

| Application No: | Consultees Name: | Received: | Comment: | Response: |
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| 2020/4307/P | Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee | 07/11/2020 18:21:31 | OBJNOT | <p>Submitted by Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee: 2020/4307/P 9D THE GROVE, HIGHGATE N6 OBJECTION FROM HIGHGATE CONSERVATION AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE</p> <p>Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee considers the existing house is one of an important group of Modernist houses in Highgate and we therefore must resist its demolition. We set out our reasons below and in the two attached Appendices.</p> <p>The existing house makes a bold and striking impact on both The Grove and Fitzroy Park with strong forms in good brickwork and the promise of a series of interesting external spaces, from shade to light. Whilst Colin Penn is probably best known for his published works on modern architecture and the modern house, and his collaborations with Erno Goldfinger, this house is also takes a sculptural and contextual approach in its design approach to the form, external spaces and facades. It makes a strong impact on its surroundings especially given the small opportunities the site presented to make such statements. It is part of the local history of modern architecture in Highgate. For all these reasons it makes a significant contribution to the Conservation Area and its loss would cause harm.</p> <p>The Heritage Statement suggests the house is unsatisfactory because it has no direct link with the garden but, from the Villa Savoye onwards to the present day, houses with as good a view as this one do adopt plans with upper floor living spaces. Homewood by Patrick Gwynne, 1938, is amongst many other examples that could be cited. The architect's one-time partner in practice, Erno Goldfinger, had built just such a house at 1 Willow Road in 1939. Until the twentieth century larger houses had plans with a piano nobile and the owners of houses in the Grove probably all continue that tradition. It is probably fair to say that the upper floor living spaces met the client's needs. We show in Appendix 1 that Colin Penn, the architect of this house, was in the forefront of thinking about modern architecture and modern house design in particular both before and after the Second World War.</p> <p>Camden planning does not have a local list of buildings of merit but instead makes assessments as to whether the building makes a positive contribution. Camden's Character Assessment mentions several contributions the existing property brings to the Conservation Area which when read together indicate this house makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. Therefore we cannot agree with paras. 4.19 - 4.24 in the Heritage Statement. However we do agree with para. 4.18: "Its simplicity of design also signals that it is subordinate to Park House ...and the Stables".</p> <p>We believe that demolition of this house should not be granted lightly and it should meet all the policy tests. We trust this Application needs to meet the 'less than substantial harm' test in the NPPF. The Highgate Neighbourhood Plan requires that demolition should result in a building which achieves enhancement. We do not believe it does.</p> <p>We note that CharltonBrown designed the 'pastiche' semi-detached pair of houses in The Grove (not four flats as approved) fairly recently but this proposal is in a very different style, picking up on current trends but without, we will argue, any consistency.</p> <p>The proposed house follows the rectilinear form of the existing building but extends further towards the Grove and adds a basement which extends under the garden which would disconnect the house from the reduced</p> |

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garden. How much higher the roof would be in relation to the existing house is uncertain as the drawings appear inconsistent. The height would be slightly greater than the existing house and the east wall would be very close to the boundary with The Stables, both unacceptable in relation to the impact on neighbours and on the Conservation Area. The difference between the semi-detached pair of houses and this scheme is that this one attempts a very different style of which examples are provided. Whilst the plans are orthodox and straightforward, the Application uses various historical references as well as some 'of-the-minute' features which are applied with little consistency or meaning to the facades of this box. Looking at the plans it is not at all clear what exactly is proposed:

- none of the pilasters project (although shadows are shown on the elevations);
- what from shadow lines appear to be recessed brickwork panels on the east and west elevations are in fact flat;
- the cornice at eaves level is flat although again a shadow line is shown suggesting a deep coping which it is not.
- The surround to the central garden doors is patterned brickwork without projection.

The double height main arch to the projecting front door is incomplete when it hits the top string course. So the approach is whimsical and intended to trick or unsettle the viewer. In three dimensions it will appear to be a flat-fronted brick box. The walls are generally around 400mm thick but the only recessed arch, on the north elevation, reduces the wall thickness.

