

Swiss Cottage Library

Heritage Impact Statement: Structural Investigation Works

Camden Borough Council

August 2022

Notice

This document and its contents have been prepared and are intended solely as information for Camden Borough Council and use in relation to Heritage Planning

Atkins Limited assumes no responsibility to any other party in respect of or arising out of or in connection with this document and/or its contents.

Document history

Document title: Heritage Impact Statement: Structural Investigation Works

Document reference: HIA-HIS

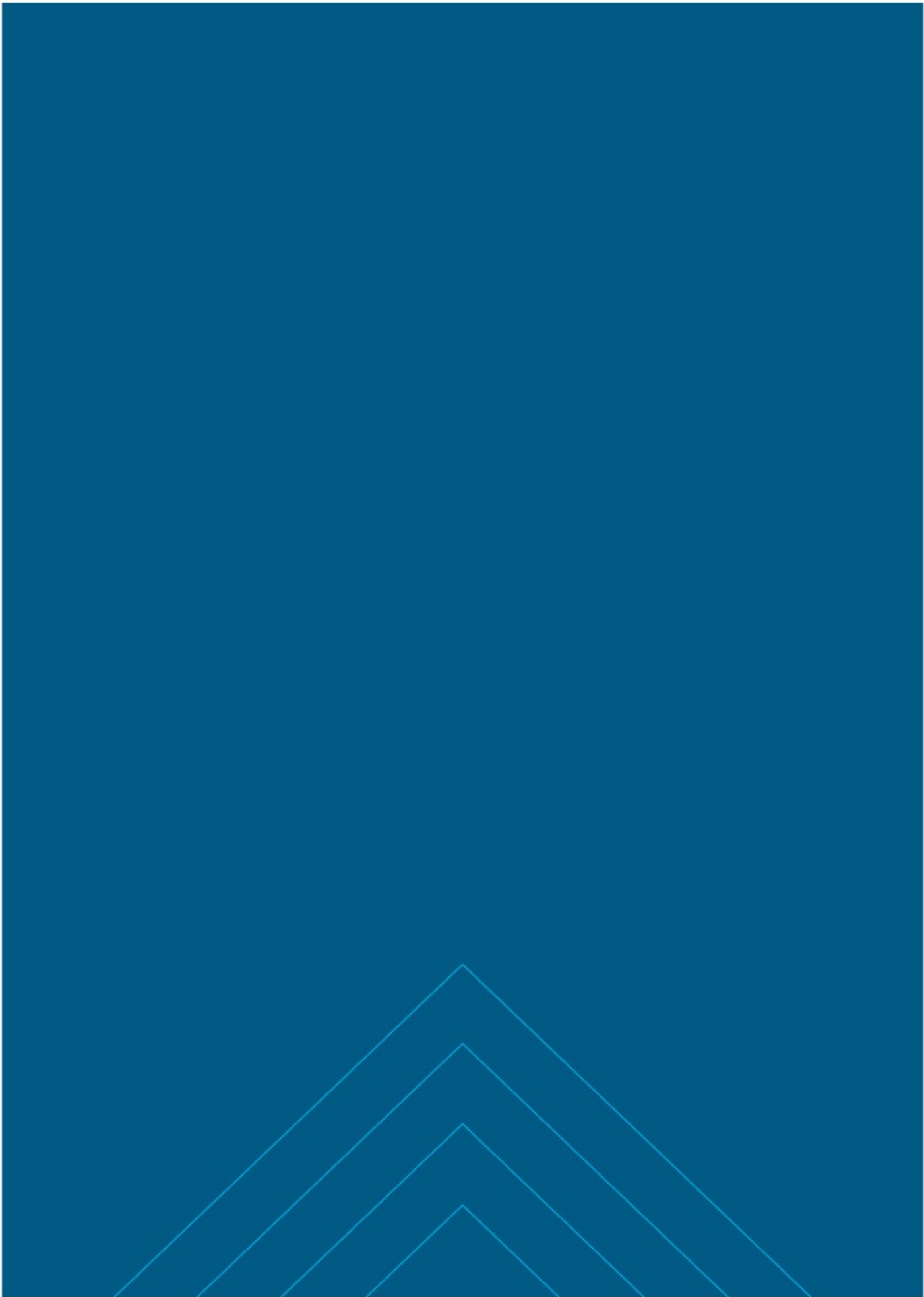
Revision	Purpose description	Origin- ated	Checked	Reviewed	Author- ised	Date
Rev 0	Heritage Impact Statement	HT	RJ	RW	RW	10/08/22

Client signoff

Client	Camden Borough Council
Project	Swiss Cottage Library: Structural Investigations
Job number	5206133
Client signature/date	

