

South Hampstead High School
January 2023



HERITAGE STATEMENT

SOUTH HAMPSTEAD HIGH SCHOOL

Quality Assurance

Site name: South Hampstead High School, 3 Maresfield Gardens, London, NW3 5SS

Client name: Girls' Day School Trust

Type of report: Heritage Statement

Prepared by: Sarah Wearing BA (Hons)

Signed



Date 28th November 2022

Reviewed by: Sean McEntee BArchSt, MA
Associate, Heritage and Design

Signed



Date 25th January 2023



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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been produced by Bidwells on behalf of South Hampstead High School and the Girls' Day School Trust in support of full planning and listed building consent (LBC) applications for proposed alterations to improve the accessibility of Oakwood House, which now forms part of the South Hampstead High School, at Maresfield Gardens, North London - henceforth referred to as 'the site'.
- 1.2 The site is located on the west side of Fitzjohn's Avenue, at the junction with Maresfield Gardens. Oakwood House is a Grade II listed building, with three other listed buildings or structures within 50m of the site. The site is also within the Fitzjohns / Netherhall Conservation Area.



Figure 1 - Aerial view showing the location of the site highlighted in red (Google Maps)

- 1.3 This Heritage Statement includes a Significance Assessment which determines the relative heritage value of the identified heritage assets and an Impact Assessment which considers the potential impact of the proposed changes on the significance of the heritage assets identified, including the contribution made by setting. This approach to impact-assessment is required in order to satisfy 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 is being considered (Paragraphs 193-206).

Authorship

- 1.4 This document has been prepared by Sarah Wearing BA(Hons) and supplemented/ reviewed by Sean McEntee BArchSt MA, Associate, Heritage and Design.

2.0 Heritage Legislation, Policy and Guidance Summary

Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- 2.1 The primary legislation relating to Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- Section 16(2) states *“In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or 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.”*
 - 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 development on land within 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.”*

National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was revised in July 2021. With regard to the historic environment, the over-arching aim of the policy remains in line with philosophy of the 2012 framework, namely that *“our historic environments... can better be cherished if their spirit of place thrives, rather than withers.”* The relevant policy is outlined within chapter 16, ‘Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment’.
- 2.2 With regard to the historic environment, the over-arching aim of the policy remains in line with philosophy of the 2012 framework, namely that *“our historic environments... can better be cherished if their spirit of place thrives, rather than withers.”* The relevant policy is outlined within chapter 16, ‘Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment’.
- 2.3 This chapter reasserts that heritage assets can range from sites and buildings of local interest to World Heritage Sites considered to have an Outstanding Universal Value. The NPPF subsequently requires these assets to be conserved in a *“manner appropriate to their significance”* (Paragraph 189).
- 2.4 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 194).
- 2.5 Paragraph 195 states that the significance any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal should be identified and assessed. This includes any assets affected by development within their settings. This Significance Assessment should be taken into account when considering the impact of a proposal, *“to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and*



any aspect of the proposal”. This paragraph therefore 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.

- 2.6 An addition to the 2021 NPPF is outlined in paragraph 198. This states that local planning authorities should have regard to the importance of the retention ‘*in-situ*’ of a historic statue, plaque, memorial or monument irrespective of its designation. The paragraph goes on to suggest an explanation of historic or social context should be given rather than removal.
- 2.7 Paragraph 199 requires 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 (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.*”
- 2.8 It is then clarified that any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, either through alteration, destruction or development within its setting, should require, “*clear and convincing justification*” (Paragraph 200). This paragraph outlines that substantial harm to grade II listed heritage assets should be exceptional, rising to ‘wholly exceptional’ for those assets of the highest significance such as scheduled monuments, Grade I and grade II* listed buildings or registered parks and gardens as well as World Heritage Sites.
- 2.9 In relation to harmful impacts or the loss of significance resulting from a development proposal, Paragraph 201 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 total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*
- a. the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
 - b. no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
 - c. conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
 - d. the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.”*

2.10 The NPPF therefore requires a balance to be applied in the context of heritage assets, including the recognition of potential benefits accruing from a development. In the case of proposals which would result in “*less than substantial harm*”, paragraph 202 provides the following:

“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, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.”

2.11 It is also possible for proposals, where suitably designed, to result in no harm to the significance of heritage assets.

2.12 In the case of non-designated heritage assets, Paragraph 203 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.

- 2.13 The NPPF therefore recognises the need to clearly identify relative significance at an early stage and then to judge the impact of development proposals in that context.
- 2.14 With regard to Conservation Areas and the settings of heritage assets, paragraph 206 requires Local Planning Authorities to look for opportunities for new development, enhancing or better revealing their significance. Whilst it is noted that not all elements of a Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance, this paragraph states that *“proposals that preserve those elements of a setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.”*
- 2.15 Broader design guidance is given in Chapter 12, ‘Achieving well-designed places’. The 2021 NPPF introduces the requirement for local authorities to prepare design guides or codes, consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code Documents. These should reflect ‘local character’ in order to create *‘beautiful and distinctive places’* (paragraph 127).
- 2.16 Paragraph 134 states that significant weight should be given to development which reflects local design policies, and/or outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability or help raise the ‘standard of design’ providing they conform to the ‘overall form and layout of their surroundings’.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (2019)

- 2.17 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was updated on 23 July 2019 and is a companion to the NPPF, replacing a large number of foregoing Circulars and other supplementary guidance.
- 2.18 In respect of heritage decision-making, the PPG stresses the importance of determining applications on the basis of significance and explains how the tests of harm and impact within the NPPF are to be interpreted.
- 2.19 In particular, the PPG 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. It is the degree of harm to the asset’s significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.”* (Ref ID: 18a-018-20190723).
- 2.20 This guidance therefore provides assistance in defining where levels of harm should be set, tending to emphasise substantial harm as a “high test”.
- 2.21 In relation to non-designated heritage assets, the NPPG explains the following:
“Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.”
- 2.22 It goes on to clarify that: *“A substantial majority of buildings have little or no heritage significance and thus do not constitute heritage assets. Only a minority have enough heritage significance to merit identification as non-designated heritage assets.”*
- 2.23 This statement explains the need to be judicious in the identification of value and the extent to which this should be applied as a material consideration and in accordance with Paragraph 197.

Historic England Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance 2008

- 2.24 Historic England sets out in this document a logical approach to making decisions and offering guidance about all aspects of the historic environment, including changes affecting significant places. It states that:

“New work or alteration to a significant place should normally be acceptable if: a. there is sufficient information comprehensively to understand the impacts of the proposal on the significance of the place; b. the proposal would not materially harm the values of the place, which, where appropriate, would be reinforced or further revealed; c. the proposals aspire to a quality of design and execution which may be valued now and in the future; d. the long-term consequences of the proposals can, from experience, be demonstrated to be benign, or the proposals are designed not to prejudice alternative solutions in the future” (page 59).



Historic England Making Changes to Heritage Assets Advice Note 2 (February 2016)

- 2.25 This advice note provides information on repair, restoration, addition and alteration works to heritage assets. It advises that *"The main issues to consider in proposals for additions to heritage assets, including new development in conservation areas, aside from NPPF requirements such as social and economic activity and sustainability, are proportion, height, massing, bulk, use of materials, durability and adaptability, use, enclosure, relationship with adjacent assets and definition of spaces and streets, alignment, active frontages, permeability and treatment of setting."* (page 10)

Historic England Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment Historic Environment Good Practice Advice (GPA) in Planning Note 2 (March 2015)

- 2.26 This advice note sets out clear information to assist all relevant stake holders in implementing historic environment policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the related guidance given in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). These include: *"assessing the significance of heritage assets, using appropriate expertise, historic environment records, recording and furthering understanding, neglect and unauthorised works, marketing and design and distinctiveness."* (page 1)

Historic England The Setting of Heritage Assets Historic Environment Good Practice Advice (GPA) in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition) (December 2017)

- 2.27 This 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 the degree to which these settings and views make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated
- Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance or on the ability to appreciate it
- Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm
- Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes

Historic England Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets Advice Note 12 (October 2019)

- 2.28 This document provides guidance on the NPPF requirement for applicants to describe heritage significance in order to aid local planning authorities' decision making. It reiterates the importance of understanding the significance of heritage assets, in advance of developing proposals. This advice note outlines a staged approach to decision-making in which assessing significance precedes the design and also describes the relationship with archaeological desk-based assessments and field evaluations, as well as with Design and Access Statements.
- 2.29 The advice in this document, in accordance with the NPPF, emphasises that the level of detail in support of applications for planning permission and listed building consent should be no more than is necessary to reach an informed decision, and that activities to conserve the asset(s) need to be proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset(s) affected and the impact on that significance. This advice also addresses how an analysis of heritage significance could be set out before discussing suggested structures for a statement of heritage significance.

Local Policy

Camden Local Plan (2017)

- 2.30 The Camden Local Plan is the principal document within the Camden Development Plan and was formerly adopted by the council on the 3rd July 2017. It establishes the council's vision and policies which will guide development in the borough until 2031. The relevant policies within this document are:
- 2.31 Policy C2: Community facilities
- "The Council will work with its partners to ensure that community facilities and services are developed and modernised to meet the changing needs of our community and reflect new approaches to the delivery of services."*
- 2.32 Policy C6: Access for All
- "The Council will seek to promote fair access and remove the barriers that prevent everyone from accessing facilities and opportunities."*
- We will:*
- a. Expect all buildings and places to meet the highest practicable standards of accessible and inclusive design so they can be used safely, easily and with dignity by all"*
- 2.33 Policy D1: Design
- "The Council will seek to secure high quality design in development. The Council will require that development:*

- a. *Respects local context and character;*
- b. *Preserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets in accordance with policy D2 Heritage;*
- c. *Is sustainable in design and construction, incorporating best practice in resource management and climate change mitigation and adaptation;*
- d. *Is of sustainable and durable construction and adaptable to different activities and land uses;*
- e. *Comprises details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character;*
- f. *Integrates well with the surrounding streets and open spaces, improving movement through the site and wider area with direct, accessible and easily recognisable routes and contributes positively to the street frontage;*
- g. *Is inclusive and accessible for all;*
- h. *Promotes health;*
- i. *Is secure and designed to minimise crime and antisocial behaviour;*
- j. *Responds to natural features and preserves gardens and other open space;*
- k. *Incorporates high quality landscape design (including public art, where appropriate) and maximises opportunities for greening for example through planting of trees and other soft landscaping,*
- l. *Incorporates outdoor amenity space*
- m. *Preserves strategic and local views;*
- n. *For housing, provides a high standard of accommodation; and*
- o. *Carefully integrates building services equipment.”*

2.34 Policy D2: Heritage

“The Council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance 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 and locally listed heritage assets.

