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Woodlands,  
Courtenay Avenue,  
Highgate,  
London N6 4LR

# Heritage Statement

Volume 1 Background and Significance Assessment



Job No 2229

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## A) Introduction

### 1) Aim

The objective of this 'Heritage Statement Volume 1 – Background and Significance Assessment' is to provide an assessment of the current condition of the site and the heritage assets within the vicinity, to inform and accompany a planning application for the proposed development at Woodlands, Courtenay Avenue, Highgate, London N6 4LR.

A separate accompanying report 'Heritage Statement Volume 2 – Impact Assessment and Policy Consideration' assesses the impact of the proposals.

The site is located in Highgate in the London Borough of Haringey.

The following are derived from the LPA Local Plan Strategic Policies 2013 to 2016 dated 2017 and Haringey interactive Planning Policy Maps online.

The site is in the Highgate Conservation Area.

The building is not listed.

The building is not locally listed as a building of merit.

The site falls within the Highgate Neighbourhood Plan Area.

The site is not Metropolitan Open Land.

The site is not Open Space.

The site is not Green Belt.

Tree preservation orders (TPO's) are associated with the site.

The site falls within the area of Archaeological Priority Area Tier 3 Bluebell Wood and Surrounds (Archaeological Priority Area Appraisal March 2021)

The assessment includes:

- Assessment of the site/historic context in compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF);
- Assessment of the significance of the heritage asset/s that might be affected by the proposed works.

This document is to be read with the planning drawings and design and access statement prepared by Wolff Architects and other supporting statements included in this planning application.

### 2) Summary Description

The site presently consists of a single dwelling with front and rear garden, which was first registered in 1958 (source: title deeds) and then demolished (demolition planning consent

dated 1990) and rebuilt in 2000 (source LA Building Control records). The first construction date is unknown, although the evidence from historic maps indicates between 1915 and 1936.

The area where Courtenay Avenue is located was formerly the Bishop's Wood, owned by the Bishop of London who used it as his hunting park. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners started developing the ancient Bishop's Wood from c.1900 to 1930. The map of 1900 shows the area as woodland with the area of Highgate Golf Course to the north as open fields. By 1944-1955 the maps show Courtenay Avenue and Highgate Golf Course.

Woodlands was designed by Browett Taylor and Co a firm of surveyors. However, the original building was demolished and the site was redeveloped in 1997-2000.

The roof is of sand face tiles which have picked up some natural weathering, and the red multi stock brickwork in stretcher bond has pink coloured mortar.

The front elevation is intact, with fenestration as grey frames subdivided, with grey railings. The style is a modern vernacular. The front garden is extensively paved with grey cobbles, with overall landscaping and entrances of numerous level changes; and the rear garden with large mature trees and a well maintained coherent landscape design.

Courtenay Avenue is dominated by substantial residential buildings set within large plots. There have been a significant number of replacement houses in recent years along Courtenay Avenue which replace original style designs. There has always been a mixture of styles on Courtenay Avenue, but there is no longer a recognisable "style" or period to the street. The replacement buildings are generally much larger houses of different architectural influence varying from contemporary to classical styles as well as being built closer together than the original layout.

The significance of the site has been assessed as part of this report and was deemed to have low artistic, historical and architectural significance. The context of Woodlands, built in 2000, has an intact modern primary elevation.



Aerial view showing Woodlands in a red circle.



Highgate Statutory listed buildings near the Woodlands demonstrating there are none in Courtenay Avenue.

East Weald to the west of the site is Grade II  
(source: Historic England).

### 3) Methodology

This assessment has been carried out using desk-based data gathering and fieldwork. The methods used in order to undertake the study were the following:

- The documentary research was based upon primary and secondary sources of local history and architecture, including maps, drawings and reports. This report has been developed using online and documentary resources.
- A site visit was conducted on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2022 and 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

### 4) Planning Policy

The assessment of the buildings has been prepared taking into account the information contained in:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2021.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), 2021.

The London Plan, 2021.

Haringey Local Plan Strategic Policies 2013-2026 dated 2017.

Highgate Wikipedia.

List of people from Highgate Wikipedia.

Highgate Neighbourhood Plan 2017.

London Borough of Haringey Archaeological Priority Area Appraisal March 2021

Title deeds.

Historic England online.

Historic England Good Practice Advice Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment, 2015.

