

**Design and Access Statement and Heritage Statement
for 26 Sheldon Avenue, London N6 4JT**

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1. Introduction

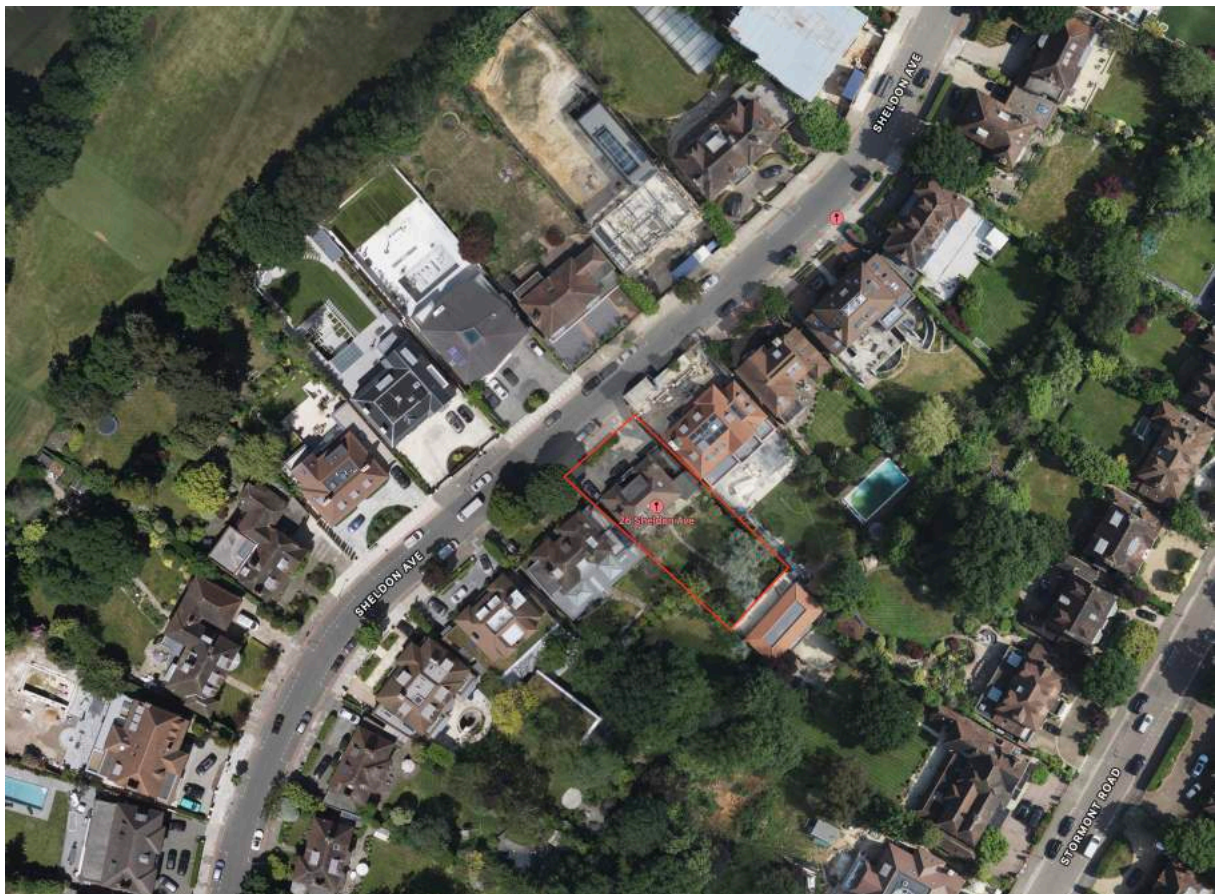
This Design and Access Statement and Heritage Statement has been prepared by qR Architects RIBA Chartered Practice on behalf of Mr. & Mrs. Patel, the owners of No. 26 Sheldon Avenue, London, N6 4JT. It accompanies the planning application documentation for demolition within a conservation area for the development as set out below:

“New 2-storey detached house with basement and loft areas at 26 Sheldon Avenue further the demolition of the existing house. New front boundary treatment.”