Designated heritage assets

Designed heritage assets include conservation areas and listed buildings. The Council will not permit the loss of or substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, including conservation areas and Listed Buildings, 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:

- a. *The nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;*
- b. *No viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;*

- c. *Conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- d. *The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*

The Council will not permit development that results in harm that is less than substantial to the significance of a designated heritage asset unless the public benefits of the proposal convincingly outweigh that harm.

Conservation areas

Conservation areas are designated heritage assets and this section should be read in conjunction with the section above headed ‘designated heritage assets’. In order to maintain the character of Camden’s conservation areas, the Council will take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management strategies when assessing applications within conservation areas.

The Council will:

- e. *Require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area;*
- f. *Resist the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area;*
- g. *Resist development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character or appearance of that conservation area; and*
- h. *Preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character and appearance of a conservation area or which provide a setting for Camden’s architectural heritage*

Listed Buildings

Listed buildings are designated heritage assets and this section should be read in conjunction with the section above headed ‘designated heritage assets’. To preserve or enhance the borough’s listed buildings, the Council will:

- i. *Resist the total or substantial demolition of a listed building;*
- j. *Resist proposals for a change of use or alterations and extensions to a listed building where this would cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the building; and*
- k. *Resist development that would cause harm to significance of a listed building through an effect on its setting.*

Other heritage assets and non-designated heritage assets

The Council will seek to protect other heritage assets including non-designated heritage assets (including those on and off the local list), Registered Parks and Gardens and London Squares.

The effect of a proposal on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, balancing the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.”

Supplementary Planning Guidance

2.35 CPG Access for all (March 2019)

“6.1 – For listed buildings and other heritage assets, the Council will balance the requirement to provide access with the interests of conservation and preservation. Sensitive design solutions that achieve access for all, to and within listed buildings, should be sought. Local Plan Policy D2 Heritage sets out the Council’s detailed approach to development affecting listed buildings and other heritage assets.

6.2 – Measures to facilitate dignified and easy access to and within listed buildings can often be sensitively incorporated without damage to the buildings special architectural or historic interest. However, the Equality Act 2010 does not override other legislation such as listed building or planning legislation.”

Fitzjohns / Netherhall Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Plan (Adopted December 2022)

2.36 This Character Appraisal and Management resource was adopted on 19th December 2022, and as such provides guidance which is reliably current. The following guidelines from the Fitzjohns / Netherhall Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Plan are considered relevant:

6.4 – Alterations, Extensions and Infill

o) Every proposal for modifications to a dwelling in the Conservation Area will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, with regard for the design of the building, the adjoining properties and streetscape.

p) In all cases, existing/original architectural features and detailing characteristics of the Conservation Area should be retained and kept in good repair, and only be replaced when there is no alternative, or to enhance the appearance of the building through the restoration of missing features

s) Modifications should draw on materials and general characteristics of existing buildings, including roof forms. Dormers and roof lights should be on rear roof slopes and not front roof frontages with limited/no visibility from the public realm.

t) Alterations and extensions to buildings should minimise impacts on historic fabric and avoid destruction of features of interest, including roof forms. This includes retention of original windows, chimneys and decorative features. As far as possible, alterations should be reversible (this means contouring around existing fabric, rather than cutting into it).

3.0 Methodology

Heritage Assets

- 3.1 A heritage asset is defined within the National Planning Policy Framework as “*a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)*” (NPPF Annex 2: Glossary).
- 3.2 ‘Designated’ assets have been identified under the relevant legislation and policy including, but not limited to: World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, and Conservation Areas. ‘Non-designated’ heritage assets are assets which fall below the national criteria for designation.
- 3.3 The absence of a national designation should not be taken to mean that an asset does not hold any heritage interest. The Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) states that “*non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.*” (Paragraph: 039 Reference ID: 18a-039-20190723)
- 3.4 However, the PPG goes on to clarify that “*a substantial majority of buildings have little or no heritage significance and thus do not constitute heritage assets. Only a minority have enough heritage significance to merit identification as non-designated heritage assets.*”

Meaning of Significance

- 3.5 The concept of significance was first expressed within the 1979 Burra Charter (Australia ICOMOS, 1979). This charter has periodically been updated to reflect the development of the theory and practice of cultural heritage management, with the current version having been adopted in 2013. It defines cultural significance as the “*aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects. Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups*” (Page 2, Article 1.2)
- 3.6 The NPPF (Annex 2: Glossary) also defines significance as “*the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.*”
- 3.7 The British Standards BS7913 (2013) notes that “*the attributes that combine to define the significance of a historic building can relate to its physical properties or to its context. There are many different ways in which heritage values can be assessed.*”
- 3.8 Significance can therefore be considered to be formed by a collection of values.

Assessment of Significance

- 3.9 It is important to be proportionate in assessing significance as required in both national policy and guidance as set out in paragraph 194 of the NPPF.

- 3.10 The Historic England document ‘Conservation Principles’ states that “*understanding a place and assessing its significance demands the application of a systematic and consistent process, which is appropriate and proportionate in scope and depth to the decision to be made, or the purpose of the assessment.*”
- 3.11 The document goes on to set out a process for assessment of significance, but it does note that not all of the stages highlighted are applicable to all places/ assets.
- Understanding the fabric and evolution of the asset;
 - Identify who values the asset, and why they do so;
 - Relate identified heritage values to the fabric of the asset;
 - Consider the relative importance of those identified values;
 - Consider the contribution of associated objects and collections;
 - Consider the contribution made by setting and context;
 - Compare the place with other assets sharing similar values;
 - Articulate the significance of the asset.
- 3.12 At the core of this assessment is an understanding of the value/significance of a place. There have been numerous attempts to categorise the range of heritage values which contribute to an asset’s significance. Historic England’s ‘*Conservation Principles*’ sets out a grouping of values as follows:

Evidential value – ‘*derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity...Physical remains of past human activity are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them...The ability to understand and interpret the evidence tends to be diminished in proportion to the extent of its removal or replacement.*’ (Page 28)

Aesthetic Value – ‘*Aesthetic values can be the result of the conscious design of a place, including artistic endeavour. Equally, they can be the seemingly fortuitous outcome of the way in which a place has evolved and been used over time. Many places combine these two aspects...Aesthetic values tend to be specific to a time cultural context and appreciation of them is not culturally exclusive.*’ (Pages 30-31)

Historic Value – ‘*derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be illustrative or associative... Association with a notable family, person, event, or movement gives historical value a particular resonance...The historical value of places depends upon both sound identification and direct experience of fabric or landscape that has survived from the past, but is not as easily diminished by change or partial replacement as evidential value. The authenticity of a place indeed often lies in visible evidence of change as a result of people responding to changing circumstances. Historical values are harmed only to the extent that adaptation has obliterated or concealed them, although completeness does tend to strengthen illustrative value.*’ (Pages 28-30)

Communal Value – “*Commemorative and symbolic values reflect the meanings of a place for those who draw part of their identity from it, or have emotional links to it... Social value is associated with places that people perceive as a source of identity, distinctiveness, social interaction and coherence. Some may be comparatively modest, acquiring communal significance through the passage of time as a result of a collective memory of stories linked to them...They may relate to an activity that is associated with the place, rather than with its physical fabric...Spiritual value is often associated with places sanctified by longstanding*

eneration or worship, or wild places with few obvious signs of modern life. Their value is generally dependent on the perceived survival of the historic fabric or character of the place, and can be extremely sensitive to modest changes to that character, particularly to the activities that happen there". (Pages 31-32)

- 3.13 Historic England advice Note 12 notes that 'interest may be archeological, architectural, artistic or historic.
- 3.14 The British Standards set out a simpler approach which '*is to think of a historic building's significance as comprising individual heritage values*'. These could include townscape characteristics, artistic value, educational value and identity or belonging amongst others.
- 3.15 It is therefore clear that value-based assessment should be flexible in its application. It is important not to oversimplify an assessment and to acknowledge when an asset has a multi-layered value base, which is likely to reinforce its significance.

Contribution of setting/context to significance

- 3.16 In addition to the above values, the setting of a heritage asset can also be a fundamental contributor to its significance - although it should be noted that 'setting' itself is not a designation. The value of setting lies in its contribution to the significance of an asset. For example, there may be instances where setting does not contribute to the significance of an asset at all.
- 3.17 Historic England's Conservation Principles defines *setting* as "*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.*"
- 3.18 It goes on to state that "*context embraces any relationship between a place and other places. It can be, for example, cultural, intellectual, spatial or functional, so any one place can have a multi-layered context. The range of contextual relationships of a place will normally emerge from an understanding of its origins and evolution. Understanding context is particularly relevant to assessing whether a place has greater value for being part of a larger entity, or sharing characteristics with other places*" (page 39).
- 3.19 In order to understand the role of setting and context to decision-making, it is important to have an understanding of the origins and evolution of an asset, to the extent that this understanding gives rise to significance in the present. Assessment of these values is not based solely on visual considerations but may lie in a deeper understanding of historic use, ownership, change or other cultural influence – all or any of which may have given rise to current circumstances and may hold a greater or lesser extent of significance.
- 3.20 The importance of setting depends entirely on the contribution it makes to the significance of the heritage asset or its appreciation. It is important to note that impacts that may arise to the setting of an asset do not, necessarily, result in direct or equivalent impacts to the significance of that asset(s).

