

Heritage Statement

55 Broadhurst Gardens, Camden

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On behalf of: Mr P Davis **Ref:** 0236

Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Ignus Froneman, Director at Cogent Heritage. It assesses the potential effects of the proposed rear steps and associated minor changes at 55 Broadhurst Gardens, on the significance of the South Hampstead Conservation Area, within which the house falls. 55 Broadhurst Gardens is not locally listed, but it is identified as a positive contributor to the conservation area.
- 1.2 The Heritage Statement was informed by an Ordnance Survey map regression and a site visit, in December 2020. The photos used to illustrate the report were taken on the site visit, including drone photos where the rear gardens and areas were inaccessible.
- 1.3 The remainder of the Heritage Statement briefly considers the significance of the South Hampstead Conservation Area, before turning to the contribution of 55 Broadhurst Gardens, followed by a short assessment of the effects of the proposed development.

Assessment

- 1.4 **Overview of the significance of the South Hampstead Conservation Area:** Section 3.0 of the *South Hampstead Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy* (February 2011,) is entitled "Assessment of Special Interest", with paras 3.1-3 summarising the character of the area as:

"3.1 South Hampstead is a well preserved example of a leafy Victorian suburb, almost exclusively residential in nature, and largely homogenous in scale and character. The area is characterised by large, semi-detached and terraced late-Victorian properties, in red or gault (white / cream) brick, with a particularly distinctive and attractive roofscape including turrets, gables, and tall chimneys. Houses are made special by a variety of decorative treatments including terracotta panels and brickwork ornamentation, tiled and patterned footpaths,

delicate ironwork, and elaborate timber doors and windows, including some original stained and leaded glass.

3.2 One of the most prominent features of the area is vegetation – both to the front and rear of properties. Green front gardens demarcated by low or ornate garden walls topped with hedges contribute strongly to the area’s character. Building lines of the residential streets are generally set-back from the pavement which, with the boundary landscape treatment and many mature specimen trees, are essential in giving the streetscape its attractive and serene quality.

3.3 The open green spaces of the private rear gardens and the communal gardens between terraces of houses remain undeveloped and are a very important amenity for local residents – both for those who look onto the spaces and those who have access to them. In some cases they are managed as natural wildlife spaces [...]. These private spaces, along with the green front gardens, are vital in providing wildlife corridors, enhancing biodiversity and reducing flood risk as well as in preserving the attractive, tranquil character of the conservation area [emphasis added].”

1.5 Section 7.0 of the Appraisal is headed “*Problems, Pressures and Capacity for Change*” and paras 7.13-14, under the heading “*Rear Extensions and Loss of Rear Gardens to Hard Landscaping*” are quoted below:

“7.13 While a small number of rear elevations and private rear gardens are visible from the street in South Hampstead, a much larger number are visible from the private open spaces and in long views from the rears of individual properties. The long, undeveloped rear gardens and private open spaces are central to the character and appearance of South Hampstead Conservation Area, and their preservation is of paramount importance.

7.14 In recent years however, largely due to the increased intensity of residential use and resulting trend for residential conversion, there have been a significant number of planning applications for large rear extensions and significant loss of rear gardens to hard landscaping. This results in a loss of amenity of residents and erosion of the leafy, open character of the conservation area. Applications are always assessed in line with Camden Planning Guidance, however particular care should be taken to ensure that the attractive garden setting of the host building, neighbouring gardens and any private open spaces is not compromised by overly large extensions and areas of hard landscaping. Residents are encouraged to maintain as much soft landscaping as possible in rear gardens.”

1.6 **The contribution of 55 Broadhurst Gardens to the conservation area:** Like its neighbours, 55 Broadhurst Gardens forms part of a good quality and coherent late-Victorian development (a terraced development, but with houses arranged in the fashion of semi-detached pairs). Its contribution is largely as part of the row of houses along this part of Broadhurst Gardens, with a pleasant and coherent character (**Photo 1**).