There are disparate design references on pages 28 and 31 of the Design and Access Statement: examples of classical buildings that are symmetrically ordered facades; recessed brickwork within brick arches; bay windows on Edwardian or inter-war houses; and, amongst others, Sir John Soane. Some reference stable buildings, presumably because the immediate neighbour was built as a stables with rendered facades and pilasters. On the other hand the window recesses (if they are indeed recesses) partly filled with windows and partly filled with brick are a currently popular form, often where a ventilation panel is required such as at Maiden Lane or here to create an outline of ordered symmetry but visually dismissed by the window positions. The proposal is eclectic and applies a different feature taken from this palette to each façade in an apparently random fashion, the rear bay windows being a real oddity, not carrying the classical references through with integrity.

The Sergison Bates' example holds together as an entity. The writer of this objection was shown round 64 - 68 Stapleton Hall Road, Stroud Green, designed by Stephen Taylor for Gus Zogolovitch (not built as Planning Permission; CoL obtained), by Roger Zogolovitch. The plans in Stapleton Hall Road are awkward and tight though the stair in one is well-detailed. The arches broken by an angle in the elevation may be an architectural amusement but a structural impossibility without concrete structure behind it. That deliberate discomfort is replicated in this application.

What we are presented with is a plain box of classical form with symmetry and pretended depth played with in uncomfortable ways but not in a masterly manner. Also we consider it detracts from the streetscape and setting thus on both counts it fails to achieve the tests of both 'cutting edge' and 'enhancement' when compared with the existing house.

We also note that the proposal would have an adverse impact on The Stables.

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We are also concerned about the three trees mentioned in the Highgate Neighbourhood Forum's objection.

Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee therefore objects to this application on the grounds that it does not meet the criteria for demolition in either the NPPF or the Highgate Neighbourhood Plan.

APPENDIX 1 : Colin Penn RIBA (1907 - 1997?) re 9D The Grove 2020/4307/P
Submitted by Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee

1933: Penn was one of four members of the Churston Committee who commissioned William Lescarze, a Swiss architect who moved to America and there played a central role in setting up New York's Housing Study Guild (which conducted housing research and outreach to educate professionals and the broader community on the design, construction and need for government supported housing for the modern age) to design a Modernist development in Churston, Devon, just outside Brixham. Penn was commissioned to ensure Lescarze's design met British building standards. The project was never built because of philosophical differences amongst the Committee particularly on the topic of 'building a community'. (Lescarze went on to build Student Accommodation for Dartington Hall and High Cross House, the Headmaster's House).

1934: Colin Penn joined the studio of Anthony Chitty, future founder of Tecton.

1939: Penn co-authors 'A Key to Modern Architecture' with F.R.S. Yorke (YRM). Its publication coincides with J.M. Richards' 'An Introduction to Modern Architecture'. Richard's proposed that the RIBA Council, through the pages of The Architect's Journal, should judge his assessment of the LCC's post-war work. Colin Penn, a member of RIBA Council and one of only four to respond through the Letters' Page, responded critically of the LCC's housing work.

1943 - 1951: Goldfinger & Penn designed the Communist Party Headquarters, King Street, Covent Garden

1946: Camden New Journal Issue 11.1.07 reports receiving a Home Office report on Goldfinger's application to be 'naturalised' through an FOI: "He would not get preferential treatment. Not, at least, while Special Branch and MI5 were investigating his links to the Communist Party...Applicant's present business partner Colin T Penn, who lives close to the applicant at 1 Willow Road, is a secret member of and an active worker in the Communist Party."

1946: RIBA Drawings Collection: Exhibition panels designed by Goldfinger & Penn: 'Planning your Home' for the Air Ministry & Admiralty Education Department.

1947: RIBA Drawings Collection: House for W.B. Fletcher at Knowle, Warwickshire by Goldfinger & Penn

1947: Design for The Daily Worker Building, Farringdon Road, London (Goldfinger & Penn drawing in RIBA Drawings Collection)

1954: 'Houses of Today: A practical guide' published

1956: Penn designs 9D The Grove for Dr. Fleetwood Walker

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1967: Penn co-authors a 'printed discussion journal' "The Marxist" . Penn had already been expelled from the Communist Party and the St. Pancras YCL. He was expelled from the London District in January 1967.

