

# Official list entry

Heritage Category: **Listed Building**

Grade: **II**

List Entry Number: **1272259**

Date first listed: **02-Dec-1997**

Statutory Address 1: **SWISS COTTAGE LIBRARY, AVENUE ROAD**

## Location

Statutory Address: **SWISS COTTAGE LIBRARY, AVENUE ROAD**

**The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.**

County: **Greater London Authority**

District: **Camden (London Borough)**

Parish: **Non Civil Parish**

National Grid Reference: **TQ 26777 84180**

## Details

CAMDEN

TQ2684SE AVENUE ROAD 798-1/61/1895 (East side) 02/12/97 Swiss Cottage Library

II

Public library. 1963-4, for the Borough of Hampstead by Sir Basil Spence, Bonnington and Collins. Reinforced concrete frame on 10' grid clad in pre-cast black basalt concrete spandrel panels between projecting and finely-finished concrete fins with Portland stone aggregate, all set over smooth raised basement and ground floor of Portland stone and concrete - painted. Asphalt on concrete roof slab. The cigar-shaped plan is a complex one, the entrance at ground-floor level on the highest, northern end of the site, the ground floor and basements otherwise housing offices, services and bookstacks, whilst stairs lead to a double-height central foyer at first-floor level. Children's library to side of this; to north and south respectively lending and reference libraries on two levels each with two pairs of spiral stairs to balcony. Music library over children's library on second floor, reached through reference library which also includes work rooms for private study and offices. The projecting fins of Portland stone aggregate at 2'6" intervals are the dominant feature of the building, contrasted with the darker panels in between. Aluminium windows. INTERIOR: aluminium also used extensively internally in the vertical divides to the glazed screens preferred to solid walls through most of the public interiors. This verticality is repeated in the slender steel balustrades to the reference and lending libraries' balcony fronts and internal stairs. White perforated aluminium ceilings with recessed fluorescent light fittings a necessary complement to the extensive use of diffused, borrowed light through the building; terrazzo floors. Original bookcases and fixed desks, the latter notably in reference area; some original signage survives on ground and first floors. Swiss Cottage Library and the adjacent baths were all that were built of an intended new civic centre for Hampstead, the scheme abandoned because of local authority reorganisation in 1965. It is one of Spence's most accomplished civic buildings, and amongst the most ambitious architectural designs for a library found anywhere. (Architects Journal: 29 January 1959; Architects Journal: 25 November 1964; Architect and Building News: 11 November 1964; Opening Brochure of the Queen's Visit: November 1964).

Listing NGR: TQ2677784180

## Legacy

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.  
Legacy System number: **476629**

Legacy System: **LBS**

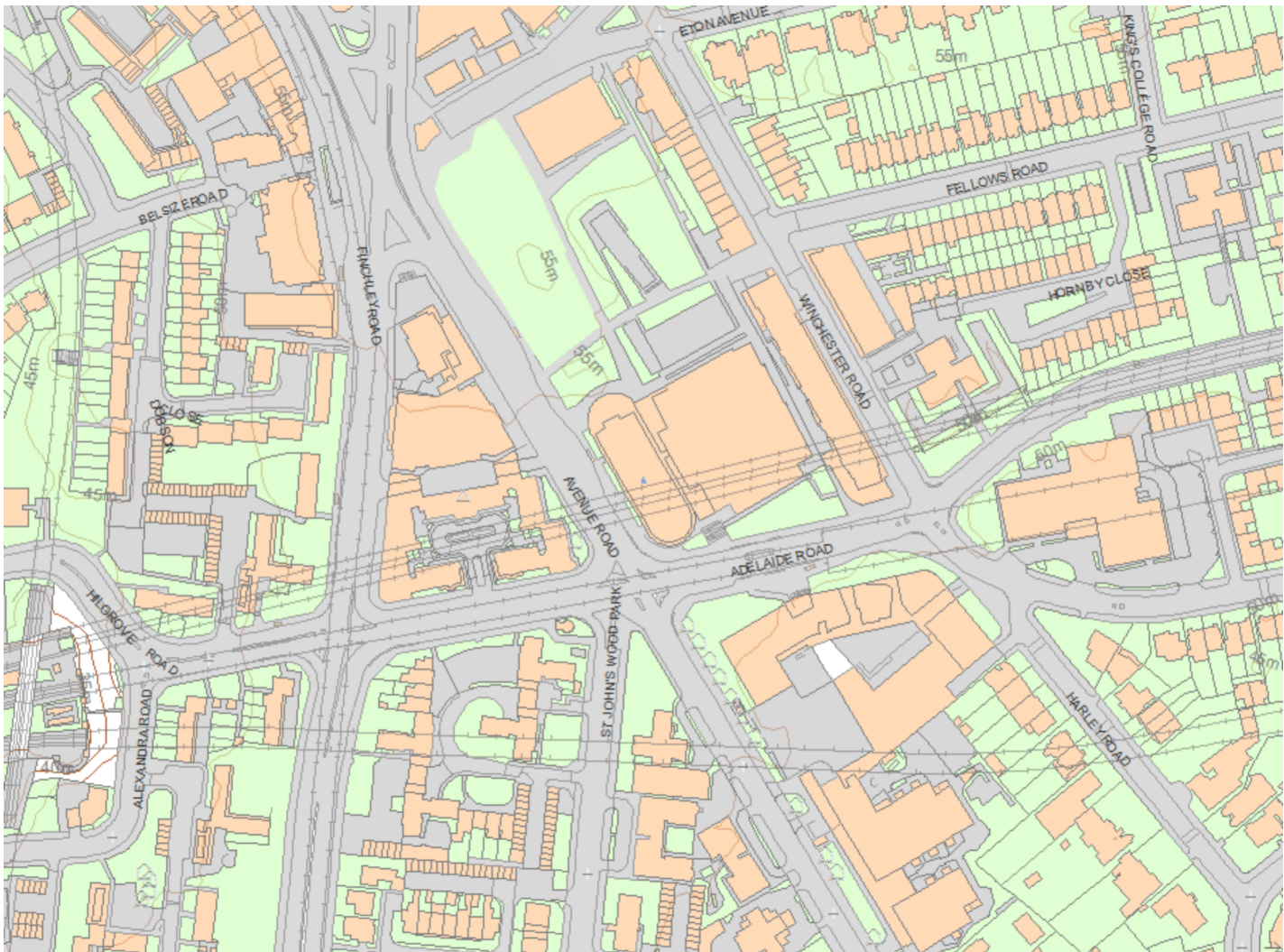
## Sources

### Books and journals

- 'Architects Journal' in 29 January, (1959)
- 'Architects Journal' in 25 November, (1964)
- 'Architect and Building News' in 11th November, (1964)

## Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.



## Map

This map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. This copy shows the entry on 04-Feb-2022 at 14:32:37.

© Crown Copyright and database right 2022. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100024900.© British Crown and SeaZone Solutions Limited 2022. All rights reserved. Licence number 102006.006.

Use of this data is subject to **Terms and Conditions**  
(<https://historicengland.org.uk/terms/website-terms-conditions/>).

End of official list entry