

# Section 2.0

## Context Analysis

## 2.0 Context Analysis

### 2.1 Site Location

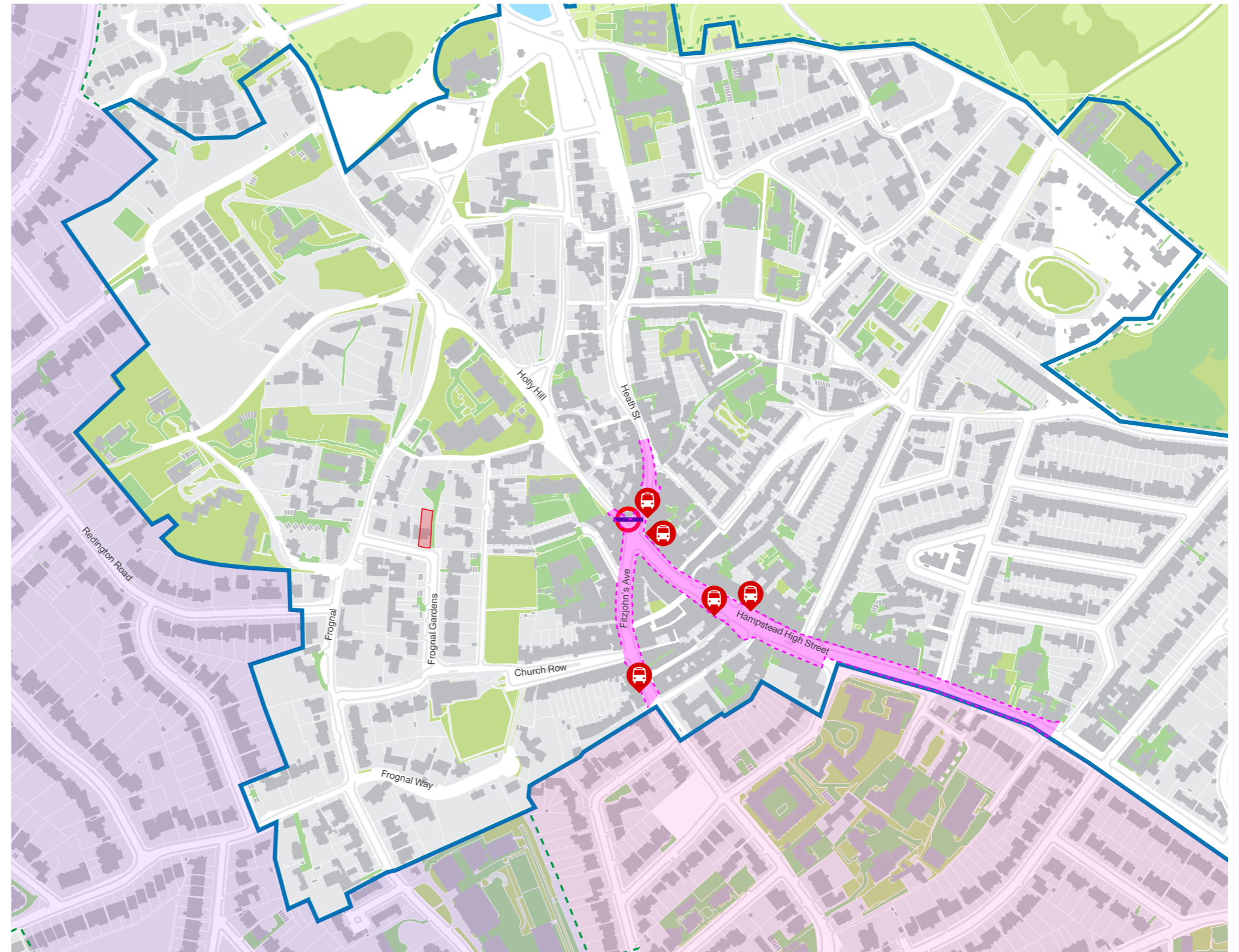
18a Frogna! Gardens is located in the London Borough of Camden within the Hampstead Conservation Area.

The site is located within the Frogna! sub area.