1968: A student thesis suggests Penn worked on Trellick Tower with Goldfinger. He may have done so as a member of Goldfinger's studio. If this is correct, it might also suggest he was involved with the Balfron Tower which pre-dated Trellick.

1973: Penn was commissioned to do work on 31 Portland Place, London, bought by the Chinese for their new Embassy (opposite the RIBA) in Portland Place. Sir Alec Douglas-Hume, Foreign Secretary, urged Geoffrey Rippon to speedily allow demolition because the Chinese had recently freed British prisoners and there was a thaw in relations with China. Demolition was approved later that year only on condition 'staircases, balustrades, mahogany doors, moulded plaster, chimney pieces' were salvaged and incorporated in the new embassy. Penn commented: 'there was never any question of reinstating historic finishes such as the staircase,' as it would have clashed with his new design. Penn was obliged to rebuild facsimile facades. The GLC's Historic Buildings' Committee Chairman said if an embassy needed a modern office block rather than a listed building, then 'it would make more sense to provide it in the first place and save London's dwindling heritage in the process.'

By 1973 Colin Penn was 66 years old.

In summary, it appears that Colin Penn was much appreciated as an architect with an interest in modern architecture and the design of modern homes, in particular, by many important architects of the period.

APPENDIX 2: 2020/4307/P 9D THE GROVE : SUSTAINABILITY Submitted by Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee

Demolition is less sustainable as an approach to addressing climate change but only if measures can be taken to improve the carbon footprint of the existing house. We do not believe a fair comparison is made between the two options in the Applicants' Sustainability Report. If it can be shown, as we believe it could be, that the performance of the existing house could be enhanced to a greater degree than that Report states, then the case for demolition is weakened.

Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee presumes that this house was built for an elderly couple wishing to downsize. The location is perfect for such a couple: a flat site with buses to the Underground and all local shops accessible without encountering the hilly parts of Highgate. Now the Doctor's Surgery is a couple of bus stops from the nearby bus stop. This house is therefore ideally suited to local people considering down-sizing which is in short supply locally. See Policy SC1 III in the Highgate Neighbourhood Plan.

The items in italics are taken from the Applicant's Sustainability Report, in which the options for the existing house are described as follows:

"The current envelope would need substantial overhauling only to raise the performance just above average,

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and the owner would have to rely on piecemeal measures for minimal performance gain."

HCAAC Response:

The comparison between the presumption of minimal works to improve the sustainability of the existing house and the assumptions made for the proposed house is not a fair one. The Applicants, having purchased a two-bedroomed house but requiring a new four-bedroomed house, are obliged to meet current standards but they are not aiming to achieve zero carbon standards. We presume that if the Applicants had needed a two-bedroomed house they would have adopted an approach which would achieve at least a similar standard as that proposed for the application scheme. However the works suggested for the existing house in The Sustainability Report are much inferior, and the suggestion is that no better standard than this could be achieved. However there are space-saving but very thermally efficient materials which could be used which together with renewables could well achieve a similar EPC as that for the proposed house or even zero-carbon.

* The existing building would require to be stripped completely internally.

HCAAC Response:

This would require much less demolition than a replacement house would involve. Reinstating underfloor heating would be a visual improvement but also more sustainable if combined with PV panels and a battery. Many interesting original features could be reinstalled.

* The ground floor slab would require insulation above the existing concrete slab, decreasing and compromising the existing head height.

HCAAC Response:

The ground floor slab could be removed and upgraded to provide much improved thermal performance

* The existing cavity walls will require blown insulation into the existing cavity, as already limited space requirements prohibit the use of internal or external insulation. There is a potential moisture risk with the implementation of insulation into the new cavity, via driving rain and rising damp if great consideration to thermal connections is not possible.

HCAAC Response:

The garage internal wall and ceiling insulation could be done very simply, cheaply and achieve high U values between the garage and habitable spaces. The outer walls of the garage could also be insulated with conventional materials to achieve a better level of insulation than is required for intermediate spaces, leaving plenty of room for plant and storage. In the habitable areas, where space is at a premium and the purchase value per sq. m. is high, more expensive forms of insulation would be considered.