Contents

Chapter	Page
Executive Summary	5
1. Introduction	6
1.1. Objectives	6
1.2. Methodology: Understanding significance	7
1.3. Limitations	7
1.4. Gaps in knowledge	7
1.5. Relationship to previous assessments undertaken	8
1.6. Statutory legislation, policy, and guidance	8
1.7. Local planning policies	10
2. Heritage Impact Assessment	10
3. Understanding the site: history, development & the site today	11
3.1. Background & setting	11
3.2. Exterior – Swiss Cottage Library	11
3.3. Views – Swiss Cottage Library	12
3.4. Use – Swiss Cottage Library	12
4. Significance	12
4.1. Assessment of Swiss Cottage Library	12
5. The value of the changes	15
5.1. Approach	15
6. Proposed works	15
6.1. Principles	15
6.2. Defects	16
7. Impact assessment	18
8. The proposed scheme and its effect	19
8.1. The proposed scheme and its effect on heritage significance	19
8.2. The public benefit	19
9. Summary and Conclusion	20
10. Sources	21



Executive Summary

The report considers the heritage impact of proposals to complete investigations to establish the nature or structural defects observed to be present in the external concrete frame (heritage fabric).

The focus of this report is to examine the impacts on the special architectural and historic interest of the areas that are immediately adjacent to the proposed areas of change and assess their impact.

The proposed works under the current application are considered critical on the basis that to leave will open up the building to significant risk of further deterioration and are likely to result in a diminution in public safety e.g., as elements weaken and fail as has been observed in a small number of locations to date.

Whilst the works and their 'temporary repair' may result in a 'patchy' appearance on completion it is likely that this will be outweighed by the public benefit as it will provide valuable information for future repairs which when completed will result in the maintenance of a heritage asset for future enjoyment of the wider community.

The assessment was completed by Howard Thomas MRICS, Associate Building Surveyor following the previous assessment carried out by Richard Jessup MRICS, RICS Conservation Accredited, MSc Building Conservation, Atkins in relation to applications ref. 2014/5034/P & 2021/4889/L.

1. Introduction

Swiss Cottage Library is a public building built in 1963-4 for the borough of Hampstead by Sir Basil Spence (Coventry Cathedral). The cigar shaped building plan is orientated on an approximate north - south axis that is adjacent to Avenue Road. The original scheme included adjacent public swimming bath, now demolished, and was intended to be part of a new civic centre for Hampstead that was later abandoned because of local authority reorganisation in 1965. In 2000 the building underwent a significant refurbishment by specialist modernist restoration architects John McAslan and Partners.

The public library consists of a reinforced concrete frame with first and second floors clad in pre-cast black basalt concrete spandrel panels finished in Portland stone aggregate, between projecting and finely finished concrete fins set at 2'6" intervals, set above a smooth ground floor of Portland stone and concrete.

The Swiss Cottage Library was listed Grade II in 1997 and is bounded by five conservation areas: Belsize, Elsworthy, Fitzjohns-Netherhall, South Hampstead, St. John's Wood (Camden) and St. John's Wood (Westminster).

There are very minor interventions proposed to the external fabric of the building under the current application as part of a detailed investigation of structural defects that were identified during recent works of improvement.

The purpose of this document is to help preserve and enhance the character of the Swiss Cottage Library, and to provide a basis for making sustainable decisions about its future. It aims to identify the historic setting and character of the affected elements to determine whether the context and 'architecture' are noteworthy, and the level of significance attached to them. Thereafter, it will be possible to determine the likely level of impact that the proposed minor works would have on the site and setting

A summary of the significance in relation to the present application includes.

- The Swiss Cottage Library continues to be used for its original purpose as a place of learning and lending.
- The Swiss Cottage Library is a landmark 1960's building in Swiss Cottage, Borough of Camden
- The library is built in the Modernist style by Sir Basil Spence (Coventry Cathedral).
- The building is located adjacent to Avenue Road and near Finchley that were significant roads in the urban development of the area.
- The exterior form is based on rigid lines, finely finished projecting concrete fins and elements arranged at 90-degrees to each other that emphasise both horizontal and vertical lines.

1.1. Objectives

This report sets out a considered analysis of the impact of the proposed work upon the historic significance of the heritage assets affected, and carefully considers whether the proposed works would cause significant harm to the character of the listed building and its setting.

This assessment examines relevant information required to understand the building and setting with historical analysis covering the immediate location. This assessment includes a description, an assessment of relevant statutory legislation and the use of the building. This information provides a

sound basis to carry out the assessment of significance. This allows a heritage impact statement and conclusion to be drawn as to the level of impact that the proposed adaptations and changes will have on the public library.

Consequently, both the Significance Assessment and Impact Statement assist in satisfying the provisions of Sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) where the impact of development on a heritage asset or its setting is being considered (Chapter 16: Paragraphs 184-202).