The site is approximately 5 minute walk from Hampstead Village Centre and Hampstead Tube Station.

The transport rating for the site is PTAL 3, which measures in the middle of the scale for public transport accessibility.

- 18a Frogna! Gardens Plot
- ⊖ Hampstead Underground Station
- ⋯ Hampstead Conservation Area
- ⋯ Fitzjohns Netherhall Conservation Area
- ⋯ Redington Frogna! Conservation Area



Site Location Plan



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### 2.2 The Hampstead Conservation Area & Statement of Significance

#### Affected Designated Heritage Assets

This section provides a Statement of Significance of affected Heritage Assets as required by paragraph 189 of the NPPF which requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected.

The affected Designated Heritage Asset in this case is the Hampstead Conservation Area itself.

The building is not experienced in the setting of any Listed Building.

The building itself, dating from the 1960s, is not considered to be a non-designated heritage asset.

Section 4 of this report assesses the contribution that the existing building makes to the Conservation Area and we find it to be limited, and no more than a neutral contribution. In some regards, its contribution to the Conservation Area is negative.

The building is connected to its neighbour at No 18b, although each dwelling employs different architectural treatment. The overall effect is that the buildings form an awkward, unbalanced composition that lacks composure, richness and quality.

There is a clear opportunity for a replacement building to make a higher quality contribution to the Conservation Area.



Hampstead Conservation Area, Frognaal Heritage Assets

- Listed Buildings
- Buildings which make a positive contribution
- 18a Frognaal Gardens Plot



Existing Buildings at 18a & 18b Frognaal Gardens



## 2.0 Context Analysis

### 2.2 The Hampstead Conservation Area & Statement of Significance

The following pages describe the significance of the CA generally, the sub area within which the application site falls, the tradition of architectural innovation in Hampstead and the historic urban development of the locality.

This section also discusses the contribution that the existing site makes to the significance of the conservation area in accordance with historic England guidelines.

#### The Hampstead Conservation Area

The Hampstead Conservation Area (CA) was designated in January 1968. The CA appraisal highlights the area's "considerable quality and variety", including "the range, excellence and mix of buildings" (Camden Council, Hampstead Conservation Area Statement, 2002).

The CA Statement details the history of the CA. The area's hilltop location, next to the Heath with fresh and clean air, played an important role for its development. Historically, the settlement's origins date from the early Middle Ages, with the manor being given to the monastery at Westminster by King Ethelred the Unready in 986. From the early 17th century, the area attracted wealthy residents and temporarily became a fashionable spa. The 18th century village is still intact at the heart of the CA. In Georgian times it remained a fashionable place of retirement high above London, with a growing reputation for artistic and literary residents. With the arrival of the railway in the 19th century, and the laying out of new streets on the southern and western slopes, population numbers continued to increase and the built-up area was finally joined to Greater London.

Hampstead's character as a sought-after residential area derives from various factors: its hill-top setting, its closeness to the Heath, its intricate street pattern, the survival of many historic buildings. It also has a richness of association with renowned artistic figures, from Romney, Keats and Constable onwards. This cultural significance extends to architecture.



Figure Ground Plan. Limit of Sub Area 5: Froggnal



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### 2.3 Historic Urban Development

The first noted description of the site of Frogna! Gardens dates back to the 15th century when the grounds formed a customary tenement on the west side of modern Frogna!. Church Row, however, is known to follow a medieval route and the present Hampstead Parish Church is most likely occupying the site of its predecessor, the earliest reference of which comes from the early 14th century.

