benefits from the inter-visibility of heritage assets. As a lesser point, private views of the church spire from within the house at no.9 Hampstead Hill Gardens will also be compromised.

4.12 It is acknowledged that these further revisions to the scheme incorporate modifications to the profile of the upper floor of the proposed building which seek to reduce its visual impact. However, this does not address fundamental concerns regarding the effect of the development upon the pattern and grain of development along Hampstead Hill Gardens which results in a distortion of one's understanding of the historic evolution of the site.

4.13 From the rear courtyard garden of no.4a views towards the flank wall of no.6 would change dramatically, with significantly more bulk and massing visible from this space. The existing and proposed west elevation drawings demonstrate this impact. Whilst this is a private viewpoint it would nonetheless erode the subordinate visual relationship between no.4b and no.6 and detract from the established urban grain and pattern of development within this part of the conservation area.

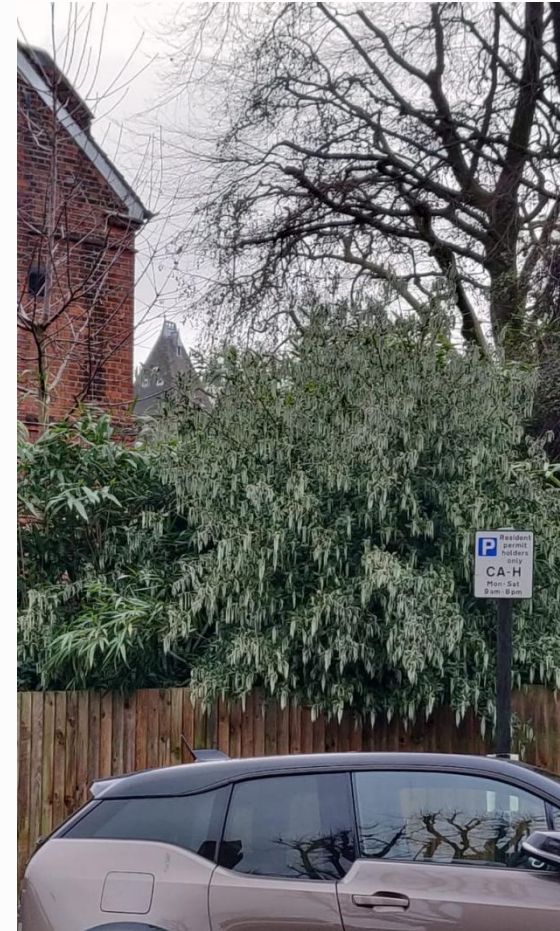
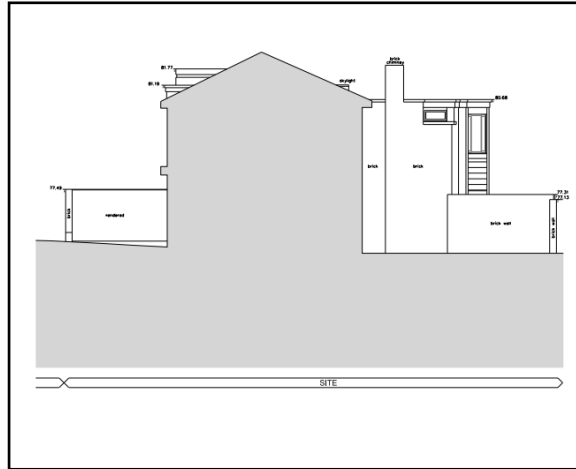


Fig 10 View from Hampstead Hill Gardens of the of the Grade I listed St Stephen's Church.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSALS



Figs 11, 12 and 13 Existing and proposed west elevation drawings of the scheme and the view from the rear garden of no.4a towards the flank wall of no.6.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSALS

- 4.14 Policy compliance**
- The NPPF 2019 requires that the significance of designated heritage assets, in this case the Hampstead Conservation Area and the surrounding statutorily listed buildings, should be taken into account when considering the impact of proposed development, so as to avoid or minimise conflict (para 190). At paragraph 193, when considering the impact of a proposed development on significance, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. At paragraph 200, the NPPF is clear that proposals that preserve those elements of setting which make a positive contribution to a heritage asset or which better reveal its significance should be treated favourably. For the reasons outlined above, the proposed development is not considered to sustain or enhance the significance of the Hampstead Conservation Area or the setting of the surrounding statutorily listed buildings and would cause 'less than substantial harm' to these heritage assets. The proposed scheme is not considered to sufficiently reflect and respond to local character and distinctiveness and would undermine the historic pattern of development and urban grain along Hampstead Hill Gardens, failing to better reveal the significance of this part of the Hampstead Conservation Area.
- 4.15**
- The supporting text to policy D1 of the Local Plan contained at paragraph 7.2 provides a checklist of requirements that developments will be expected to consider. As outlined below the proposed development is not considered to comply on any of the points.
- Character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings
- Response – The proposal detracts from the sense of spaciousness that is an original feature of the southern side of Hampstead Hill Gardens through its increased height and scale and its failure to remain visually subordinate to no.4a. The proposal would intrude into the setting of the surrounding listed buildings as a result of its increased bulk, massing and projecting building line at ground floor level.*
- The prevailing pattern, density and scale of surrounding development
- Response – The proposal takes no account of the historic evolution of the site and the subordinate character of no.4b to the surrounding late 19th century development, or to the original house at no.4a. The proposed building would increase the density on the site, which was historically an infill onto open space, detracting from the pattern and grain of development on the southern side of Hampstead Hill Gardens.*