In accordance with the statutory requirements under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas), national and local policy requirements, this assessment has been submitted to consider the impact of the proposed demolition and redevelopment on the character and appearance of the Highgate Conservation Area.

2. Site location and existing building

The subject site is located on the southeast side of Sheldon Avenue in Highgate in the London Borough of Haringey. The setting of the site is residential in character, with large, detached properties on either side. Number 26 is occupied by a two-storey detached red brick dwelling with roof accommodation. The site is accessible from two directions on Sheldon Avenue to the front of the building and there is no access to the site from the sides or the rear. Sheldon Avenue is not a red route and parking on the street is restricted only between 10 am and noon Monday to Friday.



Location plan - Google view

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Currently the site has a smaller rear garden when compared to the other neighbouring properties further to the recent attachment of the single-storey building located originally at the rear of the property, which accommodates a swimming pool, to the neighbouring property - no. 28. This has reduced the original site from approximately 1,040m² to 798m².

The site had previously been among the last fields and woodland on the north side of Hampstead Lane, which vanished when Courtenay, Compton and Sheldon Avenues were laid out immediately after the First World War. The existing building at 26 Sheldon Avenue was built around 1920 as a two storey detached single family dwelling. It was later extended at the side and rear, and an attic store was created.

The property is neither statutorily nor locally listed but is located within sub-area 7 (Bishops) of the Highgate Conservation Area, designated in 1967 and extended in 1990 and 1994. The Highgate Conservation Area Character Area Appraisal indicates that the area was developed in the 1920s by architect Charles Henry Bourne Quennell and his developer brother Walter Quennell. The adopted sub-area map on built heritage assets does not identify No. 26 Sheldon Avenue as a positively contributing building.

No. 26 Sheldon Avenue is constructed of traditional red stock brick predominately solid wall construction. It has a pitched roof in clay tiles and the existing windows are not original as they are double-glazed in white uPVC. The construction is of average quality and of a style typical of its date of construction but is not of particular architectural merit.



Street view of number 26 Sheldon Avenue

It should also be noted that the officer's report for the accompanying Consent for Demolition in a Conservation Area approved in February 2009 (HGY/2008/1297) for this very same house stated that "The property has been altered and extended in a number of ways and as such is of 'average quality' and no significant architectural quality."

The existing house twisted position in relation to the neighbouring houses stands out, especially in the shape of the extended side volumes at the lower ground floor.

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The main front façade features a central entrance doorway with a one-sided fixed panel under a porch that connects the two symmetric volumes. The disproportional big dormer on top - clearly not part of the original design, detracts from the overall appearance of the property from the street.

The fenestration on the existing house is not original or consistent. On the other hand, the property's red brick, which is characteristic of the area, shows some level of architectural detailing and features that seem more interesting than many of the other buildings within the street and surrounding area.

There are no mature trees located within the front garden, but there are some flower beds as is common in the area. Considering the boundary treatments of the street we can see that in addition to some vegetation at the front of the property, most of them have low brick walls with posts and some even have steel railing which makes the current front-drive diminutive considering the characteristic of the street. The existing front drive is currently accessible from 2 entry points and does allow private parking for 4 cars.



No.26 Sheldon Avenue - Boundary with no.28

To the rear of the property, it is clear that the property has historically been altered and extended. There are now projecting bays at the left-hand side and two storeys rear extensions on the right-hand side of the rear elevation. The fenestration is again not consistent or original.



View from the rear garden of No. 26 Sheldon Avenue - facing existing house

There are several trees at the rear side boundaries and to the far south end of the rear garden, which has a significant impact on the biodiversity of this area considering the maturity of the larger trees and that we don't intend to disturb with our proposal. These are appropriately considered and addressed in the accompanying Arboricultural report submitted within this application.

No. 26 Sheldon Avenue has no more architectural or historical interest associated with it today than it did when its demolition and replacement was consented back in 2009.