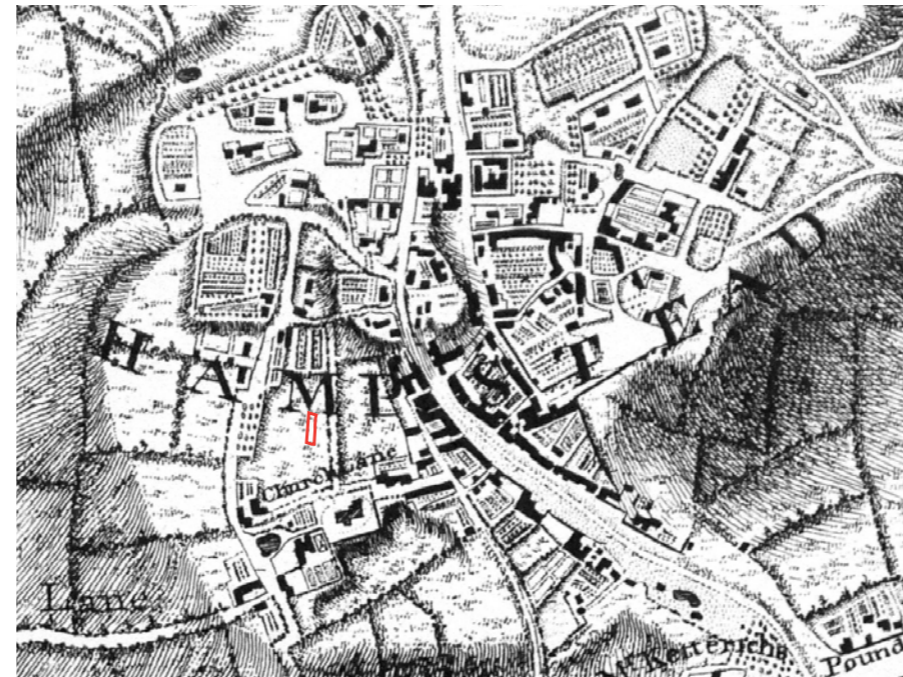
The 17th century draws a picture of a countryside settlement with several cottages and a manor with farm buildings on its demesne.

The first notable houses to be built in the direct proximity to the project site were Frogna! Hall, which probably existed by 1640 and became home to several prominent judges; and Priory Lodge, where Samuel Johnson wrote most of the *Vanity of Human Wishes*. Both the buildings were set back from the road, on a property adjacent to the church grounds.

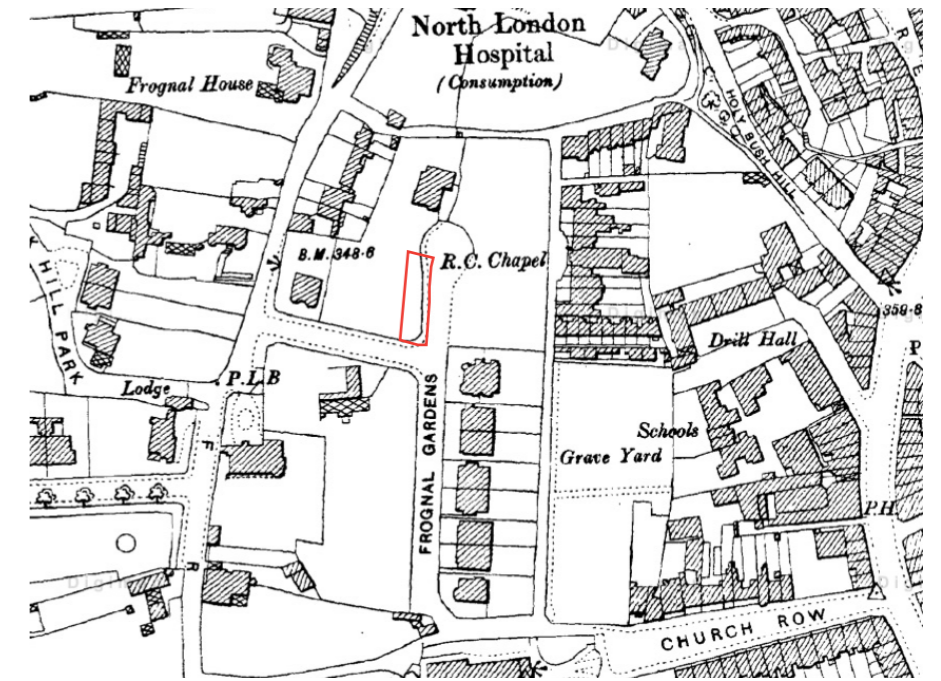
The rural character of today's stretch of Frogna! Gardens changed further in the early 19th century with a mansion located south of the present west side of the road. The Old Mansion was later acquired by Alexander Grey who laid out an L-shaped road, Frogna! Gardens c.1889. He also commissioned the design of the first house on a corner of the road – no. 100 Frogna! and five houses along the east side of Frogna! Gardens. No. 18 'Frogna! End', a double fronted detached house was built for the novelist and antiquary Sir Walter Besant in 1892.