1.2. Methodology: Understanding significance

The approach used to understand the heritage site and its setting is set out in three main sections. These are:

- Understanding the site: history, development, and the site today
- Significance
- Heritage Impact Statement

The methodology used for understanding the significance follows the systematic approach as set out within the English Heritage (now Historic England) document Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment

This assessment takes place against four main heritage values that are:

- Evidential value: the extent to which the physical fabric tells how and when your historic asset was made, how it was used and how it has changed over time. There may be buried, or obscured elements associated with your historic asset which may also be an important potential source of evidence.
- Historical value: your historic asset may illustrate a particular past way of life or be associated with a specific person or event; there may be physical evidence for these connections which it could be important to retain
- Aesthetic value: the design, construction, and craftsmanship of your historic asset. This can also include setting and views to and from the historic asset, which may have changed through time.¹⁹
- Communal value: your historic asset may have particular significance to people for its commemorative, symbolic or spiritual value, or for the part it has played in local cultural or public life. This will be particularly important in the case of buildings in public use or sites where public access must be maintained or improved

1.3. Limitations

This assessment is based upon documentary research of the site using relevant information from several sources, survey information and discussions with Camden County Council planning department. The conclusions of the report are supported by sufficient information to clarify the results of the desk-based study.

1.4. Gaps in knowledge

Despite the archival research, only a limited number of original 1960's photographs have been discovered of the Swiss Cottage Library. It should be noted that in common with many historic buildings and sites, it is not always possible to provide a truly comprehensive analysis of the historic development of a building. The research and analysis set out in this report is as thorough as possible given the type and number of archival resources available.

This desk-based and archival research has been combined with a visual assessment and appraisal of the existing building.

Information gathering has been based on, but not limited to the following:

- Archive records held at Camden County Council, RIBA archive
- Record information held by Historic England on Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Historic Landscapes, Historic Landscape Character Areas
- Historic map regression exercises.
- Aerial photography and satellite imagery.

1.5. Relationship to previous assessments undertaken

Our assessment is based on the previous assessment carried out by Richard Jessup MRICS, RICS Conservation Accredited, MSc Building Conservation, Atkins in relation to applications ref. 2014/5034/P & 2021/4889/L.

1.6. Statutory legislation, policy, and guidance

The primary legislation relating to Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Section 66(1) reads: *“In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”*

In relation to Conservation Areas, Section 72(1) reads: *“Special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.”*

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in 2012, amended 2019. The overarching aim of the policy, expressed in the Ministerial foreword, is that *“our historic environments... can better be cherished if their spirit of place thrives, rather than withers.”*

The NPPF directs local planning authorities to require an applicant to *“describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting”* and the level of detailed assessment should be *“proportionate to the assets’ importance”* (Paragraph 189).

This gives rise to the need for a Significance Assessment which identifies and then sets out the relative nature and value of affected heritage assets. It also stresses the importance of proportionality both in the extent to which assessments are carried out and in the recognising the relative merits of the assets. Planning Authorities should then *“take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal”* (Paragraph 190). This paragraph results in the need for an analysis of the impact of a proposed development on the asset’s relative significance, in the form of a Heritage Impact Assessment.

Paragraph 192 of the NPPF states that *“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.*

Paragraph 193 of the NPPF states that *“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting.”*

In relation to harmful impacts or the loss of significance resulting from a development proposal, Paragraph 195 states the following:

“Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- *The nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- *No viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- *Conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- *The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.”*
- *It is also possible for proposals, where suitably designed, to result in no harm to the significance of heritage assets, and for them to be beneficial in effect.*

Paragraph 196 states that *‘Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use’.*

In the case of non-designated heritage assets, Paragraph 135 requires a Local Planning Authority to make a *“balanced judgement”* *having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset”.*

The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) was published in 2014 as a companion to the NPPF, replacing a large number of foregoing circulars and other supplementary guidance. In respect of heritage decision-making, the NPPG stresses the importance of determining applications based on significance and explains how the tests of harm and impact within the NPPF are to be interpreted. In particular, the NPPG notes the following in relation to the evaluation of harm: *“In determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest.”* (Ref ID: 18a-017-20140306)

This guidance therefore provides assistance in defining where levels of harm should be set, tending to emphasise substantial harm as a “high test”.

Historic England (formerly English Heritage) sets out in ‘Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance’ 2008, a logical approach to making decisions and offering guidance about all aspects of England’s historic environment, including changes affecting significant places. It advises that the contribution made by setting and context should be considered when assessing heritage significance. Paragraph 76 explains as follows:

“‘Setting’ is an established concept that relates to the surroundings in which a place is experienced, its local context, embracing present and past relationships to the adjacent landscape. Definition of the setting of a significant place will normally be guided by the extent to which material change within it could affect (enhance or diminish) the place’s significance” (page 39).

The Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (March 2015) document presents guidance on managing change within the settings of heritage assets, including archaeological remains and historic buildings, sites, areas, and landscapes.

Page 6, entitled: '*A staged approach to proportionate decision taking*' provides detailed advice on assessing the implications of development proposals and recommends the following broad approach to assessment, undertaken as a series of steps that apply equally to complex or more straightforward cases:

Step 1 - identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected.

