

307 - 309 Finchley Road
London
NW3 6EH
Heritage Statement

June 2017



Built Heritage
Consultancy

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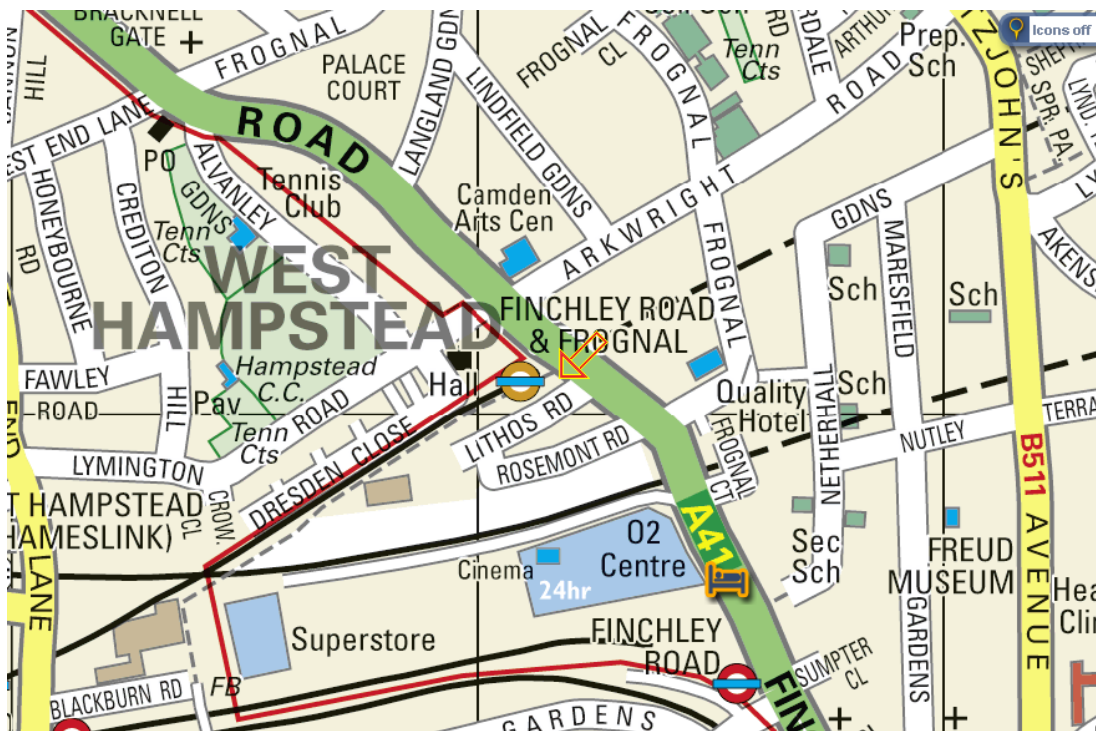
The Built Heritage Consultancy Limited is registered in England, number 7314300. Registered office: 5 The Chambers, Vineyard, Abingdon, OX14 3PX.

1.0 Introduction

This report has been commissioned by NTA Planning to support the proposed development of nos. 307 – 309 Finchley Road, London Borough of Camden. The application site forms part of a group of early 20th century buildings included within Camden's Local List of historic buildings and is therefore identified as a non-designated heritage asset. The building has previously been altered and extended with the introduction of a late 20th century extension along Lithos Street.

The application proposals relevant to this Heritage Statement include alterations and extensions to the modern extension to the rear of no. 307 which fronts Lithos Street and the erection of an additional storey at roof level.

This report has been prepared by David Gundry and reviewed by James Weeks. The site was visited on 11 May 2017.