Assessing Impact

- 3.21 It is evident that the significance/value of any heritage asset(s) requires clear assessment to provide a context for, and to determine the impact of, development proposals. Impact on that

value or significance is determined by first considering the sensitivity of the receptors identified which is best expressed by using a hierarchy of value levels.

- 3.22 There are a range of hierarchical systems for presenting the level of significance in use; however, the method chosen for this project is based on the established 'James Semple Kerr method' which has been adopted by Historic England, in combination with the impact assessment methodology for heritage assets within the *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* (DMRB: HA208/13) published by the Highways Agency, Transport Scotland, the Welsh Assembly Government and the department for Regional Development Northern Ireland. This 'value hierarchy' has been subject to scrutiny in the UK planning system, including Inquiries, and is the only hierarchy to be published by a government department.
- 3.23 The first stage of our approach is to carry out a thoroughly-researched assessment of the significance of the heritage asset, in order to understand its value:

Table 1 Assessment of Significance

SIGNIFICANCE	EXAMPLES
Very High	World Heritage Sites, Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and Conservation Areas of outstanding quality, or built assets of acknowledged exceptional or international importance, or assets which can contribute to international research objectives. Registered Parks & Gardens, historic landscapes and townscapes of international sensitivity.
High	World Heritage Sites, Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas and built assets of high quality, or assets which can contribute to international and national research objectives. Registered Parks & Gardens, historic landscapes and townscapes which are highly preserved with excellent coherence, integrity, time-depth, or other critical factor(s).
Good	Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas and built assets (including locally listed buildings and non-designated assets) with a strong character and integrity which can be shown to have good qualities in their fabric or historical association, or assets which can contribute to national research objectives. Registered Parks & Gardens, historic landscapes and townscapes of good level of interest, quality and importance, or well preserved and exhibiting considerable coherence, integrity time-depth or other critical factor(s).
Medium/ Moderate	Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas and built assets (including locally listed buildings and non-designated assets) that can be shown to have moderate qualities in their fabric or historical association. Registered Parks & Gardens, historic landscapes and townscapes with reasonable coherence, integrity, time-depth or other critical factor(s).
Low	Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and built assets (including locally listed buildings and non-designated assets) compromised by poor preservation integrity and/or low original level of quality of low survival of contextual associations but with potential to contribute to local research objectives. Registered Parks & Gardens, historic landscapes and townscapes with modest sensitivity or whose sensitivity is limited by poor preservation, historic integrity and/or poor survival of contextual associations.
Negligible	Assets which are of such limited quality in their fabric or historical association that this is not appreciable.

	Historic landscapes and townscapes of limited sensitivity, historic integrity and/or limited survival of contextual associations.
Neutral/ None	Assets with no surviving cultural heritage interest. Buildings of no architectural or historical note. Landscapes and townscapes with no surviving legibility and/or contextual associations, or with no historic interest.

- 3.24 Once the value/significance of an asset has been assessed, the next stage is to determine the assets 'sensitivity to change'. Table 2 sets out the levels of sensitivity to change, which is based upon the vulnerability of the asset, in part or as a whole, to loss of value through change. Sensitivity to change can be applied to individual elements of a building, or its setting, and may differ across the asset.
- 3.25 An asset's sensitivity level also relates to its capacity to absorb change, either change affecting the asset itself or change within its setting (remembering that, according to Historic England The Setting of Heritage Assets – Planning Note 3, 'change' does not in itself imply harm, and can be neutral, positive or negative in effect).
- 3.26 Some assets are more robust than others and have a greater capacity for change and therefore, even though substantial changes are proposed, their sensitivity to change or capacity to absorb change may still be assessed as low.

Table 2 Assessment of Sensitivity

SENSITIVITY	EXPLANATION OF SENSITIVITY
High	High Sensitivity to change occurs where a change may pose a major threat to a specific heritage value of the asset which would lead to substantial or total loss of heritage value.
Moderate	Moderate sensitivity to change occurs where a change may diminish the heritage value of an asset, or the ability to appreciate the heritage value of an asset.
Low	Low sensitivity to change occurs where a change may pose no appreciable threat to the heritage value of an asset.

- 3.27 Once there is an understanding of the sensitivity an asset holds, the next stage is to assess the 'magnitude' of the impact that any proposed works may have. Impacts may be considered to be adverse, beneficial or neutral in effect and can relate to direct physical impacts, impacts on its setting, or both. Impact on setting is measured in terms of the effect that the impact has on the significance of the asset itself – rather than setting itself being considered as the asset.

Table 3 Assessment of Impact

MAGNITUDE OF IMPACT	TYPICAL CRITERIA DESCRIPTORS
Very High	Adverse: Impacts will destroy cultural heritage assets resulting in their total loss or almost complete destruction.

	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.
High	<p>Adverse: Impacts will damage 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> <p>Beneficial: The proposals would remove or successfully mitigate existing damaging and discordant impacts on assets; allow for the 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 the heritage resource, safeguarding substantial elements of the heritage resource.</p>
Medium	<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; loss of the asset for community appreciation. The assets integrity or setting is damaged but not destroyed so understanding and appreciation is compromised.</p> <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>
Minor/Low	<p>Adverse: Some measurable change in assets quality or vulnerability; minor loss of 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> <p>Beneficial: Minor benefit to, or partial restoration of, one (maybe more) key characteristics, 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>
Negligible	Barely discernible effect on baseline conditions but a slight adverse or beneficial impact.
Neutral	A change or effect which is neither adverse nor beneficial in impact.
Nil	No change in baseline conditions.

Research Methodology

- 3.28 This Heritage Statement is the result of a robust process which assesses relevant documentary evidence, including HER records, maps, drawings and reports, as well as archive material where relevant. Use of professional judgment is also an important contributor to the research methodology.
- 3.29 Site visits were undertaken in November 2022 and January 2023, and have informed the assessments of significance of heritage assets, as well as helping to ensure the emerging proposals respond suitably to the sensitive heritage context of the site.

4.0 Historic Context

Introduction

- 4.1 Archaeological finds on Hampstead Heath dating back to the Mesolithic period suggest a community of hunter-gatherers used the area as far back as c. 7000 BC, and Roman grave goods discovered in 1774 suggest a nearby Roman dwelling or road in the area.
- 4.2 In the Domesday Book of 1086, it is named *Hamestede*, meaning 'homestead' in Anglo-Saxon, being presumably a small farmstead of seven households, cultivating 3 ploughlands (common-land arable fields), 3.5 lord's lands and woodlands, all owned by Westminster Abbey, alongside a parcel of 0.5 ploughlands with Ranulf Peverel as lord, although still belonging to the Abbey.
- 4.3 By the 12th century, the inhabitants and the area of cultivation had grown, with 41 tenants in 1259 and 4 tenants on Peverel's land, known as the Hyde. In 1312 there were 40 dwellings and six freehold houses in addition to the manorial farmland at the centre of the parish. The freehold estates were mostly owned by religious houses and were located at the edges of the settlement, in areas that had previously been woodland.
- 4.4 Hampstead's position on high ground above London meant that it represented health and clean air, with Londoners escaping there throughout the Middle Ages from both plague and flooding. By the 16th century, wealthy Londoners had begun to acquire property, causing the area to plead poverty in 1653, on the grounds that the houses were occupied by citizens who paid their taxes in London and the other inhabitants were poor wage-earning labourers. Most of the newcomers to Hampstead often bought or rented a house only for the summer.
- 4.5 From 1698, the wells on Hampstead Heath were commercially exploited as spa resort and in the early 18th century, it was the height of fashion to spend summers at Hampstead and the village grew as the need for lodgings increased. By 1762, there were around 500 houses and cottages.
- 4.6 Throughout the 19th century, although it ceased to be a spa, building continued at a fast rate as speculators built many houses as lodgings for tourists. By 1815, whole new estates were being constructed on the freehold land to the south, with opening of railway stations in the area increasing the pace of building as people were able to live there permanently and easily commute to London. Hampstead Town and the Heath remained undeveloped initially due to a restriction in the landowner, Sir Thomas Maryon Wilson's will, which was only unrestricted following the death of his son in 1869, which led to a wave of estates built in the 1870s and 1880s. It was estimated that 69% of Hampstead's buildings were constructed between 1870 and 1916, with the number of houses reaching 11,976 by 1911.
- 4.7 The new estates were a mixture of architect-designed and local builders working from pattern-books, designed and occupied by middle-class families, such as bankers, solicitors and merchants, as well as the artistic and intelligentsia. By the 1880s, Hampstead was one of the largest and wealthiest suburbs of London. However, from the 1930s, the area began to decline, with an increase in the larger houses being sub-divided into smaller flats and bed-sitting rooms, and blocks of council flats were constructed in the 1960s to relieve overcrowding. The area began to have a renaissance in the 1970s as the Victorian houses were rehabilitated in increasing numbers.

Map Regression and History of No. 1 Fitzjohn's Avenue (Oakwood House)

- 4.8 An initial review of available historic maps has been undertaken to assist in the understanding of the building's history and also the morphology of the surrounding area over time. Although such information cannot be considered to be definitive, experience shows that the mapping is often relatively accurate and reliable - particularly the later Ordnance Survey (OS) maps - and the site's history taken together with written archival date and physical evidence can help to refine the history of a site.



Figure 2 – Extract from Ordnance Survey Map – London (First Editions c.1850s) XV. Surveyed 1866, Published 1871. Approximate location of site outlined in red.

- 4.9 The area in 1871 was still predominantly rural and historically part of the Hampstead Estate, restricted from development until 1869 by Sir Maryon Wilson's will. As can be seen in the OS Map, estate development had begun to spread northwards from the main artery of Finchley Road. The Finchley Road station (operated by London and North Western Railway) just to the north and Swiss Cottage station (operated by the Metropolitan Railway) to the south both opened in 1868, with a direct service to St Pancras and Baker Street respectively, which greatly increased the pace of building.