Step 2 - assess whether, how and to what degree these settings contribute to the significance of the heritage asset(s).

Step 3 - assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance.

Step 4 - explore the way maximizing enhancement and avoiding or minimizing harm.

Step 5 - make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

1.7. Local planning policies

The Camden Local Plan sets out the Council's planning policies for the period from 2016-2031 and replaced the Core Strategy and Development Policies planning documents that was adopted in 2010. It ensures that Camden "continues to have robust, effective and up-to-date planning policies that respond to changing circumstances and the borough's unique characteristics and contribute to delivering the Camden Plan and other local priorities." (Introduction) The Local Plan is a key document along with additional action plans and supplementary planning guidance to achieve the stated aims and objectives to promote a high quality, safe and sustainable environment that preserves and enhances the unique character of Camden and the distinctiveness of its conservation areas, historic buildings, spaces, and places.

Paragraph 7.2 requires changes to heritage assets to consider the character, setting, context, form and scale, the impact on the existing uniformities of the townscape and its contribution to the public realm.

Paragraph 7.7 requires that developments affecting heritage assets should also be consistent with policies relating to sustainability and durability.

Policy D2 identifies the Council's intention to preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and settings. It states that the Council will not permit the loss of or substantial harm to a designated heritage asset and will only permit less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset where the public benefits of the proposal convincingly outweigh that harm.

2. Heritage Impact Assessment

The following Heritage Impact Assessment is a structured process that follows guidelines developed by Historic England outlined above to ensure that the significance of the site has been understood and considered. The purpose of the assessment is to establish the degree and appropriateness of the change to the historic setting and identify the most appropriate approach that will maintain and enhance the special significance of the historic asset.

3. Understanding the site: history, development & the site today

3.1. Background & setting

Swiss Cottage is located 3.25 miles north-northwest of Charing Cross. Adjoining neighbourhoods include Hampstead Village to the northeast, Chalk Farm and Camden Town to the southeast, Belsize Park to the east, St John's Wood to the south and West Hampstead to the west. Regent's Park is within walking distance of Swiss Cottage. It is bounded by five conservation areas: Belsize, Elsworth, Fitzjohns-Netherhall, South Hampstead, St. John's Wood (Camden) and St. John's Wood (Westminster).

The district of Swiss Cottage originally formed part of the ancient parish of Hampstead. It developed following the Finchley Road Act 1826, which authorised construction of the adjacent Finchley New Road and Avenue Road. The origin of the name is considered to have derived from The Swiss Tavern that was built at the junction of the new roads within the immediate proximity of the library. The neighbourhood around Finchley Road and Avenue Road was redeveloped in 1937 and 1938 with the opening of an Odeon cinema and the Regency Lodge flats. After World War II, local authority housing was constructed by the London County Council in the area and includes the five-tower Chalcots Estate built in the 1960s along Avenue Road.

Swiss Cottage Central Library was built between 1963-4 to the designs of Sir Basil Spence. The centre originally was intended to provide a new Civic Centre for what was then the Metropolitan Borough of Hampstead; however, with the reorganisation of the government in 1964, only the library and the adjoining swimming pool were built. The original swimming pool has been subsequently demolished to make way for a new leisure centre complex that remains today. Historical maps dating from 1871 to 1935 show that the site of the library and swimming pool adjacent to Avenue Road and Winchester Road was formally on the site of a congregational church and adjacent residential housing.

The style of the library by Spence is an important example of architectural modernism in the post-war years that was symptomatic of the age's spirit of renewal and a decisive move away from revivalist architectural styles into new contemporary designs that incorporated new techniques and approaches to style and structure. During the 1960's new public libraries reflected an age of optimism and modernization that was intended to be "libraries of light" in both the open-plan, decluttered, Scandinavian-inspired designs that also served as a metaphor for the public library's role as a beacon of social egalitarianism and cultural universalism (Black, A.)

3.2. Exterior – Swiss Cottage Library

The Swiss Cottage Library is based on a cigar-shaped plan and consists of a reinforced concrete frame set out on a 10' (3m) grid that is clad on the first and second floors with pre-cast black basalt concrete spandrel panels between projecting and finely finished concrete fins finished with Portland stone aggregate. The projecting fins of Portland stone aggregate at 2'6" intervals are the dominant feature of the building and extend above the flat roof area to form an open fronted perimeter balustrade. The fins also strongly contrast with the black basalt spandrel panels and aluminium framed windows above. The strong vertical emphasis of the projecting fins and window treatments contrasts with the smooth finished surfaces of the ground floor that is set back and includes a ribbon window design with a strong horizontal emphasis. The main entrance area is located at the

northern end and is accessible via ramps and steps; this area has been set back and creates an arcade area supported by plain columns.

Consequently, the architectural details of the external elements that were intended to represent the clean simplicity of modernist architecture of functionality and lightness are still easily understood.