Historic England Good Practice Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets, 2017

Historic England Good Practice Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance, 2019

The Department of Culture Media and Sport 'Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings' (November 2018).

BS 7913:2013 Guide to Conservation of Historic Buildings.

## B) Historic Background

### 1) The Origins and Development of the Area

Historically, Highgate adjoined the Bishop of London's hunting estate. Highgate gets its name from these hunting grounds, as there was a high, deer-proof hedge surrounding the estate: 'the gate in the hedge'.

The bishop kept a toll-house where one of the main northward roads out of London entered his land. A number of pubs sprang up along the route, one of which, the Gatehouse, commemorates the toll-house.

Hampstead Lane and Highgate Hill contain the red brick Victorian buildings of Highgate School and its adjacent Chapel of St Michael. The school has played a paramount role in the life of the village and has existed on its site since its founding was permitted by letters patent from Queen Elizabeth I in 1565.

The area where Courtenay Avenue is located was formerly the Bishop's Wood, owned by the Bishop of London who used it as his hunting park. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners started developing the ancient Bishop's Wood from c.1900 to 1930. The Bishop's Wood became a suburb of large detached houses on large individual plots overlaid on a landscape with many oak trees and relics of earlier hedgerows and field boundaries. The building leases from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners stipulated plot size, prime cost and sometimes the rate of development, all of which ensured the quality and nature of the streetscapes.



Aerial view with Woodlands circled in red, dating from 1948.  
Highgate Golf Course is top right.  
(source: Britain from Above)

Developer Walter Quennell (brother of architect CHB Quennell, one of the leading practitioners of the “free style” movement in Hampstead) was a well-known developer within the Bishop’s Wood area and throughout Hampstead. He designed and built several of the houses in the area in a free English domestic style, influenced by the dialect of the late Arts and Crafts and the restrained classicism of Neo-Georgian, which also influenced other architect’s designs within the area.

Highgate is a suburban area of north London at the north-eastern corner of Hampstead Heath, 4+1/2 miles (7 kilometres) north-northwest of Charing Cross. Highgate is one of the most expensive London suburbs in which to live. It has two active conservation organisations, the Highgate Society and the Highgate Neighbourhood Forum to protect and enhance its character and amenities.

Until late Victorian times it was a distinct village outside London, sitting astride the main road to the north. The area retains many green expanses including the eastern part of Hampstead Heath, three ancient woods, Waterlow Park and the eastern-facing slopes known as Highgate bowl.

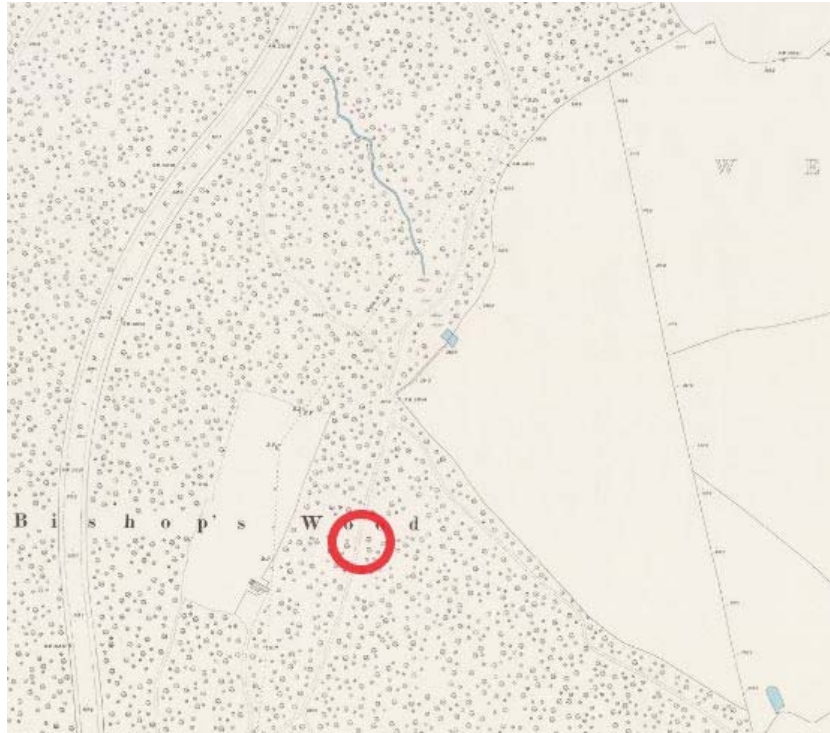


Current aerial view of Woodlands.