By the early 20th century, Priory Lodge and Frogna! Hall were demolished and replaced by 96-98 Frogna! and 3-9 Frogna! Gardens – two-storey detached houses of a distinct character with pantiled roof, set back from the street.

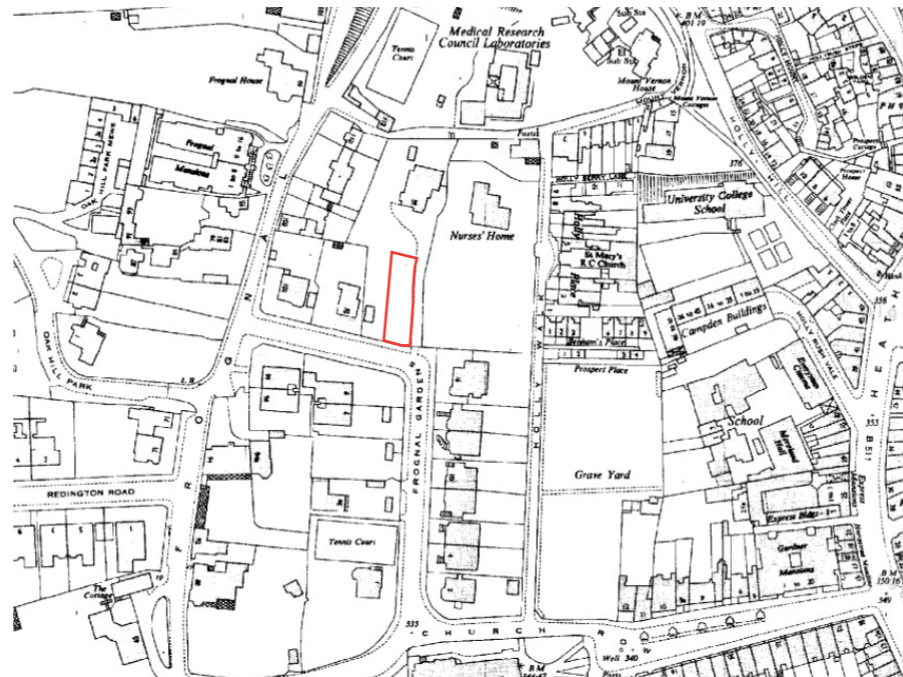
The 20th-century development of Frogna! Gardens added to the architectural variety of the built environment and the rich diversity of the area.