3.3. Views – Swiss Cottage Library

The Swiss Cottage Library is directly adjacent to Avenue Road and within sight of “Ye Olde Swiss Cottage”, the public house that the area is named after. The library is also near to Finchley Road that, together with Avenue Road can be understood as important elements in the urban development of the area.

The library forms an important landmark that can be seen from the dominant principal roads serving both the local and wider area and the adjacent medium rise buildings that were built in the second half of the C20.

The overall articulation of the vertical elements’ contrasts with the adjacent buildings that contributes to its status as a landmark building.

3.4. Use – Swiss Cottage Library

The Swiss Cottage Library continues to be used for its intended purpose. The significant refurbishment in 2000 has introduced elements that included data connectivity and services that have made the library a viable and important public asset for the ongoing use of the local and wider community. The redevelopment also included a development strategy to create a new tailored space for children within the library that has also resulted in a Modernist public space that is relevant today.

4. Significance

4.1. Assessment of Swiss Cottage Library

Significance can be defined as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest, it is unique to a place and it is vital to identify this, as the aim of conservation is to sensitively manage change to a place to ensure that its significance is protected, revealed, reinforced and enhanced at every possible opportunity.

This includes its relationship with people, now and in the past; its visual aspects and the features, materials and spaces associated with its history that includes the original design logic, as well as subsequent losses and additions. Added together, these elements become the collective history of the building(s) and form the basis of understanding their relationship with the historic area and landscape.

In assessing the significance of the Swiss Cottage Library, we have looked at the whole site and setting of the asset and focused on the areas that will be affected by the proposals.

4.1.1. Evidential value: ‘the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity’

Prior to the local government reorganisation in 1964 the Swiss Cottage Central Library was located within the Metropolitan Borough of Hampstead that can trace its origins back to early Saxon records that identifies grants made by King Ethelred the Unready to the monastery of St. Peter's at Westminster (AD 986). The area is referred to in the Domesday Book as being in the Middlesex hundred of Ossulstone. Within the Anglo-Saxon period there is evidence from both the historical records and the archaeological finds, suggesting that there was a settlement within the Borough, in particular towards the south of Camden with utilisation of the Heath to the north.

The Archaeological Priorities Area Appraisal (2018) does not record any Tier 1, 2 or 3 sites within the vicinity of the library. The proposed development does not seek make any below ground changes to the site or setting.

Historical maps show that the Swiss Cottage Library is located on a former congregational church that was demolished to make way for the 1964 civic development.



Figure 4-1 - 1871 and 1935 historical map (insert) showing the former church on the site of the 1964 Swiss Cottage Library and swimming pool development

4.1.2. Historical value: ‘the ways in which people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present’ (illustrative or associative)

Sir Basil Urwin Spence, OM OBE RA (1907 – 1976) was a Scottish architect, most notably associated with Coventry Cathedral (1956-62) in England and the Beehive parliament building in New Zealand.

By 1958 Spence was the newly elected President of the RIBA, he was knighted in 1960 and was awarded the Order of Merit by the Queen in 1962.

The Swiss Cottage Central Library is considered to be “one of Spence's most accomplished civic buildings”

Spence was also responsible for numerous other buildings in the Modernist and Brutalist style that met with both controversy and protest against what was happening to London and its skyline during a period when provincial cities across Britain were also tearing their historic cores apart to make way for a Modernist vision of the future. These buildings included the sixteen-storey Thorn office building (1956) in St Martin's Lane that towers above the surrounding buildings in Covent Garden and the thirty storey Knightsbridge Barracks tower that extends upwards for ninety-five metres and oversees Hyde Park. Sir Freddie Gibbert (English architect, town planner and landscape designer) politely described the Knightsbridge Tower as an “architectural gain and a townscape loss”.

The ideals of Modernist architecture can be easily understood in Spence's Swiss Cottage Library. Internally the architectural design has been based on openness and light, which is itself a metaphor for the libraries principal purpose of enlightenment.

The exterior form is based on rigid lines, harsh concrete forms and elements arranged at 90-degrees to each other that emphasise both horizontal and vertical lines. The projecting and finely finished concrete fins set over the smooth ground floor could be viewed as deviating from the true principles of Modernism where all ornament was viewed as inefficient and wasteful.

4.1.3. Aesthetic value: ‘the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place’

Modernism became synonymous with a rejection of the ideals of the past and a unified view of the world; this was a deliberate break with the past that initially followed the horrors of the First World War, and later the Second World War.

The emergence of Modernism during the 1920's is closely associated with two European architects. One of these was Walter Gropius, the leader of the Bauhaus in Germany. Gropius taught architects to reject historical orthodoxies and adopt the innovative new ideologies of modern industry.

The other was Le Corbusier, who took inspiration for his buildings and urban designs from modern engineering developments such as passenger jets, cruise liners, automobiles, grain silos, and smooth planar finishes. In his most famous book, ‘Towards a New Architecture’, he argued that ‘a house is a machine for living in’.