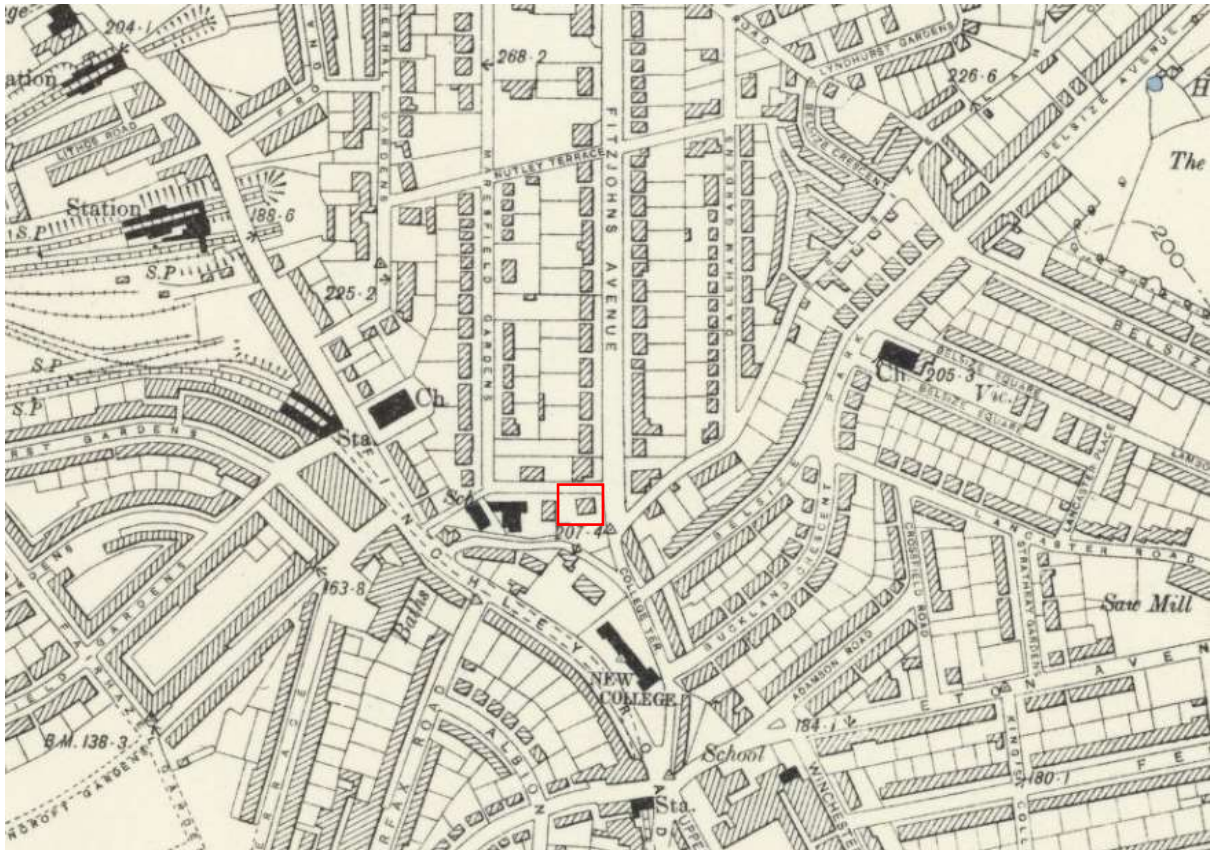


Figure 3 – Extract from Ordnance Survey Map – London Sheet VI.NE. Revised 1891-1894, Published 1894-1896. Site outlined in red.

- 4.10 By the 1890s, the area had changed drastically from the 1870s. Several railway stations have sprung up along Finchley Road, including West End Lane (now West Hampstead) in 1888. Fitzjohn's Avenue, the primary road of the development, began construction in 1875 and was named after the Spencer Wilson house in Great Canfield, Essex. Its surrounding neighbourhood was built in the ten years following. Designed by Spencer Wilson with a 50ft wide road and 10ft pavement and planted with chestnut trees, with the houses set back from the road; Fitzjohn's Avenue was described by Harpers Magazine in 1884 as "one of the noblest streets in the world". The adjoining streets were slightly less spacious than Fitzjohn's Avenue, but all had large building plots with detached or semi-detached properties.
- 4.11 As can be seen from the 1894 OS Map extract (Figure 3), the building at No. 1 Fitzjohn's Avenue has been constructed. The property is located at the corner of Fitzjohn's Avenue and Maresfield Gardens on a large corner plot. The house was designed by architect J.J. Stevenson and is commonly believed to have been for Frank Debenham, the store magnate, however it was actually designed for Alexander Gavin Anderson, part-owner of the Orient Steam Navigation Company and a relative by marriage of J.J. Stevenson.¹ Anderson was listed as resident at No.1 Fitzjohn's Avenue at his death on 6th December 1892, having presumably lived in the house since its construction in 1883.

¹ Girouard, M. "The Architecture of John James Stevenson – Part II" in *The Connoisseur: an Illustrated Magazine for Collectors* (February 1974) pp.106-112

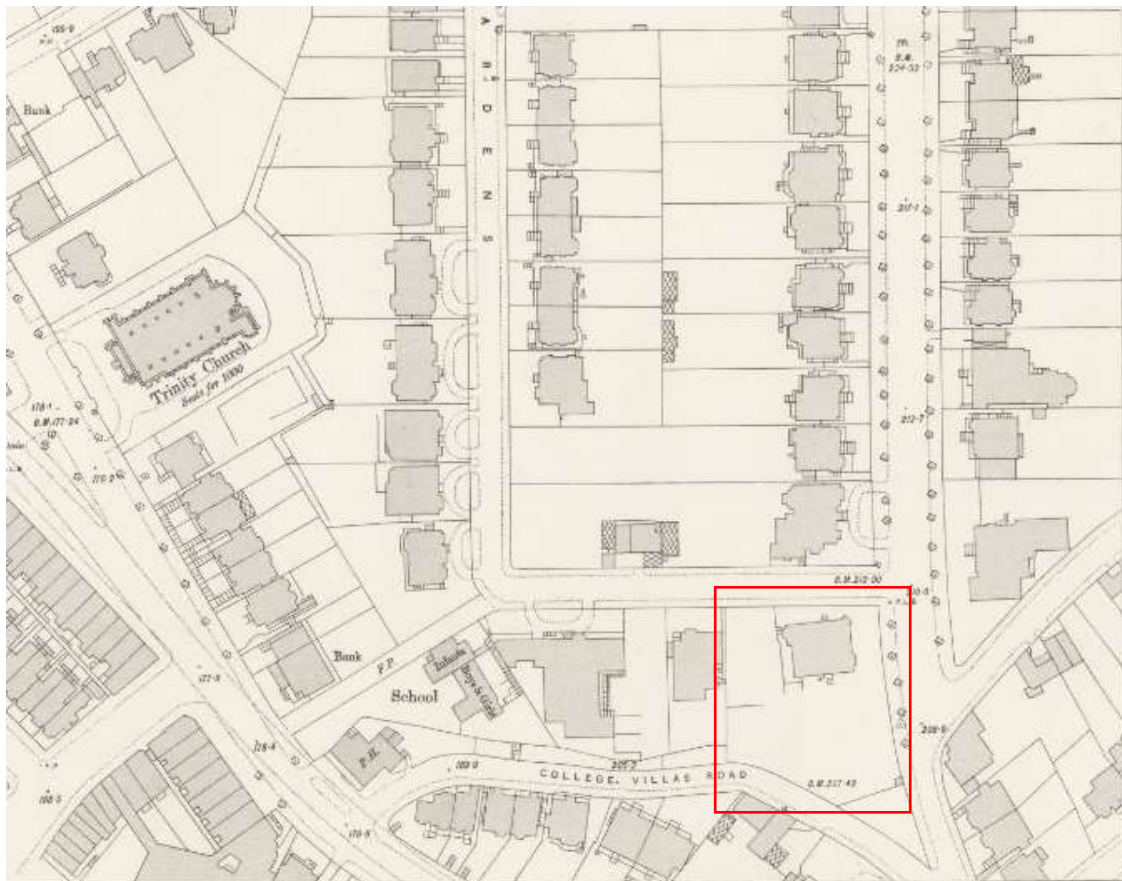


Figure 4 – Extract from OS Map – London VI.9, Revised 1893, Published 1895. Site outlined in red.

4.12

The house was auctioned in March 1893 and is described as:

“A handsome detached Freehold Mansion, built for the late owner by Messrs. Holland and Hannen in a most substantial manner, under the superintendence of Mr John J. Stevenson, F.S.A, the eminent architect, with every regard to comfort and convenience. It occupies a commanding corner position, is surrounded by well-shaded ornamental grounds, with summer and winter tennis courts, altogether comprising about an acre, and affords the following accommodation:- 12 excellent bedrooms, 3 dressing rooms, 2 bathrooms, spacious and handsome double drawing room, large dining room, library, entrance and staircase halls, full-size billiard room, and ample domestic offices, with extensive cellarage.”²

² The British Library Board, *Hampstead News*, 9th March 1893. The British Newspaper Archive [Online]



Figure 5 – View of No. 1 Fitzjohn's Avenue, looking north from College Crescent, circa 1907. The Palmer Memorial Drinking Fountain is in the foreground. ([Michael Haag: Upstairs Downstairs](#))

- 4.13 Frank Debenham is listed as living at No. 1 Fitzjohn's Avenue in 1898, presumably having purchased the property at auction after the death of Anderson in 1892. Debenham was still listed as resident at the property when he died in January 1917. After his death, the property was used by the Royal Air Force as the home of the newly created RAF School of Music from 2nd July 1918 until September 1919 when the school moved to RAF Uxbridge.³
- 4.14 By the 1920s, No. 1 Fitzjohn's Avenue had been split into flats, with the Ground Floor Flat being advertised as let in the *Hampstead News* in November 1924.⁴ In 1923, Jules Fuerst (of the Fuerst Brothers, the London agents for Lumière Cinematograph Films), who was famous for filming Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, was resident at No. 1 Fitzjohn's Avenue, and it was listed as his address at his death in 1938.⁵ He and his family were presumably living in one of the flats.
- 4.15 In 1932, a Drill Hall known as Edinburgh House had been constructed in the grounds of No. 1 Fitzjohn's Avenue, as can be seen in Figures 5 and 6. The building along the western edge was known as The Bungalow, constructed some time during the 1920s and was a separate dwelling.