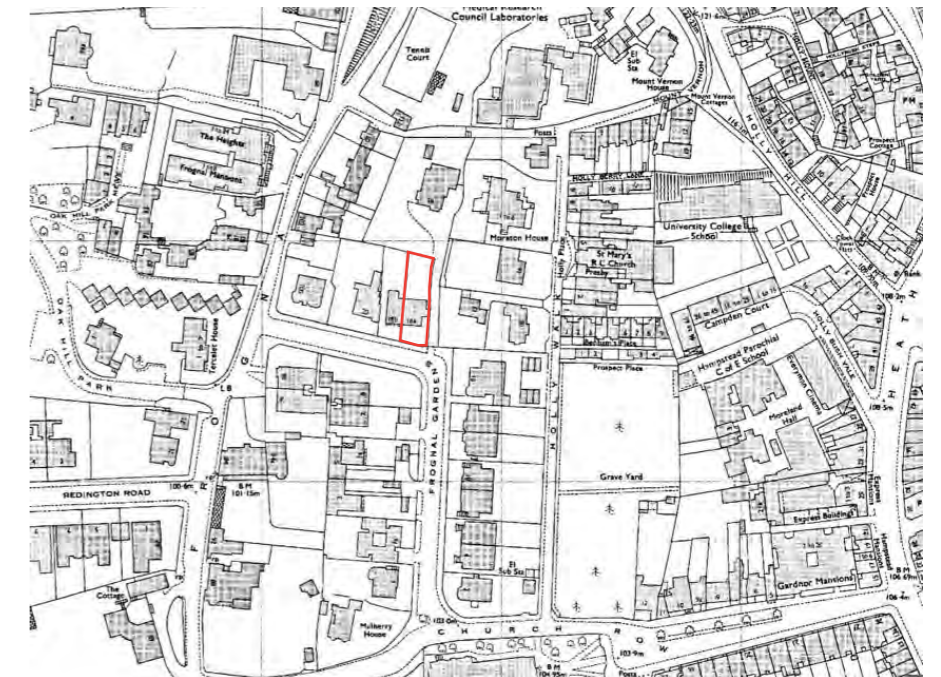
1746



1890



1950



1970



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### 2.4 Hampstead: Tradition and Innovation

Architectural innovation has become one of the characteristics of the Conservation Area, from the Victorian period, through the 20th century, and on to today. As the Conservation Area Statement (2002, p. 11) puts it for the 20th century:

“More prestigious houses continued to be built on the western slopes around Frognal and Fitzjohns Avenue in a variety of inventive arts-and-crafts styles, gradually becoming more conventionally neo-Georgian as the 20th century progressed. A number of striking modern houses were built in the 1930s around Frognal and in Willow Road that defied convention, and the Hampstead tradition of avant-garde architecture established in the 1870s, continued through the 20th century.”

In the 19th century, Hampstead’s reputation for architectural innovation was led by Richard Norman Shaw (1831-1912), perhaps the most influential of later Victorian architects: very much a local figure, he is buried in Hampstead churchyard. The stucco classicism of mid-19th century London gave way to a more domestic tradition in brick, tile and terracotta under his stylistic lead: his own house at 6 Ellerdale Road of 1874-6 (listed Grade I) embodies this move, and Fitzjohns Avenue, laid out at that time with new houses along its entire length, was described in 1883 as ‘one of the noblest streets in the world’ by American magazine Harper’s Bazaar which recognised the arrival of a new form of residential architecture.

Renowned Arts and Crafts architect C. F. A. Voysey designed one notable house for his father at 8 Platts Lane (1895-6, Grade II\*). Local architect Horace Field was a key figure in the neo-Georgian movement, designing several buildings in the area which heralded the widespread take-up of this adaptable style, such as the Lloyd’s Bank on Rosslyn Hill of 1895-6. Leading trends in architectural development can thus be seen in the area.

The brick traditional vernacular of late Victorian and Edwardian Hampstead (which endured into the 1920s) gave way to the pursuit of modernity from the 1930s. No. 20 Frognal Way is a large white-painted house in



Richard Norman Shaw introduced new stylistic elements to the Conservation Area



C. F. A. Voysey’s, no. 8 Platts Lane



The green tiles of the 20 Frognal Way has a strong presence in the conservation area.

‘Hollywood Spanish Colonial’ style with a tall green tiled roof and green shutters, built for the celebrated entertainer Gracie Fields in 1934.

Progressive clients commissioned bold new houses and apartment buildings: Wells Coates’s Isokon Building (1929-34, Grade I) shows this on a large scale. Maxwell Fry’s Sun House (1934-5), is a white Modernist classic. No. 66, designed by Connell, Ward and Lucas, was also in the modernist traditions of Le Corbusier but it is unusual for its polychromy, with earthen toned walls and brightly coloured details. Ernst Freud’s Frognal Close (1937) is a larger enclave of European modernism, realised in local brick. The Goldfinger House at 1-3 Willow Road of 1938, now regarded as one of London’s most important interwar buildings, was controversial in its day and had to overcome vigorous opposition before it was built. Innovation is not always easily accepted.



Wells Coates’s Isokon Building, 1929-34



Maxwell Fry’s Sun House, 9 Frognal Way, 1936

In keeping with domestic architecture generally, Hampstead’s post-war houses steered a line between modernity and tradition. A good example of this is ‘Broadside’ in Admiral’s Walk of 1960 by Boissevain & Osmond, with its prominent glazed front revealing a spiral staircase.