Review of historic association with local people of interest show Joseph Vegoda and Celia Vegoda acquired the property in 1958 (source: title deeds). Joe Vegoda was a film producer as listed on the IMDB website.

## 2) Map Progression

Courtenay Avenue appears on maps after 1900. The following maps show the development of the area from 1896 to the present day. The area marked in a red circle shows the approximate location of Woodlands. North is up.



1895 OS Map. The fields to the right hand side will become Highgate Golf Course.  
The edge of the fields continue in later maps.



1938 OS Map. Courtenay Avenue development is already established.  
The fields to the top right hand are Highgate Golf Course.



1964 OS Map. Courtenay Avenue and surrounding area is little changed since 1938.



Contemporary OS Map.

Canons Close has now been developed. Courtenay Avenue is little changed.

### 3) Planning History

| Planning ref                | Date | Description                                                                                      | Decision        |
|-----------------------------|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| OLD/1990/0205<br>CAC        | 1990 | Demolition of existing house.                                                                    | Approved        |
| OLD/190/0204                | 1990 | Demolition of existing house and erection of detached 3 storey building.                         | Approved        |
| HGY/1991/0428               | 1992 | Erection of 3 storey 8 bed house.                                                                | Refused         |
| HGY/1992/1142               | 1992 | Erection of 3 storey private dwelling with basement comprising 8 bedrooms                        | Approved        |
| HGY/1996/0188               | 1996 | Erection of 3 storey 7 bedroom single family dwelling                                            | Approved        |
| HGY/1997/1493               | 1998 | Erection of single family dwelling on vacant site. #                                             | Approved        |
| HGY/2010/0785               | 2010 | Security cabin. Note this application seems to be mislabelled as it does not relate to the site. | Not applicable. |
| <b>Building Control Ref</b> |      |                                                                                                  |                 |
| FP/0005/9829/A              | 2000 | Erection of single family dwelling house. #                                                      | Approved        |
| CPS/0009/1955               | 2019 | Replacement windows and door. #                                                                  | Approved        |

Numerous applications for tree works are not included. Withdrawn applications are not included.

# Indicates no drawings on-line to key applications.

## C) Appraisal

### 1) Townscape Character

The area is dominated by large residential buildings set within generous plots. This part of the Conservation Area (the Bishops Area )is considered to be an excellent example of high-quality residential development of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. There predominantly gap views between buildings and mature street trees.

Courtenay Avenue has no formal pavements, just grass verges, which gives it a semi-rural feel. It has a slope from north to south, and there is also a slope across the road from west to east, with houses on the west side being above road level whilst those on the east side are below or level with the road.

Courtenay Avenue is a pocket within the Bishop sub-area. It is a short, gated private cul-de-sac and does not form part of any recognised streetscape vistas. There is a manned security barrier at the entrance and the majority of people who access the road either on foot or in vehicles are residents, people visiting the residents or people who work in some capacity at the houses. Pedestrian footfall is therefore low and with limited access to the public a contained pocket is created. Within this pocket there are only six out of twenty two properties have not been re-built or reconstructed in the new style. Courtenay Avenue should be seen in its own context, its appearance is visually independent of the rest of the Conservation Area.

Whilst there is a variety of architectural treatments to the building in Courtenay Avenue, predominant themes are red clay tiles roofs, red brick elevations, white painted fenestration in loose Arts and Crafts style, with emphasised front entrances and large chimneys.



Aerial view of Courtenay Avenue looking west



Aerial view of Courtenay Avenue looking east. Highgate Golf Course is on the left.

## 2) Open Space

The spacious private house plots with mature trees provide an agreeable landscape setting to the area and relate to this history of the formerly wooded area and form part of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

## 3) Local Material and Details

Whilst there is a variety of architectural treatments to the buildings in Courtenay Avenue, predominant themes are red clay tiles roofs, red brick elevations, white painted fenestration in loose Arts and Crafts style, with emphasised front entrances and large chimneys.

#### 4) Negative factors

Demand on converting positive green front gardens to detrimental hardstanding is present, but fortunately has been resisted on many properties. There is demand to construct high front walls and gates creating an enclosed effect within an otherwise open streetscape. Extending of properties right up to the plot boundaries is having a negative effect.