Streetmap indicating the location of the site (source: www.streetmap.co.uk)

2.0 Understanding

2.1 The history and development of Finchley Road

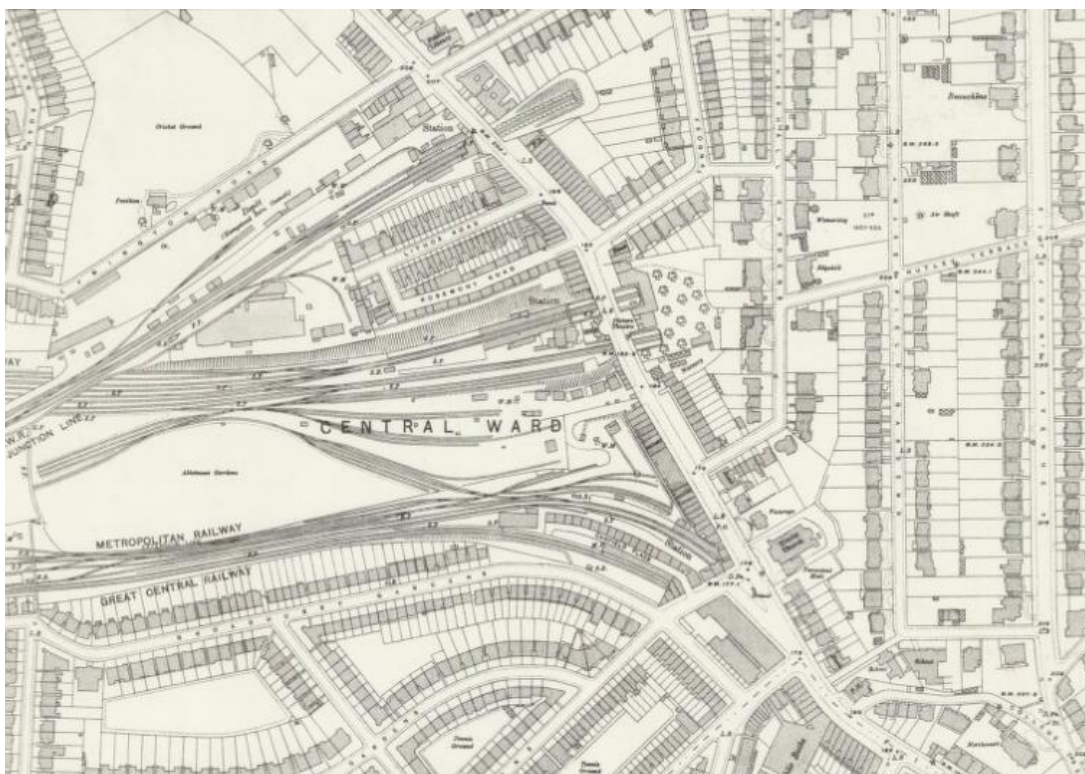
2.1.1 Early Development

Finchley Road was a turnpike road constructed in the 1830s by Colonel Eyre of Eyre Estates to link St. John's Wood in the south to Finchley in the north. Prior to this, the area was largely farmland beyond London's boundary. Finchley Road provided a bypass to the existing Great North Road routes through Hampstead and Highgate, avoiding the steep hills. The new turnpike was built at the same time as the creation of Regent's Park.

Historical records show that until the 19th century the Fortune Green and West Hampstead area was largely rural farmland. It centred on the hamlet of West End, which was within the manor and parish of Hampstead. From the 1840s onwards the establishment of the East and West India Docks and Birmingham Junction Railway began construction of a line from Poplar to Camden Town. By the 1860s the Hampstead tunnel had been dug, enabling the railway to extend further west linking Camden to Willesden Junction via West Hampstead. The arrival of what then became known as the North London Railway brought rapid development with the following 30 years leaving a distinctive legacy of many attractive buildings. These include individual houses, terraced housing, mansion blocks. The area also had many areas of distinctive streetscape of large brick built properties.



