10A SOUTH GROVE
HIGHGATE
LONDON
N6 6BS

30th July 2016

Gareth Prosser
Planning Department
Haringey Council, Civic Centre
London N22 8LE

By e-mail

Dear Mr. Prosser,

Re: 70-72 Shepherds Hill, HGY/2016/0945, HGY/2016/1755

I am responding on behalf of the Highgate Society to the above applications. It is regrettable that the two applications are being dealt with by different case officers but the Society hopes they will be viewed as a whole. The Society strongly objects to these applications for the following reasons.

1.Conservation Area

Although 70-72 Shepherd's Hill is listed as neutral in the Crouch End Conservation Area Appraisal (CECAA) it is a building of character and is one of the few remaining detached Victorian villas in Shepherd's Hill still largely intact. Although altered somewhat over the years, the Society cannot see why it should not be classified as a positive contributor to the Conservation Area in any future review of the appraisal. This house complements the character of the wider conservation area, particularly in Shepherds Hill and its loss and replacement by a modern building would be highly regrettable.

2. Adjoining building precedent

The applicant's Design and Access Statement (DAS) justifies the design of the scheme on the basis of the adjoining properties and this is supported by a number of CGI's and elevations which have been produced to show the new building in context with its neighbours, particularly, nos. 68, 74, 76 and 78. The design appear to have been developed to match that of the neighbouring properties including the square block massing, form and materiality. This argument and these images are submitted to justify the proposed design and thus the demolition of the existing building. However, the adjoining buildings are all listed as detractors in the CECAA and therefore do not set a desirable design model or precedent. In addition, the planning records, with the exception of no 76, where there is no planning history, indicate these building were constructed, (and it is assumed the existing buildings demolished), prior to the establishment of the CECA in October 1974. Therefore the demolition of the existing house on the grounds of the precedents set by the adjoining buildings cannot be justified on the basis of the precedents set by the adjoining buildings. The addition of another building within this row will only compound the negative impact of the group of detracting buildings and as such cause substantial harm to the conservation area.

3. Design of the new block

Regardless of the precedent set by the adjoining buildings, the design of the new building, using a modern London vernacular typology, results in a bulky and inappropriate building. The elevations are bland and repetitive, and would be better suited to a commercial office block in an inner

urban setting than residential accommodation in a leafy conservation area. This inappropriate building will not enhance the conservation area and therefore the demolition of the existing house, although currently categorised as a neutral contributor, cannot be justified.

4. Trees and planting;
Application HGY/2016/1755 is for tree works including felling and thus should be read in conjunction with the rest of the Society's comments.
This application involves the felling of 3 trees, including a large and significant birch tree on the street frontage to enable access into the underground parking. Other large trees are likely to be affected by the works, one of which is a hornbeam and the other a plane, both street trees vital importance to the streetscape. The new trees to replace those removed are of considerably reduced size and will not compensate for removal of mature trees..
Currently the building presents a leafy frontage onto Shepherds Hill which provides continuity with the character of the road elsewhere. It forms a break in the bland frontages of the adjoining buildings which otherwise could present a bleak frontage onto the road. The application scheme indicates no landscaping on the frontage, only hard surfaces, which will not only have a visual impact on the streetscape but are contrary to local and neighbourhood emerging policies on permeable surfaces to prevent surface run off. The applicant's sustainability report does not deal with this aspect of the development, only its internal and servicing aspects.

5. Public benefit

The applicant states in the DAS that:

The site is not currently fully utilised which presents the opportunity to provide more dwellings to help meet current housing demand.

The applicant's contention that the new home is providing housing to meet current demand is disingenuous. The problem with this argument is the demonstrable need is for affordable housing and there is no evidence that this scheme does anything to provide this. With the facilities of flats including basement parking and the location, as well as the applicants statement that these are of "high quality", the sale of the flats will be aimed at the upper end of the market. There is already a surfeit of new high end accommodation throughout London, many sold to overseas buyers. In this locality, there are a number of new schemes, such as the Magistrate's Court site and Richardson's development on Archway Road and the Archway Tower, soon to be completed. Therefore there is no justification for the scheme in terms of identifiable need and the development would not result in any public benefit to justify the substantial or even less that substantial harm being done to the designated heritage asset, as set down in the NPPF.

6. Conclusion;
Contrary to the conclusions of CgMs in their heritage statement, the society believes this is a scheme that will do substantial harm to the heritage asset and will not deliver any public benefit. It will replace an 1880 Victorian dweliing, a designated heritage asset with a non descript block to match the existing buildings adjoining, to make form a continuous the block of detractors.

Yours sincerely,



Elspeth Clements,
Chairman, Highgate Society Planning Group