Le Corbusier sought to develop a coherent philosophy of architecture that would isolate what he called type forms, or universal elements of design that he considered to be present in architecture and engineering. These ideas are not new and can be associated with those of Plato's Ideal Forms that were valued by the ancient Greeks. Le Corbusier's system demanded pilotis (slender columns) to raise the building off the ground and allow air to circulate beneath; roof terraces, to bring nature into an urban setting; a free plan that allowed interior space to be distributed at will; a free façade whose smooth plane could be used for formal experimentation; and ribbon windows, which let in light but also reinforced the planarity of the wall.

Many of these Modernist elements can be seen in Spences interior and exterior articulation of the Swiss Cottage Library and it offers an opportunity to form connections with the origins and development of the style from its origins in the 1920's.

4.1.4. Communal value: ‘the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory’

The Swiss Cottage Library continues to be used for its original purpose as a place of learning and lending. The sensitive restoration and adaptation that took place in 2000. The building remains the only structure that was to be part of bigger civic centre that would serve the area.

The new library building, like other public buildings built in the late 1950's and 60's reflected an age of optimism and intended modernization. These developments took place alongside the welfare and national health service when hopes for technological and economic renewal informed the zeitgeist of the day.

The exterior form of the library is highly distinctive landmark building that adds considerable value to the civic pride of the local area. The interior is characterised by a fine long staircase leading to the middle of the building, with curved spaces at either end featuring elegant, curved staircases.

The library is considered to have highly significant communal value that has been successfully adapted and includes a cafe, reading rooms, galleries and reference sections that continues to be used by a wide cross-section of visitors.

5. The value of the changes

The proposed works are intended to better understand the nature of defects identified in the external fabric and to inform a following schedule/scope of repairs and to ensure the continued use of the buildings now and into the future.

5.1. Approach

The design development was based on a logical process to understand the heritage asset and conservation principles that identify the impact of the proposals. Achieving the right balance involved a systematic ‘whole building’ approach that was based on the following hierarchy:

- Understanding the significance of the site and setting
- Do nothing
- Minimal levels of intervention based on option appraisals
- Conservation of fuel and power – now and in the future
- Mitigating visual impacts caused by introducing insulation materials
- Current and future habitation and use

6. Proposed works

6.1. Principles

The development of the proposed investigations/repairs has been based on site visit survey information, record drawings and historical records. The necessary repairs will be based on detailed survey information and a good understanding of how the building works and why its materials are failing.

The methodology going forward will be based on sound conservation principles which include:

- Techniques and materials which have been demonstrated to be appropriate to the fabric. This includes matching the materiality and style of the original materials.
- Interventions that will maximize the life expectancy of significant building fabric and maintain its significance.
- All works to be adequately recorded and the records made available for others.

6.2. Defects

Atkins conducted a high-level qualitative inspection of the fins on the 13th of April in order to examine a badly damaged fin, and more generally to assess the general condition of the concrete fins on the building façade, following reports by the contractor of existing cracking being observed during the current works.

A record of the visual inspection carried out by Atkins Structures is submitted with the current application.

The following is noted under the Executive Summary (of the survey report):

Whilst the fins appear to be in good visual condition given the age of the structure and the exposure conditions, there are obvious signs of deterioration. Many of the (concrete) fins have horizontal cracks both internally and externally and it is likely that this is due to the fins being restrained by the structure as they undergo heating and cooling due to thermal effects and also the long-term shrinkage of the concrete.

Whilst previous attempts appear to have been made to address the external cracking, in some cases the cracks have reopened giving rise to a risk of corrosion due to water ingress. It is likely that cracks will continue to open, and form, and that the risk of corrosion will increase because of this.

In several locations at the bottom of the fins, there is significant cracking and corrosion that may lead to large pieces of concrete spalling at some point in the future that would present a risk to public safety. At roof level, whilst the tops of the fins appear to be in good condition, the fact that a large piece of concrete became detached during the inspection, and the apparent low cover to the reinforcement, suggests that there is a risk of further pieces spalling that would be a significant risk to public safety should they fall onto the footpath, or road, below.

Given the apparent lack of adequate cover to the reinforcement in the fins, it is not possible to use current crack width limits as a guide to ongoing durability.

1.1.1. Method

The proposed method of investigation is set out in the document prepared by Atkins Structures submitted with the application. This follows recommendations set out in the Executive Summary of the survey report as follows:

To fully assess the condition of the fins, and develop a building maintenance and remedial strategy, a detailed survey of every fin should be conducted, including testing to assess the corrosion risk such as for carbonation, chloride presence, half-cell potential, and cover-meter surveys.

The detailed concrete investigation is to be completed in 2 stages, the first, an audit of defects including completion of non-intrusive works to inform the scope of following intrusive investigations. The works under Stage 2 will include the need for core samples to be taken although the number/location will be informed following completion of stage 1. No intrusive works will be permitted until a schedule setting out the scope including location/type is complete and has been agreed with Camden Borough Council planning department officer. Works will then be monitored as they progress.

