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Dear Obote

**16 Millfield Lane, London N6 6JD (Application Reference 2021/3790/P)
Boundary Treatment Policy Support**

I write further to our discussion on the boundary treatment proposed in the above application. There are a number of issues that we have discussed plus a few more that I have found that support the application as it stands. I thought it may be useful for you and your team to have these to hand in one consolidated document to provide the Council with the necessary back-up material to allow for support for the proposal.

I have revisited the site today and reviewed the following documents and materials. I hope you can agree these are the key material considerations for assessing the boundary treatment in this application.

- The existing context and the edge of Millfield Lane;
- The Camden Local Plan 2017;
- The Highgate Conservation Area Appraisal (2007);
- The Highgate Neighbourhood Plan (2017).

The Existing Context Along the Edge of Millfield Lane

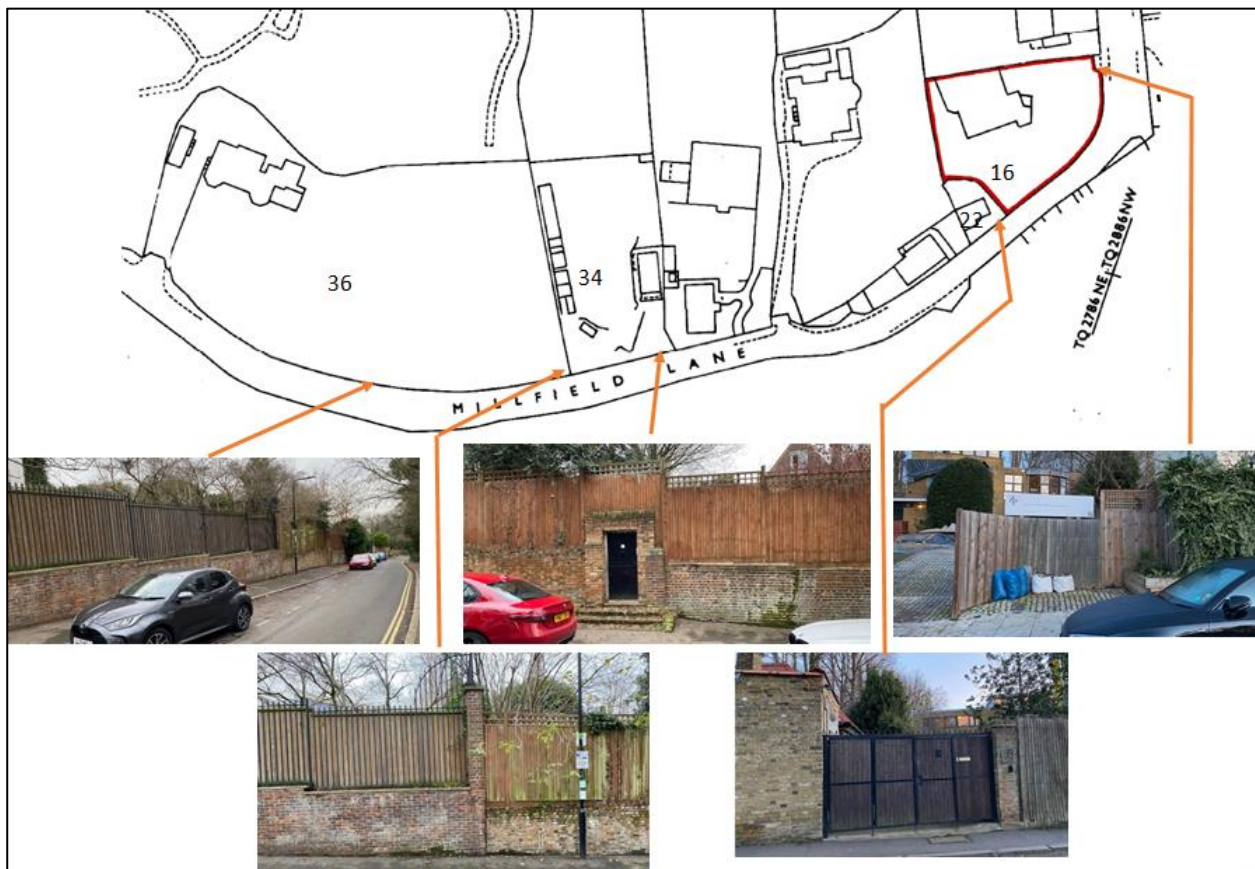
Millfield Lane has two distinct parts to it. The flat wider section running east-west and the narrow winding section that runs north-south gaining in elevation as it climbs Highgate Hill running parallel to Hamstead Heath.

The application site sits on the inside corner of Millfield Lane with approximately two thirds of the boundary on the north- south section and a third on the east west section.

The design references for the proposed boundary treatment have been taken mainly from the immediate context of the north-south section of the Millfield Lane as this is the dominant boundary of the application site.

Below are photos of this section of Millfield Lane. All the boundaries comprise a brick wall base with a fenced upper part.