For all the above, and considering the lack of any heritage or architectural interest associated with the existing house within the Conservation Area the demolition and re-build, in our professional opinion, is acceptable subject to a sensitively designed replacement building making an equal or greater contribution to the character and appearance of the Highgate Conservation Area. This is in line with London Plan Policy HC1, Local Plan Policy SP12 and DPD Policy DM9, with the Highgate Neighbourhood Plan Policy DH1, and as indicative on the Pre-application advise notice related to this site.

3. Surrounding area

The surrounding properties are residential and comprise large detached dwellings on substantial sites with large gardens to the rear. The majority of properties are large brick built with pitched roofs and rooms in the roof space and erected originally between the 1920s and 1930s.

Since then, many of these properties have been extended at the front, sides, rear, roof and/or dormer, but over the past few decades, many of these properties have been actually demolished and redeveloped completely. We can also identify that is quite common for the houses to have quite big basements with elaborate access from the rear garden.



Neighbouring properties we were able to determine to have basements.

Some of these replacements were done in a more mindful approach to resemble the original houses but some have been built in a completely different architectural style.

Other than a constant setback from the highway, some basic forms, and the brick colour there are not many prevailing details or design characters on the street. Consequently, we can confirm that there is no particular unifying style to the area.

In terms of public access, the site is quite well connected - the nearest bus stop is approximately 320m away on Hampstead Lane, which provides service to wider North London. Highgate Underground Station is approximately 1.14km away providing access to the Northern Line. The site has a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 1b.

4. Relevant Planning History

Research in the Council's Planning archives has resulted in the following list of recent applications:

OLD/1963/0811

Internal alterations and new porch on front erection of bedroom extension above existing garage.

Granted 6 November 1963

OLD/1967/0790

Erection of side extension with roof carried over, installation of three dormer windows to rear elevation, alterations to front elevation and erection of swimming pool in rear garden.

Granted 26 September 1967

HGY/1989/1338

Erection of two storey side extension with roof carried over, installation of three dormer windows to rear elevation, alterations to front elevation and erection of swimming pool in rear garden.

Granted 28 March 1990

HGY/1990/0265

Demolition and rebuilding of two storey side extension and single storey garage.

Withdrawn 16 April 1990

OLD/2001/0564

Erection of a single storey extension over existing garage at first floor level to provide additional habitable room

Refused 18 July 2001

HGY/2008/1295

Demolition of existing house and erection of a new two storey dwelling house with accommodation with the roof space and at basement level.

Approved 04/02/2009

HGY/2008/1297

Conservation Area Consent – Demolition of existing house and erection of a new two storey dwelling house with accommodation with the roof space and at basement level.

Granted 04/02/2009

HGY/2017/3039

Lawful Development Certificate for external alterations and rear extension.

Granted December 2017

HGY/2017/3428

Householder planning application

External alterations including rear, side, front and roof extensions, new window openings and changes to the front door and porch, gate and boundary treatment and other associated alterations.

Granted January 2018

Relevant surrounding planning history

Application ref. HGY/2017/0174 was granted permission for "Demolition of the existing house on the site and the construction of a new single dwelling, consisting of 2 storeys, attic rooms and basement housing plant and leisure facilities. The house will have an attached garage at ground level and a further parking space via car stacker in the basement" at 28 Sheldon Avenue, London, N6 4JT on 5 May 2017.

Application ref. HGY/2017/0180 was granted permission for "Erection of a part one/part two-storey side and rear extension together with alterations to the front facade, including a front dormer extension and rearrangement of fenestration" at 8 Sheldon Avenue, London, N6 4JT on 14 March 2017.

5. Proposal

As previously stated, the proposed development will involve demolishing the existing unlisted 1920s detached two-storey house and replacing it with a new single-family dwelling that will have two principal storeys, an attic, and a basement.

We did not make the decision to demolish the existing house lightly, as we recognise that a retention approach is typically favoured in conservation areas. There is also the presumption in favour of retaining existing buildings and adapting or retrofitting them to have a more sustainable approach.