In South Hill Park, Nos 80-90 is a terrace of 1954-6 (Grade II) by partners in Howell, Killick, Partridge and Amis; No 78 adjoining these is a more one-off concrete house, influenced by Aldo Van Eyck and other continental figures, of 1963-5 (Grade II). James Gowan’s Schreiber House at 9 West Heath Road (1964; listed Grade II) is distinctive in its engineering brick and uncompromising verticality. A number of interesting bespoke houses from this period have been demolished, such as Peter Shephard’s house at 21 Well Walk. These houses have helped to preserve the innovative character of the area.



No. 66 Frognal Way, Connell, Ward and Lucas, 1937



No. 1-3 Willow Road, Erno Goldfinger, 1938



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### 2.4 Hampstead: Tradition and Innovation

The designation of the Conservation Area in January 1968 encouraged the contextual emphasis in design although expressly modern designs continued to be built where opportunities arose, such as the renowned Hopkins House at 49a Downshire Hill by Michael and Patty Hopkins (1975-6). Now listed Grade II\*, it was a bold design to consent in the newly decreed Conservation Area. It is a notable example of how the new legislation of the 1967 Civic Amenities Act, with its injunction to allow designs which managed to 'conserve or enhance' the location, was intended to be applied. Innovative architecture was promoted by the London Borough of Camden, famous for the exemplar social housing programme in the post-war decades.



Nos 80-90 South Hill Park, partners in Howell, Killick, Partridge and Amis, 1954-56



The Hopkins House is a bold modernist design in the conservation area

Architecturally interesting council estates were built in Hampstead such as the Branch Hill Estate by Benson and Forsyth (Grade II, 1974-6), its pale render and stacked forms made possible by its secluded setting.

In more recent times too, bold designs using innovative materials have been granted consent, often replacing fairly recent buildings of the post-war period. Well Road has several modernist houses: No 21 by Webb Architects, is a severely geometric design in fair-faced concrete of c.2005, and sits on the former site of the aforementioned house by Peter Shephard. Opposite is a copper-sheeted cube to the rear of Foley House, 11 East Heath Road called 'The Treehouse' by LXA London of 2019, with dramatic glazed balconies over the sunken garden setting.

Closer to Frognal Gardens, Monahan Blythen's 27a Redington Road (2005), a stand-alone white house with dramatic exposed staircase and copper roof, stands within the brick enclave of Chesterford Gardens. 16 Holly Walk was consented in 2005, with a bold design by KSR Architects being built described in the Design and Access Statement as 'contemporary in style with a large degree of articulation to ensure its scale is in keeping with the existing street. The quality of materials, stone, render and timber are appropriate to its context and location within a Conservation Area'.

On Frognal, opposite Frognal Gardens, Tercelet Terrace is a large recent development whose simple brick and timber volumes introduce a new architectural idiom in this part of the CA.

The character of Hampstead has thus continued to be a multi-faceted one, blending different periods and styles alongside one another. Georgian (polite and vernacular) stands alongside Victorian (expressive and eclectic); inter-war traditional co-exists with the expressly modern. Post-war additions adopted several strategies and uncompromisingly contemporary designs continue to be built, such as John McAslan's The Cottage, 6 Redington Road (2006-7), an elegant composition in glass and brick.



No. 14A Redington Road



No 21 Well Road, Webb Architects, 2005



No 16 Holly Walk, by KSR architects, 2005



No 28 Ellerdale Road

The tensions between context and innovation are predictable. Following too deferential an approach in design can result in unremarkable design which falls below the level of deference and enters the territory of the dull. It is worth citing the inspector's report for an appeal heard in 2006 on proposals to redevelop 14 a Redington Road, to designs by Webb Architects: 'The quality of this Conservation Area is such that any new interventions should contribute to that architectural distinctiveness and heritage. It seems to me that this part of the Conservation Area is undergoing a period of critical change with a number of permissions having been granted for the demolition and redevelopment of existing dwellings or infill development. Some of the new development is traditional in design and some is strikingly modern. I feel that there is a danger that the history of architectural innovation in the area would be lost if too many buildings were permitted which sought merely to replicate the designs and ideas of the past.' The issue of innovation in design has thus become an important factor when considering the acceptability (or otherwise) of a proposal in the Hampstead Conservation Area. More than most Conservation Areas elsewhere, Hampstead's has a proud tradition of architectural innovation and quality. Seldom has the twin injunction of the core Conservation Area legislation, 'to conserve or enhance', been more evident.



