CONSERVATION COMMENTS

Application Ref:	**HGY/2016/0494**
Location:	**40 Methuen Park, London**
Proposal:	**Erection of a 1 bedroom detached bungalow on land at the rear fronting on to Dukes Avenue, with associated car parking and landscaping**
Officer:	**Aaron Lau**

Background: This is a corner site within the Muswell Hill Conservation Area. The site forms part of the rear garden of No 40 Methuen Park. The site also fronts on to Dukes Avenue, but sits behind an unkempt piece of land currently used for parking and refuse.

Assessment of significance:

The overall character of this part of the conservation area is represented by large Edwardian 'Queen Anne' development consisting predominantly of two storey red brick terraces with deep rear gardens, prominent front bays, decorative sash windows and timber porches. The uniform appearance of these houses belies their varied individual detailing. This architecture, combined with its setting of shallow front gardens behind low walls and hedges provides the area with a distinctive character. This part of the conservation area is relatively untouched with evidence of sub-division of plots.

Comments: The proposal seeks to sub-divide and redevelop the rear part of No 40 Methuen Park. The scheme proposes a bungalow accessed from a path off Duke's Avenue, past the parking and refuse area.

Whilst there is no precedence of sub-division of plots within the immediate area, given that this is a corner plot set behind parking, there could be an argument in favour of development on this site. However, this development should be such that it appears subservient to its host building and is of a high quality design that preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area.

From a conservation and design point of view, the proposed bungalow is considered to be 'uninspiring' in design that neither preserves nor enhances the character of the conservation area. The building appears mundane and ordinary that does not reflect the rich architectural detailing of the Edwardian style terraces. It is also not a high quality building of contemporary design that could be considered exemplar in its own right and enhances the conservation area. As such, based on design and appearance, the proposal is considered to be unacceptable.

As per the Council's statutory duty and in context of the Barnwell Manor case, it is considered that the proposed bungalow would neither preserve nor enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. The poor design of the building is such that it would be considered to cause harm to the conservation area. Given the proposed scale of the building, this is considered to be less than substantial harm. However, as per statutory duty and national policies, this harm has been given great weight. It is considered that there are no demonstrable heritage benefits that could outweigh the less than substantial harm. The development is, therefore, considered to be unacceptable.

Conclusion: Unacceptable. Considerable thought required towards the re-design of the building.

Nairita Chakraborty

Principal Conservation Officer

25th February 2016