Ordnance Survey, 1870



Ordnance Survey, 1915

2.1.3 The application site

Nos. 307 – 309 occupies a prominent corner location and comprises a three storey plus attic corner building and short terrace predominately constructed of good quality red brick under a slate roof with Dutch-style gables. The ground floor shop of no. 307 is accessed at the chamfered corner of Finchley Road and Lithos Road and is distinguished from the residential floors above as it is constructed of painted masonry with architectural mouldings, the windows set within a series of elliptical arches. The shopfronts are modern and of no interest.

No. 307's upper floors incorporate a polygonal corner oriel rising to the building's cornice constructed of red sandstone under a slated conical roof. The Lithos Road elevation of no. 307 is of most aesthetic value, being five window bays wide, each bay separated by a shallow brick and sandstone pilaster. The middle bay projects slightly with the windows replaced by a carved brickwork date reading '1891' on the second floor and monogram reading 'W & S H' within a decorative cartouche and moulded frame on the floor below. The moulded cornice is also formed of red sandstone and has a broken pediment with scrollwork above the date panel. Above this is a double layer decorated Dutch gable with stone masonry coping and integrated chimney stack, the pilasters running through from below to unify the composition. The metal framed casement windows are modern replacements.

Adjoining the historic building to the west is a modern red brick built office extension. The exact construction date is unknown but stylistically it is presumed to be c. 1980. The modern extension is formed of several distinct architectural components:

- the ground floor portion of this is constructed at back of pavement, in a form that echoes the arcaded character of the historic shopfront of no. 307, although being poorly detailed;

- the first floor at its western end is set back to bring its elevation in line with the neighbouring property and is constructed of unrelieved red brick with a concrete coping with cavetto moulding and modern fenestration;
- the second and third floors at its western end are slightly set back behind a parapet, constructed of sheet metal cladding with a quarter-turn metal profiled roof form and with rectangular windows orientated horizontally;
- Separating the western end from the rest of the building is a tall stair riser with angular protruding glazed panels, at its base forming a canopy above the Lithos Road entrance to the building. The west flank of this is finished with metal sheet cladding whilst the east flank is constructed of red brick;
- the first floor to the east of the glazed stair riser is formed of modern red brick articulated with shallow pilasters, a concrete coping with cavetto moulding and incorporating tall metal framed windows;
- the second floors to the east of the glazed stair riser are stepped back from the first floor parapet, constructed of metal sheet cladding with large angled plate glass windows;
- the third floor is constructed of corrugated sheet metal with large windows.

When viewing the Finchley Road elevation of the application site, nos. 307 and 309 are both three narrow window bays wide and do incorporate shallow pilasters at second floor level, supporting a cornice and alternating triangular and segmental pediments. The mansard roof is set behind a pediment and square headed gables, each incorporating an additional window.

3.0 Significance

The need to take an informed approach to works which might alter the significance of heritage assets is at the heart of the planning process. Significance is defined in the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, March 2012)* as:

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

This section provides a summary assessment of the significance of the application site, identifies the asset's setting and defines the contribution that the setting makes to the site's significance.

This Heritage Statement makes use of the 'heritage values' criteria for assessing significance set out in Historic England's *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (2008). There are four broad values, some of which consist of more than one type: evidential, aesthetic, historical and communal.

3.1 Non-designated heritage assets

Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by the Council as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions due to their local interest. These assets are identified on a schedule of "Locally Listed Buildings".

307-309 Finchley Road



Nos. 307 – 309 Finchley Road, illustrating its distinctive architectural features and modern frontage lesser quality along Lithos Road.



The south elevation of no. 307 Finchley Road; the east-facing Finchley Road frontage of nos. 307 – 311.

Nos. 307 – 309 Finchley Road forms part of a larger discontinuous group of buildings, bisected by the entrance to Lithos Road, which are included on Camden Council's schedule of Locally Listed Buildings. The full local list entry is:

289 to 315 and 164 to 200 Finchley Road

Group of late 19th century terraces on east and west sides of Finchley Road, running between Rosemont Road and Lithos road on the west side and either side of Frognal on the east side. These terraces largely are of lesser interest architecturally than others further south on Finchley Road, but some individuals are of higher architectural quality, specifically nos 289-295 at the entrance to Rosemont road, and no. 307, which retains a good original shopfront at the corner with Lithos Road. The significance of the wider group are purely due to the consistency they give to the townscape and the supporting role they play to the buildings specifically identified here.