Any concrete that has been damaged or broken during the survey or where surfacing has been removed is to be made good temporarily and a suitable permanent repair method should be agreed. This will be subject to the presentation and approval of a sample repair prior to works proceeding.

We note that some additional temporary repairs may be required potentially to include:

- Mitigation measures to address the risk of spalling at roof level before the current scaffolding and its sheeting is removed. Similarly, at ground level the boundary fencing should be retained until the risk of spalling at the bottom of the fins is addressed.
- The two fins where fixing points have been noted to have failed to be assessed structurally to develop a suitable remedial solution.
- The fixing detail between fins and cladding panels should be reviewed generally due to two instances of this detail having failed.

In addition, we note that the scaffolding erected ahead of the previous works of sustainable improvements was placed with a number of mechanical fixing points placed directly within the concrete façade without prior consultation with the design team and consequently the planning officer. These interventions will remain until completion of stage 2 works following which they will be repaired as scaffold is removed to the same standard/criteria as agreed following stage 1 investigative works.

7. Impact assessment

7.1.1. Assessing impact

The Heritage Impact Statement identifies each of the 'significant' building elements throughout the site and uses four categories to assess the significance of any given element. The categories are shown below:

- High significance – Must be retained.
- Significant – Alterations will require substantial justification.
- Low Significance – Alterations will require justification.
- Negligible / No Significance – Alterations are acceptable

When the value of the site and setting has been assessed and understood, the next stage is to determine the scale of the impact brought about by the development proposals. This impact could be a direct physical impact on the assets or an impact on the wider setting, or both. The levels of impact can be considered as beneficial or adverse and are shown below:

Scale of impact	Criteria descriptions
Very high	<p>Beneficial: The proposals would remove or successfully mitigate existing and significant damaging and discordant impacts on assets; allow for the substantial restoration or enhancement of characteristic features.</p> <p>Adverse: Impacts will destroy cultural heritage assets resulting in their total loss or almost complete destruction.</p>
High	<p>Beneficial: The proposals would remove or successfully mitigate existing and significant damaging and discordant impacts on assets; allow for the substantial restoration or enhancement of characteristic features. Allow the substantial re-establishment of the integrity, understanding and setting for an area or group of features, halt rapid degradation and/or erosion of heritage resource, safeguarding substantial elements of the heritage resource.</p> <p>Adverse: Impacts will damage the cultural heritage assets; result in the loss of the asset's quality and integrity; cause severe damage to key characteristic features or elements; almost complete loss of setting and/or context of the asset. The assets integrity or setting is almost wholly destroyed or is severely compromised, such that the resource can no longer be appreciated or understood</p>
Medium	<p>Beneficial: Benefit to, or partial restoration of, key characteristics, features or elements; improvement of asset quality; degradation of the asset would be halted; the setting and / or context of the asset would be enhanced and understanding, and appreciation is substantially improved; the asset would be brought into community use</p> <p>Adverse: Moderate impact on the asset, but only partially affecting the integrity; partial loss of, or damage to, key characteristics, features or elements; substantially intrusive into the setting and / or would adversely impact upon the context of the asset for community appreciation. The</p>

	assets integrity or setting is damaged but not destroyed so understanding and appreciation is compromised.
Low	<p>Beneficial: Minor benefit to, or partial restoration of. One (maybe more) key characteristic features or elements; some beneficial impact on asset or a stabilisation of negative impacts; slight improvements to the context or setting of the site; community use or understanding and appreciation would be enhanced.</p> <p>Adverse: Some measurable change in assets quality or vulnerability; minor loss or alteration to one (or maybe more) key characteristics, features or elements; change to the setting would not be overly intrusive or overly diminish the context; community use or understanding would be reduced. The assets integrity or setting is damaged but understanding and appreciation would only be diminished not compromised.</p>
Negligible	Barely discernible change in baseline conditions
Nil	No discernible change in baseline conditions

8. The proposed scheme and its effect

8.1. The proposed scheme and its effect on heritage significance

The works albeit subject to review following the outcome of a 1st stage investigation are anticipated to have Low impact on the basis that this will lead to a wider understanding of the defects in a significant element of the heritage asset which will inform a schedule of repairs to sustain the asset for the future. However, the resulting appearance following numerous albeit small areas of opening up via the drilling of core holes and their subsequent 'temporary' repair will have minor impact on the building's external appearance until a future scheme of repairs is developed/completed.

8.2. The public benefit

The proposed scheme is considered to have a high public benefit value where the proposed changes will ensure that continued use of the space and include interventions that will stimulate and engender civic pride in Camden Borough Council's commitment to the necessary reduction in greenhouse gases.

9. Summary and Conclusion

The proposed works under the current application are considered critical on the basis that to leave will open up the building to significant risk of further deterioration and are likely to result in a diminution in public safety e.g., as elements weaken and fail as has been observed in a small number of locations to date.