Photo 1: 55 Broadhurst Gardens (centre right) in its local context.

1.7 Unsurprisingly, there is less consistency at the rear of the terrace. Some of the houses are painted and some, like 55 Broadhurst Gardens, has a later added rear bay window under a lean-to roof. As may be expected, the rear elevations are subservient, much plainer, and generally with a less formal character, reflecting their subsidiary function and location fronting private gardens.

1.8 The rear of the terrace has many later accretions, although the leafy garden character means that these are largely obscured by trees and vegetation (even in leafless months; the site visit was in December). Some of that can be seen from the drone photo below (**Photo 2**).



Photo 2: A drone photo of 55 Broadhurst Gardens (the painted house on the far left) within its Broadhurst Gardens to the south.

1.8.1 It is also relevant that permission was recently granted for a garden level rear extension, on 29 October 2020 under ref: 2020/2879/P. The permitted garden level rear extension can be seen on **Fig 1** overleaf. The relevance of this permission is that the permitted extension would facilitate the proposed creation of an access from the ground floor flat (indeed the proposed access is reliant on the rear extension).



Fig 1: An isometric sketch view of the permitted garden level rear extension.

1.9 **Impact assessment:** The proposal comprises essentially three elements, listed below and the considered in turn:

- i. Modification of the rear window to create a door.
- ii. New stairs with timber screening down to the garden.
- iii. Division of the rear garden into two parts, each serving a flat.

1.10 Modification of the rear window to create a door. This minor alteration would not materially change the character/appearance of the conservation area, or the contribution of the host building to it. This will preserve the character, appearance and significance of the conservation area.

1.11 New stairs with timber screening down to the garden. The proposed stairs and flanking timber screens are quintessential garden features that would not be out of place in the context of the rear of 55 Broadhurst Gardens, or the broader context on Broadhurst Gardens. The annotated drone photo below (**Photo 2**) shows a multitude of examples of timber fencing/screens above the lower ground/garden level. Within this context, there is nothing about the proposed stairs with timber screening that would seem out of place or harmful in any way. This component of the proposed development is not publicly visible from anywhere, and it is entirely reversible. This will preserve the character, appearance and significance of the conservation area.



Photo 2: A drone photo, annotated with red arrows showing timber railings above ground level at the rear of properties on Broadhurst Gardens.

1.12 Division of the rear garden into two parts, each serving a flat. This will not result in the reduction of the rear garden of the host building (unlike the many existing garden sheds or structures), and it would not be visible, even from immediately adjoining properties. However, it would be beneficial in providing external amenity space for the ground floor flat. There is no effect on the host building, or the wider character of the conservation area. This component of the proposed development is entirely reversible. This will preserve the character, appearance and significance of the conservation area.

Conclusions

- 1.13 The proposed development is very modest, by any standards, and will preserve the character, appearance and significance of the conservation area. In particular:
- i. The South Hampstead Conservation Area would remain unaffected, as a well preserved, largely homogenous example of a leafy residential Victorian suburb.
 - ii. One of the most prominent features of the area is vegetation – both to the front and rear of properties – and this would remain unaffected.
 - iii. The open green spaces of the private rear gardens and the communal gardens between terraces of houses are a very important amenity, which would be preserved.
 - iv. The long, undeveloped rear gardens and private open spaces are central to the character and appearance of South Hampstead Conservation Area. Their preservation, which is of paramount importance, would remain unaffected.
 - v. The proposed development is not a rear extension that would result in any loss of rear garden.
 - vi. The leafy, open character of the conservation area is preserved.
 - vii. The proposed development would not be visible in any public views, with very limited visibility even in private views.
 - viii. The proposed stairs and flanking timber screens are quintessential garden features that would not be out of place in the context of the rear of 55 Broadhurst Gardens, or the broader context of this part of the conservation area.
- 1.14 Because the character, appearance and significance of the conservation area is preserved, there are no policy conflicts and the proposed development accords with the Local Plan, the national Planning Policy Framework and the provisions of s.72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.