The local list entry makes clear that no. 307 has aesthetic value in its own right. This is attributed to the relatively high quality of the building's construction and employment of both architectural decoration and the inclusion of the brick date panel and monogram. Its shopfront and corner entrance supports the building's individual contribution as a distinct feature and local landmark.

Nos. 307 and 309 are similar but of much less interest. These buildings have some similar characteristics to no. 307, and enhance the Finchley Road streetscape, but lack architectural interest due to the relative crudeness of their finish. Nevertheless, the significance of the group of buildings as a whole is attributed to its architectural and townscape merit as it forms a distinctive feature within the streetscape, which is attributed to both its consistent height and building line at back of pavement which creates a positive sense of enclosure along Finchley Road. These buildings' form and brick construction are also typical of the late 19th century, helping to reinforce the historical character of the group.

In terms of the group's communal value, the Fortune Green and West Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan states that preserving the area's architectural heritage is of great importance, although it does not mention these specific buildings. The notable red brick Victorian and Edwardian terraces and mansion blocks which are characteristic of the area have numerous design features and detailing which are highly valued and appreciated. The area therefore has a strong and distinct architectural heritage – including a significant number of listed buildings as well as large conservation areas – which are extremely important in signifying the area's look and feel.

However, when considering the different aspects of the existing building, the late 20th century modern extension along Lithos Road, especially its upper mansard roof and projecting glazed stair riser, are constructed of relatively poor quality or visually obtrusive materials and are not considered to be of architectural or historic interest. The modern extension is therefore assessed as a negative attribute that detracts from the historic building's contribution to local views.

4.0 Legislation, Policies and Guidance

As the site is within the South Hampstead Conservation Area, any proposals will be assessed in terms of the impact they might have on that area's character and appearance.

The proposals are therefore subject to a range of national, regional and local authority heritage policies in addition to normal planning policy, and where relevant these are set out below.

4.1 National Heritage Policy

National heritage policy governing the application of the primary legislation is contained within section 12 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF, March 2012). Paragraph 128 of the NPPF requires applicants 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.

This Heritage Statement meets these requirements at an appropriate level of detail.

The relevant sections of the NPPF are as follows:

129. 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 assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

131. 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.*

135. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

4.2 Historic England Advice

Parts of Historic England's Good Practice Advice Notes (March 2015 reissued July 2015) are relevant here. With regard to GPA 2: *Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment*, the following sections are relevant:

Paragraphs 4-14 General advice on decision-taking;

Paragraphs 25-28 Assessing the proposals; and

Paragraphs 52 & 53 covering opportunities for enhancing heritage assets and their settings, and what local distinctiveness covers.

With regard to GPA 3: *The Setting of Heritage Assets*, the following sections are relevant:

Paragraphs 1-31, replacing previous English Heritage advice *The setting of heritage assets* (2011), giving advice on understanding setting and views when considering impact on heritage assets.

4.3 Regional or London-wide heritage policies

The Greater London Authority's *London Plan* (consolidated with alterations since 2011, March 2015) contains heritage guidance in Policy 7.8, Heritage Assets and Archaeology, the relevant parts of which are as follows:

C Development should identify, value, conserve, restore, re-use and incorporate heritage assets, where appropriate.

D Development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.

The Plan does not contain any policies which specifically relate to roof extensions.

4.4 Local Authority Heritage Policies

Planning applications in Camden must be determined in accordance with Camden's present Core Strategy and Development Plan of 2010. There is an emerging local plan due to be submitted shortly.