³ Hanna, E. (2020) Instruments of War. In *Sounds of War: Music in the British Armed Forces during the Great War* (Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare, pp. 53-75). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁴ The British Library Board, *Hampstead News*, 27th November 1924, The British Newspaper Archive [Online]

⁵ The British Library Board, *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette*, 3rd December 1938, The British Newspaper Archive [Online]

- 4.16 An application was made in March 1936 to the Camden Council to demolish all of the buildings on the site and replace them with a purpose-built four-storey block of flats, which was approved but never implemented.⁶



Figure 6 – Extract from OS Map – London VI.9. Surveyed 1864-65, Revised 1935, Published 1936. Site outlined in red.



Figure 7 – Close up of No. 1 Fitzjohn's Avenue from OS Map 1936. Oakwood House is outlined in red.

⁶ Application G7/5/A, Camden Council Planning, 7th March 1936

- 4.17 From 1948, Camden Council granted permission for No. 1 Fitzjohn's Avenue and all buildings on the grounds (including The Bungalow) to be used as a Headquarters for the Territorial Army. The building continued to be used by the Army for the next 40 years.
- 4.18 In 1989, the Territorial Army demolished the old Edinburgh House Drill Hall, which was presumably being used for storage at this stage as the application lists demolition of a garage and storage buildings only. It is presumed The Bungalow had either been demolished earlier with no record or was also being used for storage. The Army constructed a large new four-storey building in the grounds of No. 1 Fitzjohn's Avenue and moved their operations there, selling the original property. 33 and 34 Military Intelligence Companies are stationed at the property, alongside the Territorial Army and the RAF Air Cadets.
- 4.19 In 1991, Oakwood House became part of the South Hampstead High School campus as a location for the Sixth Form. In 2011, when the original school buildings were demolished and replaced with a new school building, Oakwood House was joined to the building via a glass link staircase and walkways.

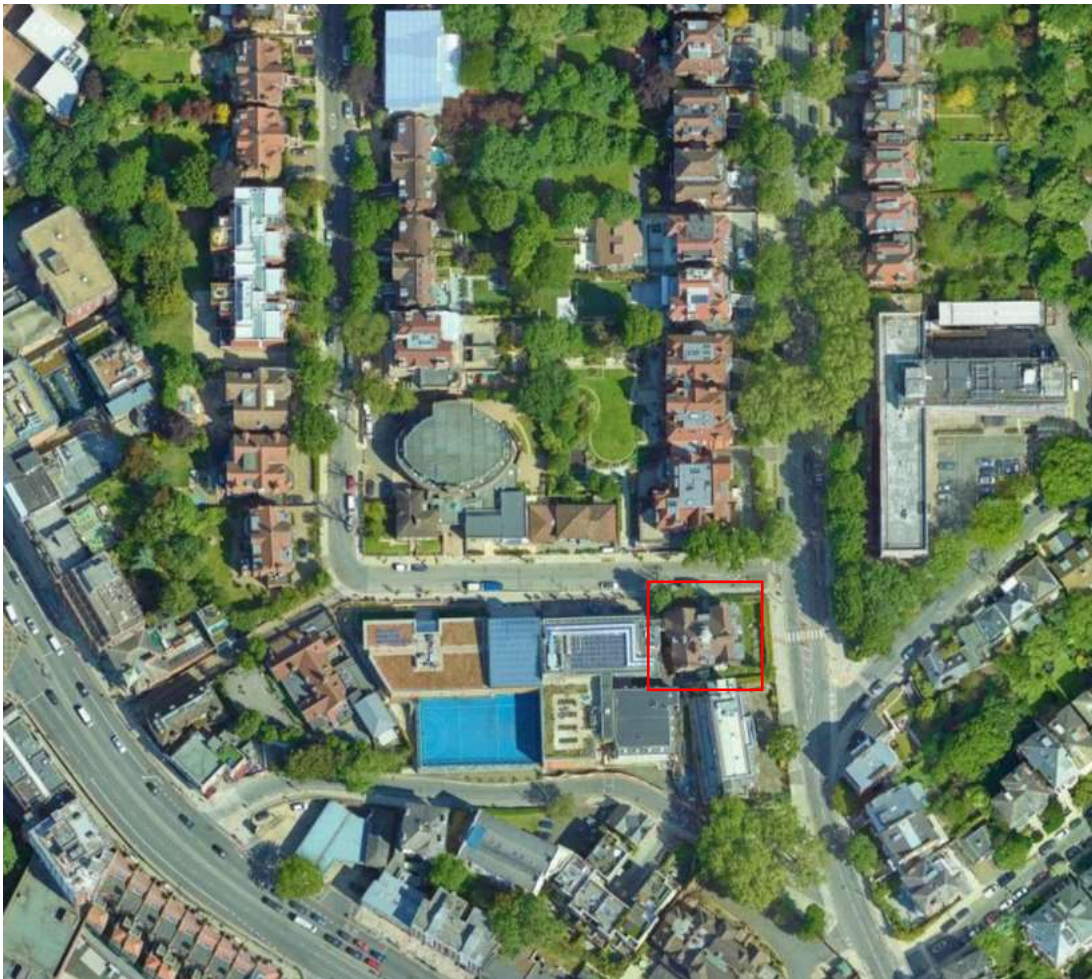


Figure 8 – The site today, Oakwood House outlined in red. (Google Maps, 2022)

5.0 Heritage Assets

- 5.1 This section identifies heritage assets which relate to the site. In the case of this application submission, the following heritage assets are local to the proposed development and have been identified as they may be affected by the current proposals. The identification of these assets is consistent with 'Step 1' of the GPA3 The Setting of Heritage Assets.
- 5.2 Although there are other built heritage assets within the local surrounding area, the location and significance of many of them results in them having no perceptible relationship with the proposed development site. For this reason, only the built heritage assets which may be considered to be affected by the proposals have been identified.
- 5.3 In the case of this application, the following built heritage assets are located within the vicinity of the site. Due to their location, positioning and significance, they have the potential to be affected by development on the application site:
1. No. 1 Fitzjohns Avenue (Grade II listed)
 2. The Fitzjohns / Netherhall Conservation Area;
 3. Sigmund Freud Statue (Grade II listed);
 4. Palmer Memorial Drinking Fountain (Grade II listed);
 5. Roman Catholic Church of St Thomas More (Grade II listed)



Figure 9 - Aerial indicating the location of the assets listed above. The site boundary is marked in red, the Conservation Area boundaries in yellow and the heritage assets in blue

- 5.4 Following an appraisal of the relationship of the heritage assets to the application site, and given the modest nature of the proposed interventions in an area of the campus largely shielded from public view, only the conservation area and the host listed building, Oakwood House, have been brought forward for further assessment.
- 5.5 For the purposes of this assessment, where we consider the Conservation Area, we are considering the Conservation Area as a term of designation but also with reference to the built assets which they contain; in other words, we do not assess the Conservation Area in two dimensions but rather as a grouping of buildings and spaces and the manner in which these relate to their surroundings. Thus, consideration of effects on the setting of a Conservation Area also takes into account potential effects on the setting of built assets within that designated area, this includes the buildings which are considered to make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

6.0 Significance Assessment

- 6.1 The below evaluation of significance and subsequent conclusions have been assessed in line with the methodology outlined in Section 3 and consider the following:
- The relevant planning legislation as well as the policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and objectives of the Planning Practice Guidance;
 - Historic England ‘Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance’;
 - British Standard 7913 (2013) Guide to the ‘Conservation of Historic Buildings’;
 - Guidance set out in Historic England advice notes.

No. 1 Fitzjohn’s Avenue (Grade II Listed)

- 6.2 No. 1 Fitzjohn’s Avenue is located on the west side of Fitzjohn’s Avenue at the junction with Belsize Lane. It was added to the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest on 14th May 1974.
- 6.3 The house was built in 1883 by architect J.J. Stevenson as a large, detached mansion. It is constructed from red and yellow brick with terracotta dressings. It comprises three storeys plus attics, with dormer windows in the roof and tall moulded brick chimneys. The main entrance onto Maresfield Gardens is recessed between two gable ends, one of which is Flemish with an end chimney stack with a terracotta cartouche inlaid and a full-height bay window set diagonally. The other gable has another terracotta cartouche inlaid into the wall, and a large rectangular axial chimney stack. All of the fenestration is irregular on every elevation of the property.
- 6.4 As discussed above, the building’s origins as display of wealth and taste by the first owner, but has also endured less auspicious functions, and as a result of it’s occupation by the Territorial Army and now as a school, these varied functions have brought substantial change to much of the interior. The external envelope of the building remains largely as it was originally built.
- 6.5 Overall, No. 1 Fitzjohn’s Avenue is considered to hold a **good** level of significance in heritage terms

Setting

- 6.6 The setting of No. 1 Fitzjohn’s Avenue has been much compromised over the years. Although within the Fitzjohn’s / Netherhall Conservation Area, the area around No. 1 does not contribute meaningfully to the significance of the asset. The large Territorial Army building directly to the south is much larger in scale and overshadows the original property, also removing its connection from its originally large, landscaped grounds and providing the majority of the south-facing garden windows of the property with a blank brick wall outlook. The new South Hampstead High School buildings directly east have removed the Victorian connection to the rest of Maresfield Gardens and the original context of the property as one of multiple large villas in their own grounds. To the west, across Fitzjohn’s Avenue, is the large 1960s concrete building of the Tavistock Centre, although partially obscured by mature trees. Only the view to the north, towards No. 3 and the other villas along the east side of the tree lined Fitzjohn’s Avenue provide the property with a connection to its original setting.
- 6.7 As such the setting of No. 1 Fitzjohn’s Avenue is considered to make a **moderate adverse** contribution to its significance.