We have considered the possibility of retaining the existing building, but as we developed the program specified by our client's needs, we realised the real impact and viability of this option. The main challenges we faced were the structural complexity of developing a basement under the existing structure, creating new internal circulation areas that required major structural work on the existing slabs, readapting the previous extension that currently has an unpleasant relationship with the neighbouring properties and with the rear garden to hold the main living areas for a big family. Additionally, we needed to extend, possibly towards the side of the first floor, to allow for an additional bedroom. However, this would create a bulky appearance on the front elevation that we found to be unsympathetic to the street scene. Lastly, we needed to remove the large dormer towards the front, which was aesthetically disruptive on the existing house and would require major structural work on the existing roof.

Considering the above the technical and financial effort to retain the existing house was not something our client was willing to support, especially as they would have to structurally redo most of the existing elements to simulate a "retaining approach" that comes with layout limitations for their needs and additional cost just to objectively keep a really small part of the existing appearance.

Furthermore, we took into consideration that keeping the existing house would limit our ability to provide the client with an energy-efficient home. The London Plan has detailed policies regarding energy efficiency, renewable energy, climate change, and water resources. Local Plan Policy SP4 mandates all developments to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions throughout design, construction, and occupation. Similarly, DPD Policy DM21 requires proposals to use sustainable design, layout, and construction techniques. To comply with these policies, we have evidence that a new build would yield better results, especially because we would be able to install the latest technology and systems to achieve these goals in a more modern and efficient manner.

After considering all of the above, we have decided to propose the construction of a new dwelling. This new building will be made with the highest quality handmade and finished

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materials, will complement the surrounding area and produce a replacement building that could conceivably have been an original building within the conservation area.

Policy DM1 'Delivering High Quality Design' requires development proposals to relate positively to their locality, Local Plan (2017) Policy SP11 requires the highest standard of design that respects its local context and character and historic significance and this is supported by London Plan (2016) Policies 7.4 and 7.6.

Further to the Pre-application process we have been through recently (ref. PRE/2022/0289), we understood that our initial proposal had some elements that were not perceived by the Council Heritage Team as sympathetic to the conservation area. Specifically, we were replicating certain elements of other houses on Sheldon Avenue that the officers did not consider good examples, and that would detract from the established character of the area.

Based on the pre-application notice, we have significantly altered our proposal to address these concerns raised by the Council officers.

The proposed replacement dwelling of this application has been designed in a more sympathetic free English/Arts and Crafts Style which applies a scholarly interpretation of the character of the area to produce a high quality family dwelling that is in keeping with neighbouring properties and preserves the key characteristics of the area.

We propose to slightly change the angle of the existing house to correct its torsion, allowing the new house to follow the alignment of neighboring properties. Additionally, we will detach the house further from the boundaries by reducing its overall width, as suggested in the pre-application advice. This is a common practice in the area and is considered an important feature by the local authority, as it creates a sense of space and openness in a verdant suburbia, as required by the policies in the HNP 2017.

We have redesigned the front facade of the house to be more interesting, using stepped volumes on each side that resemble the original house and are more in line with the Arts and Crafts style. Additionally, we have decided to maintain the ground-level connection to the neighbouring property at number 24. We replicated the existing side passage wall with an arched gate area, as it creates more volumetric interest and allows for a better perception of the space between the properties at the first-floor level.

The proposed development is very similar in nature and scale to other dwellings in the area, as is demonstrated by the proposed front elevation. This creates a proportional relationship with our neighbouring properties. We have reduced the width compared to the initial proposal presented in the Pre-application, which addressed the excessive scale the office had raised on the notice issued.

The proposed chimneys, variation in window design throughout the house, front porch, and proposed dormers reflect a mindful understanding of the Arts and Crafts design and the original symbols of the street. They are sympathetic to the same elements present in most buildings in the area.

The external walls will be constructed with brick, following the material cohesion of the street. Different brick design styles will be used to create a rich and interesting texture. The construction will consist of cavity walls with thermal insulation, achieving a high level of energy efficiency above the minimum required by the recently updated Building Control Regulations.