Camden Local Plan Strategic Policies and emerging Local Plan Policies

Camden's Core Strategy for the Local Plan was adopted in November 2010. It has Policy CS14 relevant to the historic environment:

CS14 - Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage: The Council will ensure that Camden's places and buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use by:

a) requiring development of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character;

b) preserving and enhancing Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens;

c) promoting high quality landscaping and works to streets and public spaces;

d) seeking the highest standards of access in all buildings and places and requiring schemes to be designed to be inclusive and accessible;

e) protecting important views of St Paul's Cathedral and the Palace of Westminster from sites inside and outside the borough and protecting important local views.

Then there are the Camden Development Policies 2010-2025

DP24 – Securing high quality design

The Council will require all developments, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, to be of the highest standard of design and will expect developments to consider:

a) character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings;

b) the character and proportions of the existing building, where alterations and extensions are proposed;

c) the quality of materials to be used;

d) the provision of visually interesting frontages at street level;

e) the appropriate location for building services equipment;

f) existing natural features, such as topography and trees;

g) the provision of appropriate hard and soft landscaping including boundary treatments;

h) the provision of appropriate amenity space;

and i) accessibility

Camden Design SPD

To support the Planning Policies there is the design SPD of 2015 which has an informative introductory section:

Guidance for all extensions and alterations: External alterations

4.6 The good practice principles set out below and the general design considerations for residential façades shown in Figure 1 – 'Alterations to Residential Façades' should be followed when undertaking external alterations. A façade is the front or face of a building.

Good practice principles for external alterations

4.7 Alterations should always take into account the character and design of the property and its surroundings. A harmonious contrast with the existing property and surroundings may be appropriate for some new work to distinguish it from the existing building; in other cases closely matching materials and design details are more appropriate so as to ensure the new work blends with the old.

Materials

- *Wherever possible you should use materials that complement the colour and texture of the materials in the existing building, see also CPG3 Sustainability (Sustainable use of materials chapter). In historic areas traditional materials such as brick, stone, timber and render will usually be the most appropriate complement to the existing historic fabric; modern materials such as steel and glass may be appropriate but should be used sensitively and not dominate the existing property.*
- *Materials for alterations should weather well, so their ageing process contributes positively to the character of the building, and the site's wider context.*
- *Original surface finishes should be retained or replicated wherever possible, as they are usually central to the architectural design / character treatment of a building. These may cover the entire building or façade (such as stucco facing), the roof elements (such as roof tiles and roof ridges), highlight specific features (such as windows or doors) or act as decorative elements (such as ironwork or terracotta panels).*
- *When repairing existing wall finishes, the composition of the original material (such as plaster, stucco or render) should be determined, the defective area cut out and a replacement material of identical chemical composition applied and properly bonded. Concrete repairs are generally non-original and unsympathetic to historic buildings, and can damage bricks, and should be replaced with a more traditional lime-based finish.*
- *The insulating quality of materials should be considered, along with their embodied energy (the energy used in manufacture) and the potential for re-use and recycling.*
- *Alterations or repairs to brickwork or stonework should match the original in all respects while satisfying the needs of durability and maintenance. This should include matching the original bond, mortar colour and texture. Retention of any existing pointing is encouraged wherever possible.*
- *Samples of brick type and mortar colour will normally be required to be submitted to the Council as part of any application.*
- *Painting, rendering or cladding of brickwork will normally be resisted, as it is often unsightly and can damage the appearance of a building by obscuring the texture and original colour of the façade. Painting, rendering or cladding may also trap moisture, which can cause major damp problems in the masonry.*

Fortune Green and West Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan

The Fortune Green and West Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in 2014. The document includes a number of vision and objective statements, including relating to design and character, stating *“development will be of high-quality design and will need to reflect the existing styles of the area, large parts of which are covered by conservation areas. The height of new buildings shall have regard to and respect the proportion, scale, massing and rooflines of existing buildings in their vicinity and setting. In all development there shall be a clear presumption in favour of preserving the distinct character and appearance of the area, as well as the views across it.”*