The Fitzjohns / Netherhall Conservation Area

- 6.8 The Fitzjohns Netherhall Conservation Area was first designated in March 1984 and subsequently extended in 1988, 1991 and 2001. The current Conservation Area Appraisal was adopted December 2022.
- 6.9 The area is focused upon Fitzjohn's Avenue, with Finchley Road and Hampstead High Street forming the north-eastern and south-western boundaries. The area is primarily residential in use though there are some institutional or educational organisations also present; the latter two often occupy former houses rather than purpose-built facilities.
- 6.10 The area has a steep, hilly topography. Much of the built form was constructed in the late 19th century with some later infill development also extant. The area's grain is urban though relatively loosely grained, with large properties within sizeable gardens built along wide roads. The properties are built along a common building line, set behind front gardens, they are usually semi-detached or detached creating an open rhythm in the area. To the rear are large gardens, particularly to the centre of the Conservation Area. The area has an affluent, suburban feel due to the building sizes, trees lining the roads and, where they have not been converted into hard surface carparking, soft landscaped front gardens.
- 6.11 The buildings themselves were often built by individual architects hired by a private patron, resulting in a range of architectural styles. Around Fitzjohn's Avenue, the buildings are mostly in the domestic revival or Queen Anne architectural styles, and are built of red or purple brick often featuring decorative brickwork, ironwork or timber roof details.
- 6.12 There are also examples of later buildings, both reconstructions and infill developments, as well as extensions to the buildings within the Conservation Area, including roof dormers and extensions. In many cases, the reconstructed buildings have been larger than the original building. When the original building was retained but converted for institutional use the extensions to the structure, have also been large. Presumably, these developments were approved as they helped to sustain the feasibility of the building or site in continuing its use. However, the new structures use materials and details sampled from the around the Conservation Area ensuring that collectively the area has retained a homogeneous mid-late 19th century residential character.
- 6.13 Overall, the Fitzjohns / Netherhall Conservation Area is considered to hold a **good** level of significance in heritage terms

Contribution of the Site to Setting

- 6.14 The site is located at the southern edge of the Fitzjohns / Netherhall Conservation Area and is representative of the style of a large individual-architect-designed mansion for a private patron which punctuate the conservation area. The design and construction fit well with the rest of the Conservation Area and its original layout and character. However, the curtailment of its original grounds has changed some of its connection to Fitzjohn's Avenue. Therefore, it is considered that the site makes a **medium beneficial** contribution of the character and setting of the Conservation Area.

7.0 Proposed Scheme

- 7.1 The scheme seeks to provide equitable access for all students throughout the ground floor of Oakwood House. Facilitating this access requires installation of an external lift at the southern elevation of the building to access the raised landing of the principal entry point of the building. Mechanisms to automate the opening/ closing of the main entry doorway, and three internal doors. Push button control points are required on either side of each opening. The proposed scheme has been developed with heritage specific guidance to ensure the interventions involve minimal fabric interruption or loss, and are not visually obtrusive.
- 7.2 The installation of the lift will require the partial removal of the low wall surrounding the raised landing at the entrance to the building.



Figure 10 – Proposed location of the external lift and low wall requiring partial removal. Note the mismatched brickwork across the face of the low wall, suggesting it has been rebuilt in recent years.



Figure 11 – Proposed location of the external lift and low wall requiring partial removal. Again, note the poor brickwork and differing colour of the bricks in the section proposed for removal.

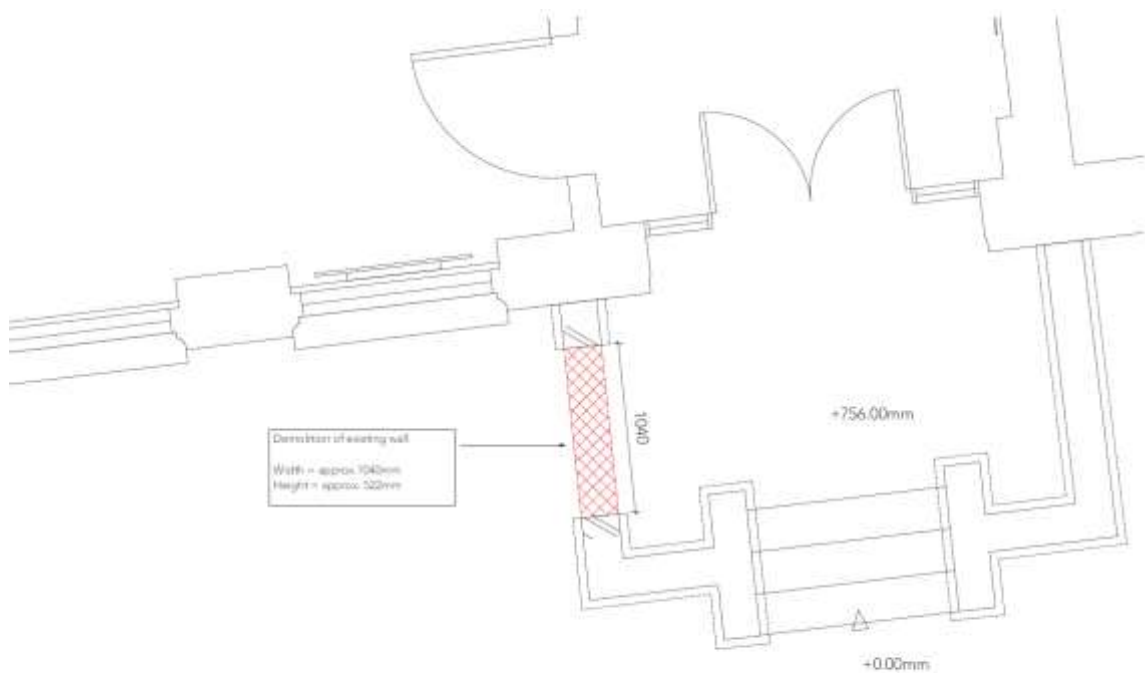


Figure 12 – Proposed demolition plan indicating the modest amount of material proposed for removal. The drawing also indicates the existing arrangement of the proposal site. Refer architects' full drawing set..

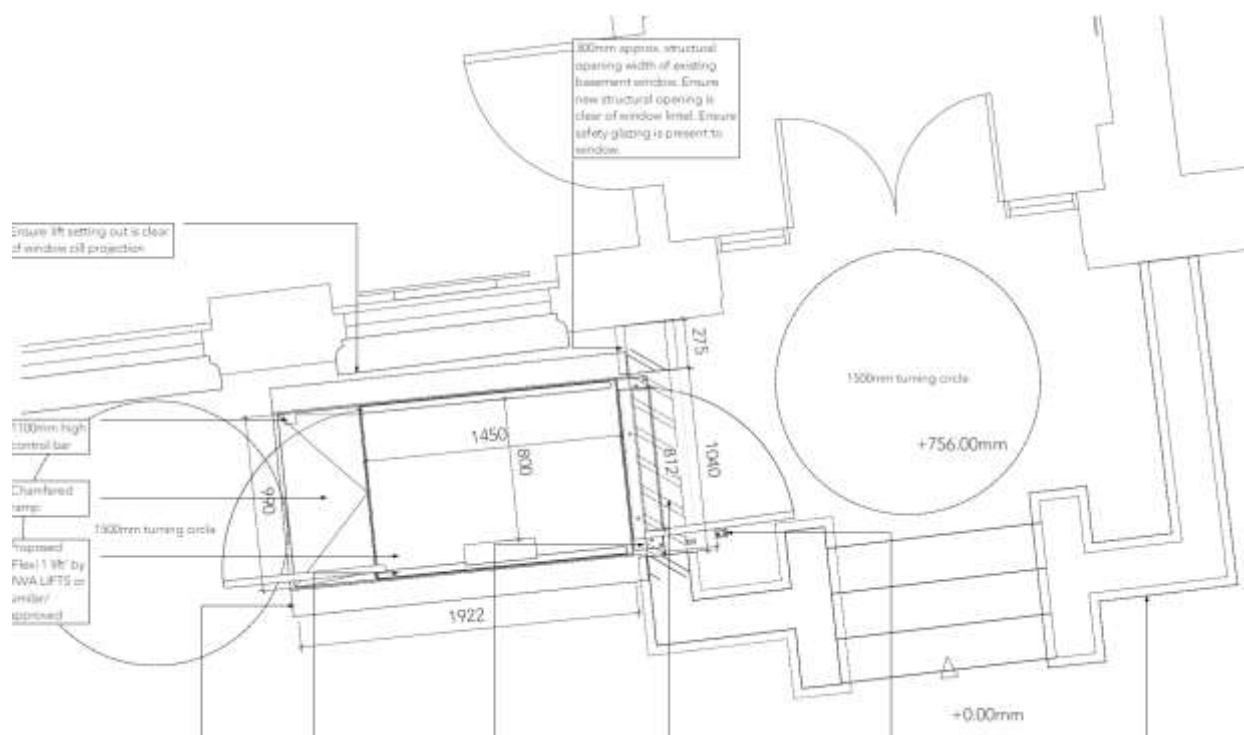


Figure 13 – The lift system as proposed, with turning circles etc indicated for code compliance.