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSALS

4.15 cont'd

The impact on existing rhythms, symmetries and uniformities in the townscape

Response – Hampstead Hill Gardens has a pattern of substantial detached and semi-detached late Victorian houses. The outer edge of the curve has a closely spaced grain and strong sense of enclosure. By contrast the southern side of the road is more irregular, with visible soft landscaping and trees softening the townscape. The proposal will detract from this pattern by introducing a building of significantly greater bulk and massing which competes visually with the high architectural quality of its context and detracts from the otherwise subordinate scale of development on the site that has been a feature since the mid 20th century.

The composition of elevations

Response – The design of the building with three visible above ground storeys creates an unacceptable degree of bulk and massing on the site which detracts from the historic pattern and grain of development along the street. The proportions, solid to void ratio, fenestration and detailing to the front facade fail to respond to the architectural context of surrounding historic buildings.

Its contribution to public realm and its impact on views and vistas

Response – The proposed development would be more visually assertive within the streetscene and would be in striking contrast to the subordinate character of the existing house, which is largely screened by existing soft landscaping in longer views westwards along Hampstead Hill Gardens. The additional height and bulk of the proposed development would intrude into views of the flank elevation of no.6 and the rear roofscape of no.4, both of which have architectural detailing and articulation that was clearly intended to be visible within the streetscene.

The wider historic environment and buildings, spaces and features of local historic value

Response – The proposed development fails to take account of the key features and characteristics of the road and the buildings which line it and consequently do not respond or contribute to the local distinctiveness of this part of the Hampstead Conservation Area.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSALS

- 4.16 Policy D2 of the Local Plan requires development to preserve and where appropriate enhance the borough's heritage assets and their settings. Hampstead Hill Gardens has a townscape of very high significance, reflecting the historic and architectural value of its individual listed buildings and the combined value of its unique layout, vistas, urban grain and relationship between the houses, the street and their garden settings. The proposed development is considered to detract from the setting of these listed buildings, both individually and as a coherent group. It is also considered to detract from an understanding of the historic evolution of this part of the road and its original pattern and grain of development by giving undue physical and visual prominence to the least historically significant element of the site.
- 4.17 The principles outlined in the supporting text to policy D1 are reflected in guidance contained within the adopted Hampstead Conservation Area Statement which states at policy H21 that new development should be seen as an opportunity to enhance the Conservation Area and that it should respect ".....the built form and historic context of the area, local views as well as existing features such as building lines, roof lines, elevational design, and where appropriate, architectural characteristics, detailing, profile, and materials of adjoining buildings." Policy H22 is also clear that modern architectural design should be considerate to its context. In this case the proposed development is not considered to comply with these policy requirements.
- 4.18 The proposed scheme does not respond to local distinctiveness or the character of the area as a result of its building line, height, massing, form, materials and detailed design and due to its impact upon the established, historic grain and pattern of development. The proposed scheme is not considered to preserve the setting of surrounding listed buildings or the character and appearance of the Hampstead Conservation Area. Consequently the proposals are considered to fail to comply with policies DH1 and DH 2 of the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan (2018).
- 4.19 As outlined at paragraph 3.3 above, in assessing the current application the decision maker must give '*considerable important and weight*' to the statutory duties to preserve the setting of listed buildings and the character and appearance of conservation areas. The identification of harm would give rise to a strong presumption against planning permission being granted. In this case, harm is considered to arise from the height, scale and bulk and design of the proposed building and the consequent impact upon views along Hampstead Hill Gardens. The increase in visual prominence on the site would invert the subordinate and ancillary relationship between nos.4a and 4b and would fail to respect the historic evolution of the site and the rightful primacy of the original Victorian buildings.

5.0

CONCLUSION

5.1

This report has assessed in detail the character of Hampstead Hill Gardens and the contribution of its historic buildings. The historic evolution of the site at nos.4a and 4b and its relationship with the surrounding late 19th century townscape has also been considered.

5.2

The proposed redevelopment of no.4b is considered to detract from the setting of the surrounding listed buildings at nos.1-11 (odd) and to cause demonstrable harm to the character and appearance of the Hampstead Conservation Area due to its height, bulk, massing, detailed design and materials which fail to respond adequately and sensitively to the surrounding historic context. Consequently the application fails to comply with the statutory duties at s.66(1) and s.72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. The application is also contrary to policies D1 (Design) and D2 (Heritage) of the Camden Local Plan 2017

Thank you for viewing our Heritage Statement.

If you have any queries or would like to discuss anything further with us please don't hesitate to get in contact. Our details can be found below.