Furthermore, policy A3 (architectural heritage) states that *“new developments in such areas – particularly terraced streets – need to be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area in terms of their proportion, height, scale, massing, materials, storey height and rooflines. Larger developments, while reflecting new design, need to incorporate design features that reflect the character of existing development, using materials (such as red brick) which complement existing buildings. Innovation is not ruled In this section of the Plan, the paragraphs set out the justification for the policy that follows. While the policy takes precedence, the text explains the formulation of the policies and provides further detail as to how the policies should be implemented. out, however schemes incorporating innovation will need to make a persuasive case for such development and demonstrate the suitability of such schemes.”*

5.0 Assessing the Proposals

5.1 Outline of proposals

The application proposals comprise the redevelopment of 307 – 309 Finchely Road and its Lithos Road extension to provide for modern accommodation fit for purpose and commensurate with this area of London, which can be considered a high value residential and office market. The proposals are illustrated in full in the submitted drawings.

The main heritage consideration in determination of the application are the effects of the works on the significance of 307 – 309 Finchley Road, a non-designated asset forming part of a larger group of brick-built buildings fronting onto Finchley Road.

The proposals would result in:

- a) The extension, conversion and refurbishment of nos. 307 – 309 Finchley Road, the principal aim of which was to terminate the extant use of the part of the building for adult entertainment;
- b) New commercial floorspace would be created on the upper floors, together with HMO accommodation on the ground and lower ground floors, the existing commercial use of no. 307 Finchley Road (presently an estate agent) would be maintained;
- c) The proposals also seek to extend and re-elevate the late 20th century Lithos Road frontage of the building, providing an improved façade treatment more in keeping with the 19th century building and the wider context of this part of Finchley Road (i.e. the other buildings that form the non-designated building group);
- d) The extension works at the south-west corner of the building (onto Lithos Road) would also enable supplementary works relating to the re-organisation of internal space so that additional residential units could be accommodated and the use of the building rationalised.

5.2 Pre-application planning advice

Prior to submitting the redevelopment planning application, in January 2017 the client sought pre-application advice from Camden Council. A pre-application meeting was held on 24th February 2017. Officers provided advice relating to heritage issues:

- i. The proposed loss of the adult entertainment use was welcomed;
- ii. The size of the extension fronting onto Lithos Road were considered to overwhelm the host property – it was recommended that the overall height, mass and bulk of the proposed extension should be reduced; and
- iii. The principle of the new elevation to Lithos Road was supported, as was the predominant use of brick, however the detailed design required further assessment. In particular, the

fenestration should adopt a traditional hierarchy as evidenced on the historic portions of the building.

The revised application proposals have taken on board these points. The following images illustrate the existing and proposed development scheme:



Existing view from Finchley Road



Proposed view from Finchley Road



Existing view along Lithos Road



Proposed view along Lithos Road



Proposed elevation drawing

5.3 Assessment of impact

The relevant heritage policy context for consideration of the application is set out in full in section 4. This includes the statutory duties of the Planning (listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, national policy set out in the NPPF, and regional and local policy for the historic environment.

This assessment recognises the need, established within the NPPF, to take a proportionate approach to assessing the harm caused to the application site, which forms part of a locally listed building group.

The significance and setting of nos. 307 – 309 Finchley Road has been assessed. This assessment has identified that the building is predominately of aesthetic value due to the relatively high quality of no. 307's brick-built elevation and historic shopfront. No. 307 also occupies an important corner position which gives it prominence in the streetscape, supporting its assessment as a building of townscape merit.

However, when considering the different aspects of the existing building, the late 20th century modern extension along Lithos Road, especially its upper mansard roof and projecting glazed stair riser, are constructed of relatively poor quality or visually obtrusive materials and are not considered to be of architectural or historic interest. The modern extension is therefore assessed as a negative attribute that detracts from the historic building's contribution to local views.