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### 2.4 Hampstead: Tradition and Innovation

**1** No 6 Ellerdale Road, 1876-76

**2** No 8 Platts Lane, 1895-96

**3** No 20 Frognal Way, 1934

**4** Isokon building, 1929-34

**5** No 9 Frognal Way, 1936

**6** No 66 Frognal Way, 1938

**7** No 1-3 Willow Road, 1938

**8** "Broadside", Admiral's Walk, 1960

**9** No 80-90 South Hill Park, 1954-56

**10** No 78 South Hill Park, 1963-65

**11** No 9 West Heath Road, 1964

**12** No 11 East Heath Road, "The Treehouse", 2019

**13** No 49a Downshire Hill, 1975-76

**14** Branch Hill Estate, 1974-76

**15** No 21 Well Road, 2005

**16** No 21 Well Walk

**17** No 27a Redington Road, 2005

**18** No 16 Holly Walk, 2005

**19** No 6 Redington, 2006-7

**20** No 14a Redington, 2006

**21** No 3 Admirals Walk, 2018



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### 2.5 Historic Building Materials: Variety and Revival

An important element of the interest of Hampstead's buildings derives from their materials. Traditionally, these have reflected those of historic Middlesex: an area devoid of building stone, but with clay plentifully available for brick and tile, and timber available too. The transport revolution of the 18th-19th centuries brought about a standardisation of materials as they became more freely available, such as Welsh roofing slates. Industrial processes also introduced new building materials such as Roman cement and plate glass.

The domestic revival of later Victorian Hampstead placed greater premium on traditional materials: roof tiles made a return, and warm red brick displaced the stock brick or pale grey brick preferred of the mid-century. The appetite for picturesque embellishment led to a greater range of finishes being made available, such as terracotta decoration and decorative external plasterwork (seen to advantage down the road at No 14 Kidderpore Avenue, of 1901). Polychromatic and decorative brickwork was also used to enliven exteriors, as was banded brick and stone, exemplified by the Dutch-inspired frontage of 12-14 Frognal Gardens. Materiality and the quality of construction were important contributory factors to the best of Hampstead's buildings.

In recent decades, the predominant local material of brick has determined the design of many recent houses.

No 3 Admiral's Walk, completed in 2018 to the designs of Stanton Williams, is a further instance of a bespoke new house faced in brick, showing the possibilities offered by this material in a non-traditional idiom. Others, exceptionally, have deployed the palette of international modernism: steel, glass and concrete.

Coloured faïence is best shown on the exterior of Hampstead Underground Station, by Leslie Green (1906-7), in his characteristic ox-blood tiling. Introducing colour notes in buildings in later Victorian designs, beyond the earth tones of brick and tile, was left to stained glass and external joinery, such as doors and window frames. Copper could be an eye-catching feature too, as seen in the spire of the parish church. Between the wars, the palette of roofing material was extended so that green pantiled roofs became a new feature: Gracie Fields' house of 1934 in Frognal Way is a good example of this.

The recent 27a Redington Road, referred to above, of 2005, used a Verdigris copper roof covering as one of its signature features, introducing pleasing chromatic contrast with the warm red bricks of its neighbouring houses. The injection of colour, set against the predominantly earth tones of Hampstead buildings, and the natural backdrop of foliage and sky, can enhance the scene and extend the local tradition of creative achievement within a setting of great sensitivity.



No. 14 Kidderpore Avenue shows a range of building materials, including terracotta tiling



Admiral's Walk by Stanton Williams shows a non-traditional approach to brick architecture



27a Redington Road by Monahan Blythen Architects adds a bold accent to the conservation area



20 Frognal Way has green roof tiles and details



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### 2.6 The Frogna Sub-Area

The CA Statement divides the CA into eight sub-areas which have their own particular characteristics. 18a Frogna Gardens falls within 'Sub-area 5: Frogna'. Each sub-area is broken up into character zones. One of these is Frogna, which already existed as a small hamlet in the 17th century. A collection of 18th century houses has survived, enveloped by later building. At the end of the 19th century, Frogna became a popular place for the affluent classes to live, and large houses in spacious gardens were built.