#### D) Description of the Site

Woodlands was rebuilt in 2000. It is a detached modern vernacular style house visually plain and with unusual fenestration in the street. The main street facing elevation is intact. Refer to photos.



The roof is sand-faced red plain tiling with natural weathering apparent. The elevations are red multi stock brick in stretcher bond with pink coloured mortar, with flat soldier course lintels. Windows are grey colour coated metal with linear rail pattern. Railings are in grey horizontal theme.



Entrance approach via granite steps.



Entrance door in stained natural timber.



Rear elevation.





Rear garden with large mature trees and a well maintained coherent landscape design.



Rear garden looking back at house.



Rear garden reminiscence of the original Bishops Wood.

## E) Significance Appraisal

### 1) Introduction

The NPPF (Para 194) states that “In determining applications local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should also be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on that significance.”

Significance is defined by Historic England as “The sum of the cultural and natural heritage values of a place, often set out in a statement of significance”.

A significance assessment has been provided to ascertain historical development of the property and its contribution to the area. It outlines the findings of the background research, based upon visual inspection of the building and its setting, and primary and secondary sources of local history and architecture, including maps, drawings and reports.

The appraisal of significance is the result of desktop research and analysis and a site visit conducted in October and November 2022 in order to inform the significance of Woodlands, Courtenay Avenue.

Significance is determined on the basis of statutory designation and professional judgement. The guidelines followed are contained in two main national documents: the Department of Culture Media and Sport ‘Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings’ (November 2018) and in the Historic England’s ‘Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance’ (October 2019).

The first document states that the special interest of a building is determined based on its Architectural and Historic Interest, assessed through the principles of age and rarity, aesthetic merits, selectivity and national interest. Historic England identifies three potential points of interest that can be held by heritage assets; artistic and architectural, historical and archaeological.

### 2) Assessment Criteria

This appraisal will evaluate the significance of Woodlands, Courtenay Avenue. These points encompass the following points of interest and are in line with the statutory definitions set out in the NPPF:

- Archaeological interest: there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

- Architectural and artistic interest: these are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.
- Historic Interest: an interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

In order to determine the significance of a certain component of a heritage asset the sum of its artistic and architectural, archaeological or historic interest needs to be disaggregated and determined.

The grading of values is considered using three categories: **low, medium and high.**

### 3) Significance Assessment

Archaeological interest.

The area is identified by LB of Haringey as of Archaeological Priority Area Tier 3 Bluebell Wood and Surrounds. With two dwellings having been built on the site over time, evidence near the house will not be available in the surface, however there may be archaeology in the rear garden. As a result, the site has **low** archaeological interest.

Artistic and architectural interest.

Woodlands, Courtenay Avenue built in 2000 is an intact, coherently and competently designed in proportion, scale and detailing. However there is ambiguity in the visual cues inappropriately suggesting institutional use. The house is not listed or locally listed as a building of merit. Whilst the Town Planning drawings are not available, it is logical to take that the latest consent was the one that was built. The consent is dated 6th January 1998 with the architects practice noted as Clarke Klein & Chaudhuri Architects. There is no evidence that this practice or these architects have later in their careers attained significant architectural or artistic noteworthiness in the terms of this assessment.

Overall, the architectural and artistic interest of the site is considered to be **low**.

Historic interest.

Woodlands, Courtenay Avenue original house has been demolished although the original designer is known and was associated with a known film producer the link is broken by virtue of the removal of the house. The new house dates from 2000 but there is no evidence that the inhabitants or designers have attained historical noteworthiness in the terms of this assessment. Therefore the site is considered to be **low**.

## F) Conclusion

This heritage statement has undertaken detailed documentary research and a visual analysis of the site in order to establish the significance of Woodlands, Courtenay Avenue, according to the values set out by Historic England and to national, regional and local planning policy and guidance.

The assessment carried out in this report have found that the property is of **low** archaeological and historic significance due to their **low** archaeological potential within the area, and associations with persons of interest. Woodlands, Courtenay Avenue, was not nationally nor locally listed, had intact, coherently, competently and ambiguously design has resulted in an overall **low** artistic and architectural interest.

It is considered, therefore, that that there is an opportunity to develop the site and building with a scheme of reasonable design quality.

It can be said that the Woodlands house itself is not a heritage asset. The heritage asset is the conservation area as a whole. A full impact assessment of the proposed scheme follows in Volume 2 of the Heritage Statement: 'Impact Assessment and Policy Consideration'.

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