- Number 36 averages 3.2 metres in height;
- Number 34 averages 3.7 metres in height.
- Numbers 22 and 24 have buildings on the pavement boundary with varying heights over 3 metres;
- Number 12 (to the east of the application site) averages 2.9 metres in height.



Above: Examples of existing boundary treatments on neighbouring properties on Millfield Lane

The existing boundary treatment on the application site comprises a fence of between 2.4 and 2.8 metres in height. On the lower parts there is substantial ivy growth which adds 0.2 to 0.4 metres to the overall height.

The high boundary treatments of the other residential boundaries along the north-south part of Millfield Lane is the dominant characteristic on the road with every property having a similar

arrangement. These much higher than normal boundary walls and fences appear to mark the edge of Hamstead Heath and the boundary of the more domestic Highgate Conservation area.

The Camden Local Plan

The Camden Local Plan 2017 provides general guidance on design in policies D1 (Design) and D2 (Heritage). These require that development proposals respect the local context and character as well as preserving or enhancing the historic environment and heritage assets.

To more accurately consider the heritage impacts and design it is necessary to consider the local context.

The Highgate Conservation Area Appraisal (2007)

The Appraisal divides the Conservation area into four parts. Millfield Lane is specifically mentioned in sub-area 4 'The Whittington Hospital' area.

The Appraisal states on page 44:

*"The northern end Millfield Lane is very open, since the road forms the boundary with the Heath. **The east side is defined by the high boundary treatment**, with glimpses of buildings behind. The buildings are set back and vary in character and design" (my emphasis);*

*"No 30, with a half-timber gable, dates from the interwar period, and is partly visible over the **high fencing, hedges and entrance gate bordering the street**."*

And;

*"As the lane approaches the bend at its southern end, **the houses are hard on the pavement** and much older, dating from the 17th and 18th centuries." (my emphasis)*

It is evident that for such a short section of road there are multiple references in the Conservation Area Appraisal to the unusual height of the boundary treatments with the road, either from the walls and fences or from the buildings themselves are on the street frontage. It appears as if the walls and buildings combine to form a defensive edge between the wild heathland and the domestic residential areas.

The Highgate Neighbourhood Plan (May 2017)

The neighbourhood plan provides another opportunity to consider very local aspects of a development. Policy DH2 (Development Proposals in Highgate's Conservation Areas) states that:

*“Development proposals, including alterations or extensions to existing buildings, should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Highgate’s conservation areas, and respect the setting of its listed buildings and other heritage assets. **Development should preserve or enhance the open, semi-rural or village character where this is a feature of the area.**”*

Policy DH2 recognises that even within the Highgate area there are a variety of development styles. This is why the aspiration of preserving or enhancing the open character of the area is only applicable where this is a feature of the area. In this case that is not the case as high boundary treatments are the recognised conservation area feature that marks the edge of the built up Highgate area as well as the conservation area.

Policy DH6 considers front boundary treatments and is therefore also relevant to the application. It states:

“Original boundary walls, gate piers or railings should be retained unless their removal is necessary due to the condition of a structure, or replacement provision is proposed which would enhance the character of the area. In areas where matching and similar boundary walls form a recognisable part of the streetscape, for example clinker walls in Cromwell Avenue, replacements should be reinstated to match the originals. New boundary walls requiring planning permission, and gated developments will not be permitted if they:

- I. Have a detrimental impact on the open character of the street-scene; or*
- II. Result in the unnecessary removal of mature hedges or natural features which have a positive impact on the character of the local area;*
- III. Would result in a loss of visual permeability or public accessibility where this contributes to local character”*

There are a number of tests in this policy. First is that original boundary treatments should be retained. The fence on the application site is not original so its loss should be accepted and I do not believe that is an issue.

The policy then states *“In areas where matching and similar boundary walls form a recognisable part of the streetscape, replacements should be reinstated to match the originals.*

The conservation area appraisal identifies high boundary walls being a key recognisable character of the area. This fact is demonstrated from the photographic assessments and measurements set out earlier in this letter.

The three sub-tests of the policy are also all met and therefore the proposal is in accordance with Policy DH6.

The supporting text to the policy refers to gated communities and high boundary walls applies in instances where these are not features or characteristics in the area. In this instance the very

high, almost continuous boundary along the eastern edge of Millfield Lane is over 3 metres in height. This does not apply in this instance.

Conclusions

The proposal for a boundary treatment of around 3 metres in height is entirely consistent with the character of the east side of Millfield Lane. It is a feature that has multiple references in the Conservation Area Appraisal.

The existing 2.5 metre high fence is out character with this local area. It is too low compared to all neighbouring sites and is of a poor quality. Its replacement with an average 3 metre high wall and fence would redress this design anomaly. The use of high quality London stock bricks and larch timber would enhance the conservation area where this high boundary treatment is a distinctive marker differentiating the open land of Hampstead Heath and the start of the more formal residential areas of Highgate.

I trust this provides sufficient background and support to assist in justifying the proposal. I would be happy to speak with you or your colleague to ensure this provides you with the necessary justification to support the proposal.

Yours sincerely



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