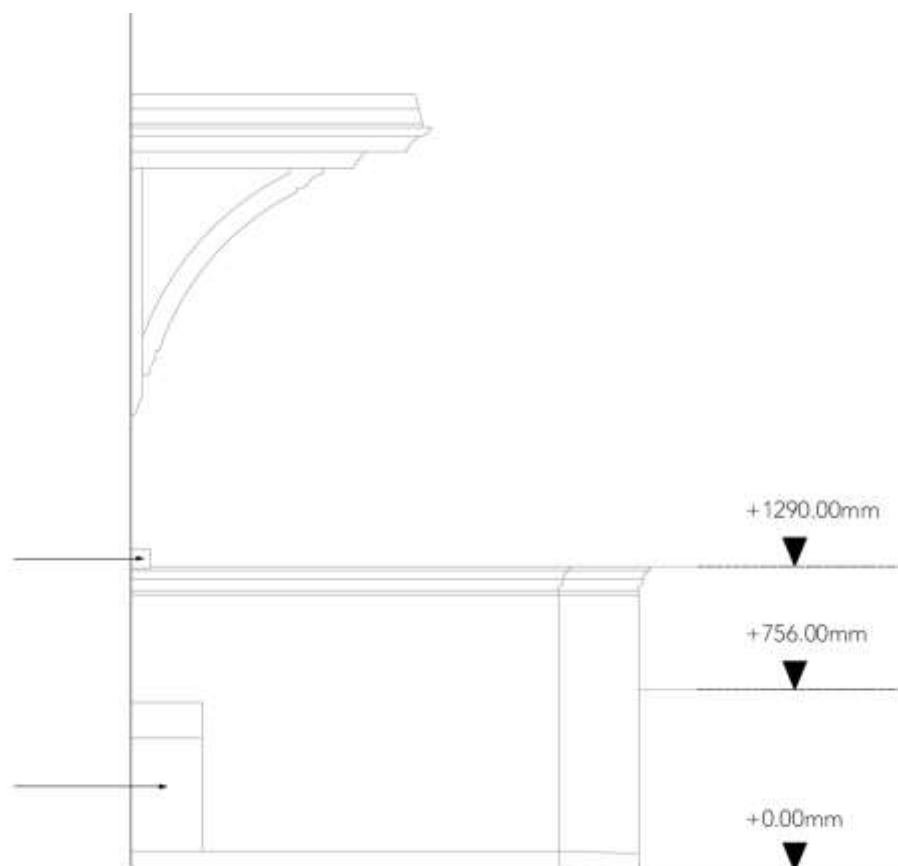


Figure 14 – The Existing Elevation AA looking across the landing.

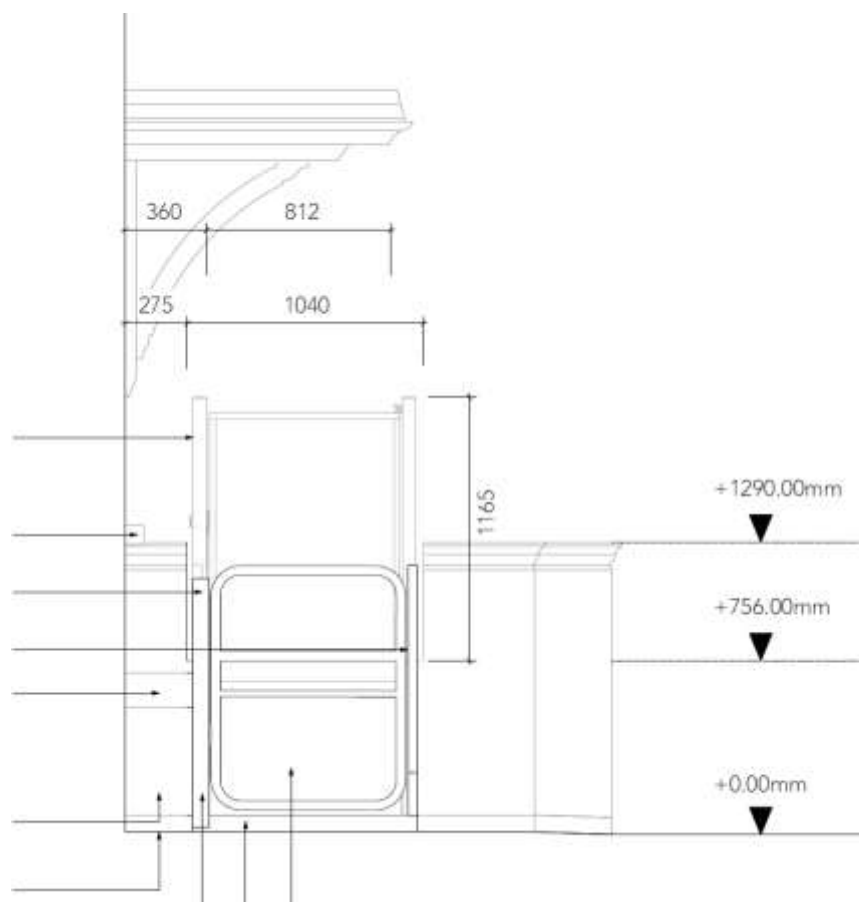


Figure 15 – The proposed Elevation AA, indicating the majority of the new lift sits below the coping of the low wall surrounding the entry landing.

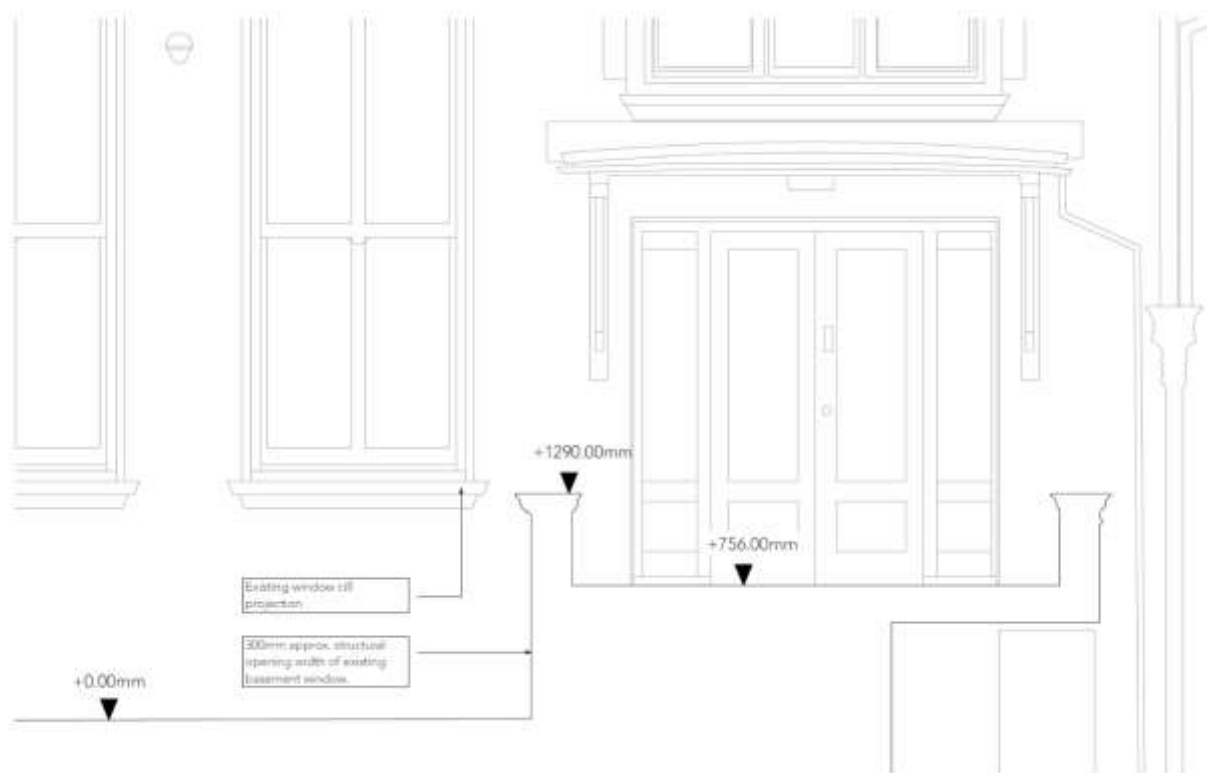


Figure 16 – Existing Section 01 looking toward the building's southern elevation.