Summary of effects

Partial demolition of the existing Lithos Road elevation would remove features which detract from the significance of no. 307 Finchley Road and the positive contribution that it makes to the local townscape.

Despite the slight increase in massing represented by the redeveloped building, several key design features would preserve the significance and setting of the host building, including:

When viewed from Finchley Road, whilst the ground and first floor elevation onto Lithos Road would remain largely unchanged, the second and third floors would be re-elevated, replacing the existing mansard type glass and corrugated iron form with a more traditional brick-built and set-back vertical façade walling. The proposal would introduce an additional set-back rooftop extension, behind a brick parapet, which would be sufficiently set back to render it almost invisible from the street. Most notable would be the effect of reducing the visible flank wall of the glazed stair riser of the existing Lithos House, reducing its visual dominance in views west along Lithos Road. The entire redeveloped elevation would be slightly set back from the historic building line of no. 307 Lithos Road, thereby ensuring that it is read as a visually recessive element in the composition.

In terms of the redeveloped elevation's materials, the façade would be constructed of high quality brick which would be architecturally detailed, for example incorporating moulded window jambs to the second and third storeys. This will complement the high quality brick construction of no. 307 whilst presenting a simplified range of materials that appears contemporary but coherent alongside the host building.

The fenestration of the redeveloped façade would incorporate tall rectangular windows slightly set back from the building line. These are similar in size and proportion to the existing windows found along Finchley Road and would reinforce the vertical bay rhythm of the elevation.

Consideration of the relevant national and local policy

In national policy terms, the proposals would satisfy the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework for works to be of high quality design, taking account of the character of the local area, and conserving heritage in a manner appropriate to its significance (paragraph 17), whilst making a positive contribution to economic vitality (paragraph 131). The works would also satisfy paragraph 131 requirement for development to make a positive contribution to local character, since in terms of paragraphs 132 and 134 the benefits of the works would exceed any harm caused by the redevelopment of the existing building.

The scheme would satisfy the local policy and guidance relating to heritage and design. In respect of London Borough of Camden's Local Plan, the application proposals would satisfy policy CS14 since the new development would employ very high design standards which respect local context and character. This would be most evident in the use of high quality red brick in a form that echoes the historic built form of no. 307 Finchley Road but which is clearly recessive. This ensures that

the new development preserves the setting of the locally listed building group, reinforcing its aesthetic value and contribution to local streetscape.

Furthermore, the proposals will improve the coherence of the street frontage alongside adjacent buildings and ensure that the new frontage fits in well with the existing context along both Finchley Road and Lithos Road.

For many of the reasons mentioned above, the scheme would also satisfy Camden's development policy DP24 which also stresses the need for extensions and alterations to be informed by the character, setting and context of neighbouring buildings. This is most clearly illustrated by the subtle set-backs from both the street and from the western flank wall of the redeveloped Lithos Road block, both of which effectively modulate the slight change of scale from the neighbouring buildings to the application building, whilst retaining the characteristic sense of enclosure that contributes so much to defining the streetscape.

With reference to paragraph 4.7 of Camden Council's SPD, the re-elevated Lithos Road frontage will be constructed so that it creates a harmonious contrast with the historic portions of the site.

6.0 Conclusion

The proposed works outlined within this application are not considered to have any harmful impact upon the significance or setting of nos. 307 – 309 Finchley Road or its wider locally listed group. They are considered to comply with London Borough of Camden’s policies relating to the historic environment and the national policy framework. They are therefore considered to be acceptable in heritage terms.

7.0 Selected sources

National Planning Policy Statement NPPF, DCLG 2012 and National Planning Policy Guidance, DCLG 2014

Camden Core Strategy and Development Management Plan 2010

Camden Design Supplementary Planning Document 2015

Historic England *Conservation Principles* 2008

Wade, Christopher (ed, revised), *The Streets of West Hampstead*, Camden History Society, 1992