Whilst the works and their 'temporary repair' may result in a 'patchy' appearance on completion it is likely that this will be outweighed by the public benefit as it will provide valuable information for future repairs which when completed will result in the maintenance of a heritage asset for future enjoyment of the wider community.

10. Sources

Belsize conservation area appraisal and management plan

Camden Town conservation area appraisal and management plan

Ellsworthy conservation area appraisal and management plan

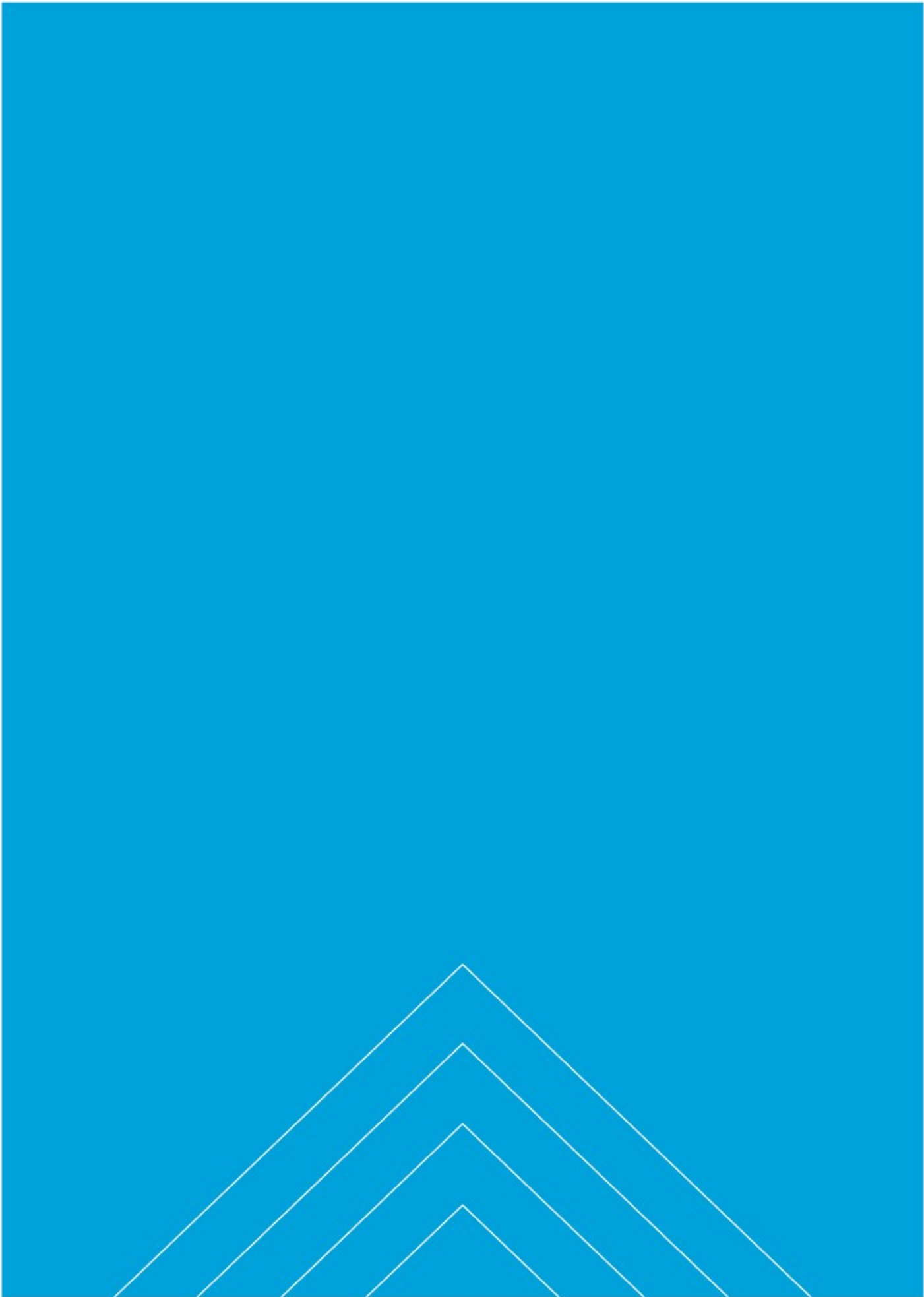
Elsworthy CA 1871 map

Elsworthy CA 1935 map

English Heritage (Historic England) *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment*

Historic England - Archaeology Priority Appraisal Camden

Historic England List Entry - 1272259



Howard Thomas MRICS

Moderated by:

Richard Jessup MRICS

Atkins Limited

The Hub

500 Park Avenue

Aztec West

Bristol

BS32 4RZ

Tel: +44 (0)1454 662000

Fax: +44 (0)1454 663333

richard.jessup@atkinsglobal.com

© Atkins Limited except where stated otherwise