* New steels will be required to support the first floor to enable a new layout to the ground floor that is able to adapt to family life over time and ensure the longevity of the building.

HCAAC Response:

This does not appear to be a sustainability matter but more a result of buying a house unsuitable for the family

* The roof covering will require replacement however the level is not possible to be raised to increase the

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thermal performance to modern standards as the parapet is low lying and as mentioned the internal floor to ceiling heights are already low for maximal light infiltration. Insulation will be introduced between the existing rafters, retaining a cold roof to minimise moisture risk.

HCAAC Response:

If the copper has reached the end of its life (which seems unlikely) then a warm roof could be devised whilst ensuring no cold bridges occur at parapet gutters. Alternatively, sufficient roof insulation could be installed in the void, whilst maintaining ventilation, together with a layer of insulating plasterboard replacing the existing ceilings, having minimal effect on ceiling heights

* The windows and doors would all require replacement for increased thermal performance and where possible, relocation, to maximise available light / considered layout for modern family life.

HCAAC Response:

As the windows are not original and are apparently double-glazed, their replacement to much-enhanced standards following the original fenestration would be advisable. A Daylight Report would indicate if those changes met current standards. The positions of window and door openings should not be changed given the importance of the house

* Thermal bridges will be present at wall and floor junctions with the inability to form continuous insulation layer without significant structural implications

HCAAC Response:

Thermal bridges can be designed out

* The retained form will affect the quality of light significantly as rooms will become more pokey and effect the ability for the light to penetrate to the depth of the structure.

HCAAC Response:

This may not be the case. See above re Daylight Report and ultra-thin insulation

* The low ceiling heights will affect the quality of light and space within 9D, as well as making it not possible to run services through ceiling voids.

HCAAC Response:

We presume the first floor and ceiling are timber structures within which services can be run.

There is plenty of room for plant in the garage or outbuilding. Ground Source and Air Source heat pumps should be included in a revised calculation.

The Sustainability Report states that air conditioning will not be provided to the several basement habitable rooms but a Nilan P system will only reduce temperature by up to 10 deg c. No duct routes are shown.

In summary, a much more ambitious target, even zero carbon, should be set as a comparator for a new building with a new study carried out independently; and the sustainability of demolishing a house built as

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| | | | | recently as 1956 which is in good repair should be addressed. |
| 2020/4307/P | Louise Lewis | 06/11/2020 17:12:08 | OBJ | <p>2020/4307/P 9d The Grove</p> <p>Application 2014/2563/T implies that these trees are subject to a TPO. If this is the case this application should be detailed and subject to greater scrutiny than is the case for trees in a Conservation Area. T1,2,3 and 4 make a significant contribution to the visual amenity of the area. This can clearly be seen from the photographs the applicant has supplied. Although Fitzroy Park is a private road, it is well used by walkers and cyclists going to and from The Heath. These impressive mature trees mark the edge of the historic Highgate Village area. That arboriculturalist has assessed the trees as grade B and C, as is usual in such reports. We would ask one of Camden's Tree Officers to make an independent assessment. The Tree Protection Plan is totally inadequate, merely reproducing the standard fencing drawing automatically attached to such Plans. There is no evidence that any thought or consideration has been given to these trees. There is no analysis of a suitable Root Protection Area and no attempt to analyse what effect the basement and bringing the house forward to Fitzroy Park, will have on these trees. We are particularly concerned with T1 and T2.</p> <p>Louise Lewis Highgate Neighbourhood Forum</p> |
| 2020/4307/P | Peter Kenny | 06/11/2020 10:00:23 | COMNOT | <p>I object to this planning application on the grounds that;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposal to demolish means Fitzoy Parl will lose a rare example of 50's architecture by a female architect. 2. The proposed schem is too large and an overdevelopment of the site. 3. The proposed development is contrary to Camden's Basement policy. 4. No CMP is provided with the application. 5. There are no proposals concerning access to the site, traffic management, or pedestrian safety. 6. The proposed scheme is not appropriate for a unique area such as Fitzroy Park/ the Grove |