

PHASE 3, 13 NETHERHALL GARDENS.

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Rev A

Background

This Statement of Community Involvement sets out the process of public consultation undertaken with neighbouring residents and local stakeholders in respect of the proposed development at 13 Netherhall Gardens. This process of consultation has run in parallel with the phased planning applications for the site.

The first application ('Phase 1') was submitted in March 2020 and proposed works to the external building envelope of Elm Tree House, including the demolition of the existing ground floor extension on the southern side of the building (Planning Ref: 2020/0971/P). The 'Phase 1' application was approved on 7 May 2020.

A subsequent planning application ('Phase 2') was submitted to the London Borough of Camden on 2 September 2021 for a proposed development comprising the extension and reconfiguration of the lower ground floor level of Elm Tree House, the construction of a new basement level, external soft landscaping and planting, cycle parking and associated works (Planning Ref: 2021/4259/NEW). The 'Phase 2' application was subject to consultation in June 2020, with the residents of the three neighbouring buildings to Elm Tree House - with Heath Court, 10-12 Frognal and with Samara Mansions, 11 Netherhall Gardens. The consultation events for the 'Phase 2' proposals focuses on explanation and discussion of the Phase 2 application which was at that point about to be submitted.

As part of these discussions, Paul Whitley, the project architect and project manager acting on behalf of the applicant explained about the three-phase approach to the planning applications in the overall development and that in due course there would be further consultation specifically in relation to the Phase 3, once a design for the new building was in a much further advanced stage.

Although these consultations focused on the Phase 2 proposal, the neighbours were nonetheless interested in the intentions for the whole development. As a result other site-wide issues, such as the arboricultural proposals, the landscaping, presence of Japanese knotweed, the renovation of the host building, the intentions for the boundaries and the front wall facing the street were discussed.

Introduction

On 3rd and 6th October 2022 respectively, two Zoom consultation meetings were held with the residents of Heath Court, 10-12 Frognal and with Samara Mansions, 11 Netherhall Gardens. Although 26 invitations were sent out in a leaflet that introduced the proposed new building, issued to every resident in each building, only 2 residents attended the first and the 5 residents attended the second meeting. On the applicant's behalf, the architect, planning consultant and an arboriculturalist attended.

At each meeting, Paul Whitley first set the context for the consultation, by reminding the residents about the previous consultation, as explained in the background above. The applicant then went on to explain that shortly after these consultations in June 2020, all work associated with the design and development of the whole development had had to stop, due to Covid related funding issues. The Applicant recommenced the project in July 2021, the Phase 2 application was submitted in August 21, and a resolution by the London Borough of Camden to approve the application subject to the S106 Agreement has been made.

Following this setting out of the events leading to this consultation, Paul Whitley presented the proposals and explained the design rationale for the new building. Following this, there was a discussion ranging across a wide range of topics, as more particularly described below. This presentation made to the residents is at Appendix A to this Statement. Following each consultation, Paul Whitley sent a copy of the presentation to each group of residents; in addition, Samara Mansions residents requested and received the plans, elevations, cross-section and the explanation of the design rationale.

Following each of these two consultations and the submission to them of the material, there were no further communications from any residents.

Design rationale for the scheme presented to each community group.

Paul Whitley first explained an analysis of the heritage and built form of context of the scheme, in respect of the relationship of the site to the adjacent buildings, and of the character and heritage value of the host building and the Conservation Area. From this starting point, he then explained the design rationale for the building footprint, together with the location, bulk, height and character of the new building. He explained that such an analysis was at the heart of the material planning considerations that the Council's Planning and Design Officers had been - and would be - judging the appropriateness of the building.

He noted that the current building design had to evolve over a series of 5 pre-application meetings with case officers, the Camden heritage and design officers, as well as a presentation to Camden's Design Review Panel, which ultimately resulted in support for the current building design.

Paul Whitley explained that one of the important planning design considerations for this building was the need to create a building that preserved or enhanced the setting of the host building (given its heritage status) and the character of the Conservation Area. In this regard, there were two notable features of the site that detracted from that character which the new building was intended to remedy. These features – firstly - are the presence of the existing wide gap between Elm Tree House and no 11 Netherhall Gardens, and – secondly -the presence of the set-back nature of Elm Tree House in relation to the prevailing pattern of gaps between buildings and prevailing front building lines along the street.

The relative uniformity of that gap in all the other buildings of the street and of the front building line are important features that assist in giving a cohesiveness and rhythm to the character of the street and Conservation Area, and which bind those buildings together into a relatively regular street scene. The set-back nature of Elm Tree House and the much larger gap at this site, dislocates that heritage building from the street scene, and the gap is a detrimental aspect to that prevailing character, similar to a missing tooth in a line of teeth.

Accordingly, it was necessary to create a new building which could relate both to Elm Tree House, whilst at the same time being read as part of the street scene of buildings with similar sized gaps between them. This drove the idea of a two-part building, one part being set alongside the existing gables to Elm Tree House, and one part reaching forward to hold a presence next to Samara Mansions.

