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Listed Building Application

18 February 2021

## LBC - DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

**Blue plaque: Jim Henson (1936-1990)  
at 50 Downshire Hill, Hampstead, NW3 1PA**

### Site Analysis

Number 50 Downshire Hill is in the Hampstead Conservation Area, sub-area 3 and Grade II listed (entry ref.1078269); the freeholders Brian Henson, Lisa Henson, Cheryl Henson and John Henson.

### The current building history:

Number 50 Downshire Hill, is a distinctive semi-detached house (paired with number 51 (consecutive)), and dates from the mid-nineteenth century, on a street first laid out with villas and terraces from 1818, when it had probably been extended to Willow Road. By 1826 building was apparently complete on the northern side, where there were 18 houses between the public house and the junction with John Street; on the southern side were St. John's church, opened in 1823 in the angle with John Street, and at least five houses (nos. 39-43). The first recorded resident is noted in 1861. Number 50's neighbour, 51, is also listed grade II with similar window decoration on the Downshire Hill façade, but with recessed side-entrance wing. Number 50 is built of brick with painted plain render façade; four bays wide; a central entrance doorway and porch; the ground floor has asymmetrical sized windows - the right-hand a French window, the left-hand a French window plus side windows; a first-floor running cast-iron decorative balcony with four French windows, three with pediments on scroll brackets, the far right window has been altered and the pediment now replaced with an inset sash window above; later alterations have also included an attic dormer above the cornice band. It is listed Grade II and lies in the Hampstead Conservation Area, sub-area 3.

The many varied and remarkable past residents of the area are celebrated by blue plaques, Downshire Hill currently has three English Heritage commemorated figures - at nos. 47 to John Heartfield; at 21 to Lee Miller and Sir Roland Penrose; at 25 to Sir Peter Medawar,

### Design Process Components

It is proposed that English Heritage erect a blue ceramic inset mounted plaque, of standard 19.5-inch diameter, inset into the brickwork and facing render by a depth of 50mm. To be located at ground floor level, to the right of the entrance door and centred symmetrically between the entrance door and right-hand window; the vertical

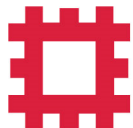
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height centred on the top glazing pane of the long window door; located as shown on the attached surveyor orthophotos, scaled 1:50, and oblique views. The submitted surveyor orthophotos take the role of architect drawings and the square-on view at 1-50 scale will print to scale at A1. The materials and methodology for the installation of the plaque are considered under accompanying documents.

The decision to locate the plaque here is so as to be as appropriate as possible to the design of the façade of the building, and to be visible to the average passer-by.

The exterior elevation of the building will be slightly adapted to accommodate the blue plaque (please also see separate Installation note). There will be no change to the use of the building, no floor space will be added or subtracted, and no new homes will be built on the site. The layout of the building will not be changed, nor will the scale of the building be affected. There will be no landscaping undertaken.

### **Access**

No new access points and routes are proposed. No changes are proposed in relation to pedestrian and cycle routes, road layout, local services and public transport provision. The blue plaque will be visible from the public highway and therefore no new access is required. There is no new need for provision of access for emergency services.

### **Design Solution**

The above information has explained and justified the proposed development, and the lack of necessity for good access into and through the site in relation to the proposed works. The English Heritage blue plaque design has been developed over 150 years in sympathy with the character of London buildings. The ceramic plaque is hand crafted and is thought to respond positively to most local contexts. The freehold owners of the building, the Henson family, have approved the project and given their consent. The architectural character of this listed building will only be affected in a minor way, and the historical and cultural interest of the property and area will be enhanced within the local and wider community.

Cathy Power  
Blue Plaques Manager  
English Heritage

6<sup>th</sup> Floor, 100 Wood Street, London, EC2V 7AN

☎ 020 7973 3757 ✉ [cathy.power@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:cathy.power@english-heritage.org.uk)