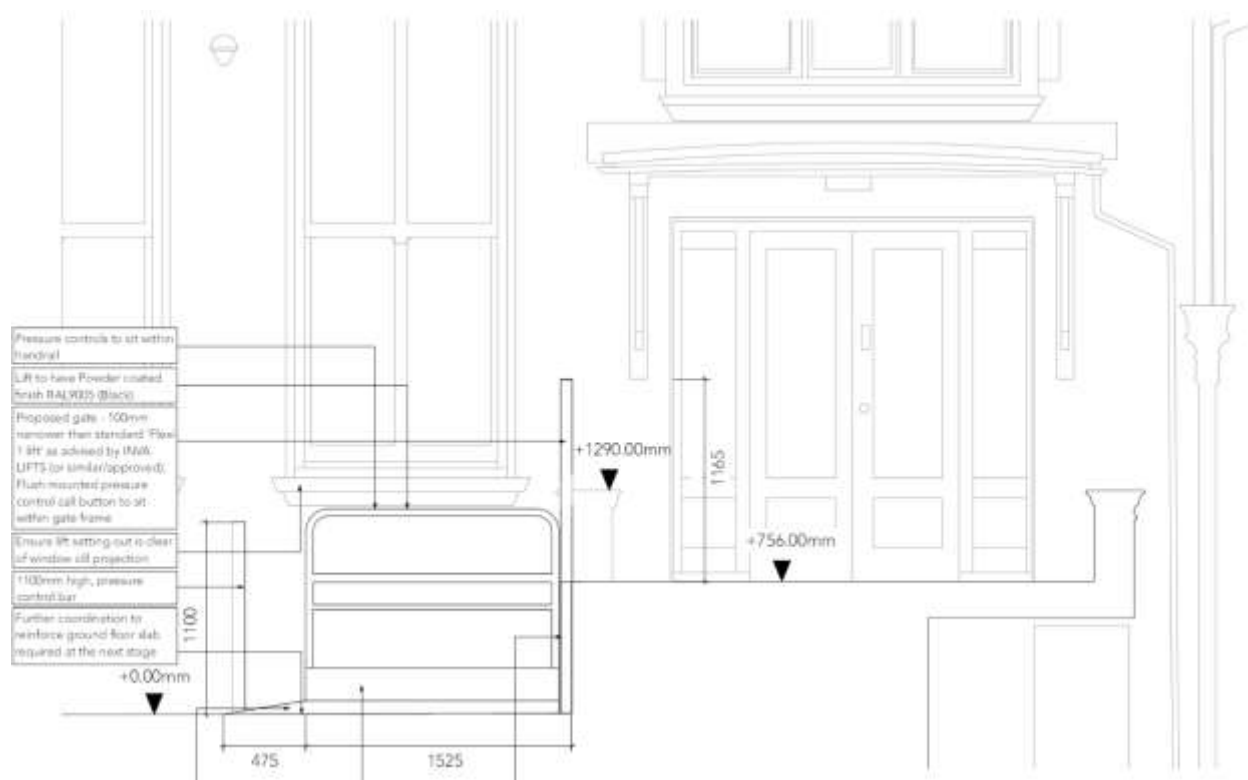


Figure 17 – Proposed Section 01. The sectional cut of the drawing reveals more of the lift mechanism than would be appreciable when looking in this direction.

- 7.3 In addition to the main entry double doors leading off of the landing, there are three internal doorways which need to be automated in order for the accessibility requirements to be met. The locations of the openings are indicated on the ground floor plan of Oakwood House (below, Figure 18).



Figure 18 – Ground floor plan indicating the four doorways (numbered) requiring automation. Approximate location of the opening mechanism is indicated in red, and the proposed locations of command points to operate the doors are shown with purple triangles.

- 7.4 Door 1 will require two sections - each approximately 600mm -to be taken out of the carved timber beading above the door. This beading carries across the wood panelling, and an initial visual assessment suggests that it is not original or early fabric. Disruption in this space will nevertheless be kept to a minimum.
- 7.5 Door 2 has an ornate architrave and entablature surrounding the door on the common room side, where the current (non-automated) door mechanism is fixed. The other side of the door (stair hall side) has a simpler architrave, and for this reason the mechanism will be fixed in this location, but maintaining the existing opening direction of the door. In order for this mechanism to work it needs to be mounted as close as possible to the plane of the door (when closed), and as such, a small section (approximately 600mm) will need to be removed from the architrave above the door.
- 7.6 Door 3 also has a decorative surround, and it is viable in this context to cover a small section of the architrave above the door with a backing plate which the opening mechanism will then be fixed to, ensuring no sensitive fabric is interrupted or lost in this location.
- 7.7 Door 4 replicates the ornate architrave and entablature surrounding the door on the common room side, with further detailing of merit surrounding the double doors on the entrance hall side. A backing plate sitting over the architrave will prevent the need for cutting a section out to accommodate the opening mechanism.



Figure 19 – Door 1 – Top image showing proposed location of mechanical units between tops of doors and bulkhead above. No alternative to placing the mechanised arms in this position, and the removal of two small section of the decorative timber detailing above the door could be developed given the numerous constraints of the location. The lower left image gives an indication of the positioning of the external control point. The lower right image shows the section of wood panelling proposed to situate the control unit (which given the battery power supply only requires fixing points).



Figure 20 – Door 2. The highly decorative door surround on the common room side of door 2 (top image), through its aesthetic value and size, meant any automation mechanisms in this location would be entirely problematic. The proposal as part of this application is for the mechanism to be located on the other side of the wall, while keeping the existing opening direction. In order for the unit to operate properly, a piece of architrave above the door will need to be removed so the opening mechanism can sit flush against the wall. Despite many options being tested, a less invasive solution has not been identified.



Figure 21 – Door 2. Proposed locations for door control points (wireless, wall-mounted push button devices)- door 2 common room side to be located below the level of the dado rail to minimise any visual impact in the context of the moulded decoration which characterises this room.



Figure 22 – Door 3. Top image showing the existing mechanism, which will be replaced by a new unit, and require a backing plate to address the shallow recess above the door. Proposed locations for the internal command points. The lower left image is taken from the entrance hall looking into the stair hall. The lower right image is of the stair hall panelling which appears to be made of poorer quality material and a lower level of craftsmanship. As noted elsewhere, the command points are wireless and their placement is reversible.



Figure 23– Door 4. Mechanisms will be placed on the entrance hall side of the opening, avoiding direct or indirect impacts to the rich decoration of the entablature on the common room side. The call point for this side of the door will be placed below the dado rail to minimise any adverse impacts arising through introducing a visually discordant element into an area of particular aesthetic value.

8.0 Impact Assessment

- 8.1 In order to assess the suitability of the site for the proposed development, it is necessary to determine the *nature* and *extent* of any impacts resulting from the proposal on heritage assets and/ or their settings.
- 8.2 When assessing the impact of a proposed development on individual or groups of heritage assets, it is important to assess both the potential, direct physical impacts of the development scheme as well as the potential impacts on their settings and where effects on setting would result in harm to the significance of the asset. It is equally important to identify benefits to settings, where they result from proposals.
- 8.3 The proposed development is considered below in terms of its impact on the significance of the heritage assets, and the contribution which setting makes to their significance. Assessment of impact levels are made with reference to Table 2 in Section 3 and satisfy '**Step 3**' of Historic England's GPA 3.

No. 1 Fitzjohn's Avenue (Oakwood House) – Grade II

- 8.4 The statutory duty under sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the special architectural or historic interest of a listed building and its setting. As stated in section 6 of this report, No. 1 Fitzjohn's Avenue is considered to hold a **good** level of significance.
- 8.5 The external lift is proposed to be incorporated on the southern elevation of the property, in an area that is between the Territorial Army building and the new buildings of the School next door and will not be visible in views from Fitzjohn's Avenue, Maresfield Gardens or College Crescent. It has been designed to fit within the existing landing arrangement, and to be implemented with a minimum of fabric loss.
- 8.6 Automating the main entry and internal doors at ground floor with push-button command points is a critical feature of providing an accessible space. There is a small amount of fabric that will be removed in order to install the mechanisms.
- 8.7 When considering the impact of the proposal on No. 1 Fitzjohn's Avenue, the installation of the external lift and interventions internally to automate doors is considered overall to have effects ranging from **negligible adverse to minor adverse** impact on the significance of No. 1 Fitzjohn's Avenue. The minor adverse impact has only been identified as a result of the loss of a small amount of fabric

Fitzjohns / Netherhall Conservation Area

- 8.8 The statutory duty under section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. As stated in section 6 of this report, the Fitzjohns Netherhall is considered to hold a **good** level of significance with the application site making a **medium beneficial** contribution.
- 8.9 The proposed external lift to be on the southern elevation of the property, in an area that is between the Territorial Army building and the new buildings of the School next door and will not be visible in views from the street or the rest of the conservation area.

- 8.10 When considering the impact of the proposal on the Fitzjohns / Netherhall Conservation Area, it is considered overall to have a **neutral** impact on the contribution that the site makes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Therefore, the scheme is not considered to be in conflict with Section 72 of Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

9.0 Conclusions

- 9.1 This Heritage Statement has been produced by Bidwells on behalf of South Hampstead High School in relation to the proposed installation of an external accessibility lift, and implementation of mechanisms and control points to the principal entry door to the building, as well as a further three doors internally
- 9.2 The proposals seek to install an external lift to the entrance on the south elevation of the building, alongside removing a section of wall and installing the relevant internal mechanisms.
- 9.3 This report considers the impact of the proposed scheme on the significance of the built heritage assets identified, including the contribution made by their settings. This approach to impact-assessment is required in order to satisfy the provisions of Sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act of 1990 in relation to listed buildings and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) where the impact of development on heritage assets or their settings is being considered (Paragraphs 194-206).
- 9.4 As a result of our assessments on site, it is considered that the proposed scheme would result in impacts ranging from **negligible adverse** to **minor adverse** impact on the significance of No. 1 Fitzjohn's Avenue (Oakwood Hall) and a **neutral** impact on the Fitzjohns / Netherhall Conservation Area.
- 9.5 The aspects of harm identified are considered, in all cases, to represent "*less than substantial*" harm in the context of Paragraph 202 of the NPPF. In these instances, we consider that the "*less than substantial*" harm levels **are at the lower end** of this scale and would not incur impacts of such an effect as to infer substantial losses of significance by way of impact on setting.
- 9.6 These adverse impacts relate solely to the loss of a small amount of fabric from the low brick wall defining the entry landing to the building and some fabric above doors in areas of lower contribution to the significance of the building. These identified minor adverse impacts are considered, to represent "less than substantial" harm in the context of the NPPF, a term which according to Bedford Borough Council v SSCLG & Nuon UK Ltd [2013] EWHC 2847 can refer to a range of impacts, from an impact that is "negligible" in effect, to one which is "something approaching demolition or destruction." The levels of adverse impact arising in this case is at the very lower end of this scale.
- 9.7 At the level of "less than substantial harm", the impacts arising from the proposals to enhance accessibility to the site should be considered in the context of any heritage and public benefits arising from the proposals in accordance with the NPPF. When considering the effect of the proposals on the listed building, it is apparent that the negligible adverse impacts are a modest consideration, especially when weighed against the provision of equitable and dignified access to the building through considered and unobtrusive interventions.
- 9.8 We therefore find that the proposed alterations to have had special regard for the desirable objective of preserving the special interest of the listed buildings and their settings in accordance with Sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Fitzjohns / Netherhall Conservation Area in accordance with Section 72(1). In addition to satisfying these provisions of the Act, the NPPF Paragraphs 194-206 are also satisfied.