There is an eclectic mix of building ages and architectural styles with many Queen Anne, neo-Georgian and Arts and Crafts inspired designs. The influence of the noted architect (and Hampstead resident) Richard Norman Shaw is strongly felt, making Hampstead something of a test-bed for developments in English domestic architecture. The predominant building material in the CA is brick in different hues, combined with a rich variety of other building materials, such as render, natural stone, terracotta and timber. Gables are often partially clad with red hung tiles or shingles and complemented by white barge-boards. The CA appraisal highlights the "decorative moulded brickwork or areas of tile hanging". Materials and detailing play a key part in the appeal of the CA.

At their best, the later Victorian buildings are picturesque compositions comprising a series of volumes, bay windows and oriel windows, porches, parapets, turrets and gables, embellished with architectural details in brick or stone, for example quoins, cornices, pediments and chimney stacks. Hampstead's houses led the way nationally for their picturesque yet carefully planned design, which drew imaginatively on historical precedents for inspiration.

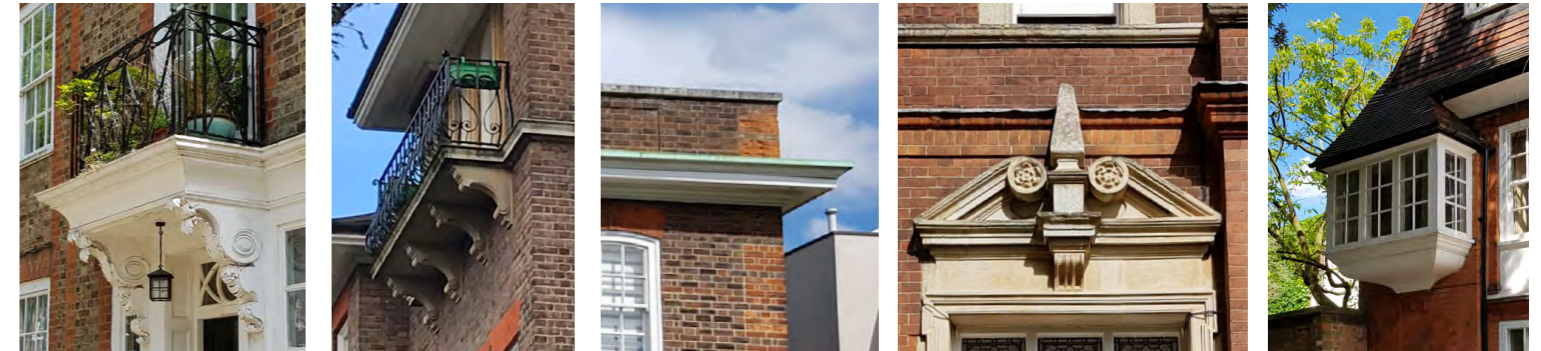
One of the key character traits of the area is variety in scale, which is emphasised by Hampstead's hilly topography. This includes the contrast between the grand Victorian five storey Frogna Mansion and the three 3 storey Grade II listed early 18th century cottages opposite. The difference in scale and variety of material

contribute to the streetscape's rich character, full of incident, with an overall coherence and quality.

There are many other instances of architectural moments in the CA, such as an 18th century belvedere in the roof of no. 79 Frogna Lane. The CA appraisal highlights the "interesting features such as an octagonal bay and a slate hung oriel window" at Bay Tree Cottage (Grade II), an early 19th century gardener's cottage. No. 71 Redington Road nearby has a dramatic corner turret and red tiled roof.



Frogna Mansion: bays add a strong vertical emphasis to the Conservation Area



Architectural Details: cornices, balconies, railings, moulded stone dressings, oriel windows



79 Frogna: cornices, balconies, porches, turrets.



71 Frogna: chimneys and turrets