The height, bulk and form of this two part building were calibrated to be of a nature that could resonate with the two existing gables to Elm Tree House, in a manner which allowed the building to be read as being subordinate to the buildings on each side. This is achieved by contemporary interpretations of the traditional gable form. As in the host building here, the gables to the new building are asymmetric so that each part plays off against each other. The objective of remaining subordinate is achieved by the narrower width of the building and its overall height being around

metre less than its neighbours on each side. Moreover, the stepped profile of the front building line helps to provide an appropriate transition between the contrasting building lines of Elm Tree House and Samara Mansions.

The heritage consultants have confirmed that the inclusion of this new building designed in this way is a positive enhancement to the character of the Conservation Area.

Matters raised by, and discussed with, the residents of Heath Court.

The residents advised that the new Phase 3 development was likely to be of only limited interest to Heath Court residents. They raised no objection to it.

The residents were keen to understand the status of the Phase 2 application. Paul Whitley advised that Camden officers had resolved to grant consent for the Phase 2 element subject to a S106 Agreement. He confirmed that nothing in this previous planning application (for the refurbishment of the original Elm Tree House, and some associated landscaping works) will be altered by this new planning permission if granted.

The residents asked for confirmation that the removal of the trees which was included within the Phase 3 application would go ahead as part of the landscaping works within the Phase 2 application, which the architect confirmed.

The residents asked about the intentions regarding the boundary wall between the rear garden of Elm Tree House and the back garden of Heath Court. Paul Whitley advised that its demolition and rebuilding was included as part of the Phase 2 application, and that following the grant of all the planning consents for the whole site and the decision to commence the implementation of the development, there would be a Construction Management Plan consultation and Party Wall negotiation process with the residents.

At the end of the consultation, Paul Whitley advised that - subject to there not being any amendments legitimately required to the scheme arising from public consultation adverse comments, the intention was to submit the scheme very soon thereafter. He hoped for that to be determined within about 3-4 months, but the timescale was difficult to predict and could be a lot longer.

Matters raised by, and discussed with, the residents of Samara Mansions.

The residents were keen to know about what was happening in relation to the many trees on site. Paul Whitley explained and confirmed:

- the design team's objectives for the trees;
- the nature of the original trees planted at the site and those that currently remained out of those protected under a Tree Preservation Order;
- the retention of the healthy trees that were not past their lifespan, and
- that there would be over 20 new trees planted of a kind that related to the heritage of the host building and were suitable for their circumstance.

Residents were particularly concerned why the building needed to be located alongside their boundary, rather than being a building at the rear of Elm Tree House. Paul Whitley referred to the planning considerations relating to the character of the Conservation Area which the planners

wanted to see addressed, and he explained that the Council rarely allow development in rear gardens, as this would constitute “back-land” development.

Residents were concerned that the proposal might lead to overlooking and a loss of privacy. Paul Whitley confirmed there would be no loss of privacy from these windows, as all the windows facing Samara Mansions are a combination of high-level or obscure, non-openable windows.

A residents expressed concern that the new building would take away the views from her property. Paul Whitley accepted that the new building would take away the views of Elm Tree House and of its grounds, and he explained that this was not a factor that was considered to be a material planning consideration affecting the placing of a new building.

Residents queried what was happening with the car parking on site, noting their expectation that cars would be accommodated in a garage in the new building. Paul Whitley explained that the Council has a car-free policy for new developments and that in the current climate emergency context, Camden officers would not be able to support the inclusion of cars.

Residents asked whether the new building would result in a loss of light. Paul Whitley confirmed that it was inevitable that there would be some loss of light. However, the planners would make their decision on the guidance set out in the BRE Guidelines. Further to this, it was advised that the design of the new building has been informed by daylight and sunlight analysis, which has shown that the effects are acceptable.

Residents queried about whether planting on the green wall would survive and were reassured when advised that it was intended to have creepers growing from a planting bed.

Residents queried whether there would be a noisy environment from the existence of the proposed Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs). Paul Whitley responded to this concern and clarified that the acoustics report had confirmed that the noise resulting from this plant was well within the World Health Organisation standards that Camden use to guide the acceptability of acoustic impacts.

Residents queried the current status of the Japanese knotweed and how this is being treated. Paul Whitley responded that it was being chemically treated each year and that its long term eradication was only possible by digging it out which would kill protected trees. It would be done at the start of the building works once the planning consents – which included consent to fell these trees – was received.

The residents asked about the length of time for the building works and the potential impact of the works on the stability of their building and on their amenity. Paul Whitley explained the programme, the Construction Management Plan and the Party Wall process.

Consultation with Community Stakeholder Groups

Emails have been sent to the Hampstead CAAC, the Hampstead and Heath Society, and to the Netherhall Neighbourhood Association, setting out: the background context to the development; the design rationale for the scheme; and issuing the Heritage statement, the design section of the Design and Access Statement, the existing and proposed drawings and the public consultation presentation documents. The responses to those consultations will be issued to Camden once they arrive.

Summary and Conclusion

The process of public consultation has provided a valuable opportunity for the Applicant and Design Team to understand the queries and concerns raised by neighbouring residents. This has helped to inform the mitigation measures and the matters that will need to be addressed in the Construction Management Plan for the site.

The Applicant and the Design Team will continue to liaise with the neighbouring residents to assist with information they may require and, subject to obtaining planning permission, the Applicant and construction contractor will endeavour to communicate directly with the residents to understand how best to manage the construction process.