Regarding the proposed main pitch roof, it will match the existing material and follow the ridge height of the existing house. The roof eaves will match the height of the closest adjacent neighbour. The top of the crown roof will be flat and recessed to hide all technical external units, keeping them from appearing visible on the exterior of the building. This will

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significantly reduce the impact on the neighbourhood in terms of appearance and noise disturbance.

The proposal will not significantly impact daylight or sunlight in neighbouring habitable rooms, nor will it result in any significant overshadowing of adjoining gardens.

The proposed lead dormers will be of a modest scale, in proportion to the dormers seen on Sheldon Avenue: 2 at the front, 3 at the back, and 1 on each side.

The rear flat roof will be transformed into a green roof with a small terrace, which will enhance the area with additional vegetation and promote biodiversity. As the terrace is only connected to the master bedroom, we believe that any potential privacy issues will be minimal. Moreover, this feature is already present in several other houses on this street, including our neighbour at no.28.

The front drive will maintain its current car parking capacity, while we will increase the amount of landscape and vegetation at the front of the property in accordance with the conservation area experts' recommendations. We will preserve the boundary treatment and flower bed next to number 24 as much as possible, or replace it if any damage occurs during the works. A similar approach will be replicated on the opposite side with number 28.

To create a more consistent appearance with other properties on Sheldon Avenue, we propose a new front boundary consisting of a low brick wall between posts that match the property. This boundary will feature a central pedestrian gate and 2 sliding gates that will replace the previous car accesses. As shown in the proposed plans, the slide gates will be remotely operated and will slide inside the property, reducing waiting time on the highway and without causing any disturbance on the public footpath. We will redesign the existing front hedges to accommodate a pedestrian gate passage, and we will add additional flower beds on either side of the main entrance.

The windows in the building will be timber sash with divided lights in white painted hardwood frames. They will be double-glazed and compliant with efficiency requirements. However, at the rear of the building, the timber windows/door option would be very high maintenance and would give the building a bulky and heavy appearance that we don't think would fit in with the surrounding area. For this reason, we have opted for aluminium frames, which will maintain the beading rhythm and allow for slimmer frames while performing better on a daily basis. The proposed openings and obscured glazing were carefully designed to minimize any loss of privacy for the neighbouring dwellings and to make the most of the natural light and ventilation for the proposed rooms.

The rear garden will be maintained and the trees will be retained as much as possible, in accordance with the accompanying Arboricultural Impact Assessment.

Internally, the house is organised into two floors (ground and first), a loft area, and a basement. While the basement and ground floor will be communal areas for the family and their visitors to enjoy, the first and loft floors will have a more private fit, with all five bedrooms that this family requires.

The provision of an additional below-ground level allows for efficient use of scarce land resources. With little or no visual impact, the proposed basement is a key element of the scheme to upgrade the property, providing additional living and leisure accommodation.

While the Haringey UDP policies and Local Plan Strategic Policies do not contain specific policies on basement development, the proposed basement has been designed based on considerations set out within the emerging Development Management DPD - pre-submission, particularly DM18 Residential Basement Development and Lightwells.

The proposed basement floor is not perceptible from the front drive as is completely organised to face the rear garden. The courtyard landscape design allows for a smooth transition of levels and close relation with the garden, while also providing natural light to the main room at the basement level. Part of the basement will have complementary family areas, as well as technical and storage areas that are essential for this family.

To demonstrate that the proposed basement will not adversely affect the structural stability of neighbouring buildings; will not increase flood risk to nearby properties; will avoid harm to the established character of the surrounding area and does not adversely impact the amenity of adjoining properties or the local natural and historic environment we have deeply studied the site and this option.

- A Ground Investigation (GI, Report Ref: B2538/22/GEO) have been carried out by 'Earth Environmental & Geotechnical Southern Ltd' (EEGSL).
- A Basement Impact Assessment (BIA) including a Floor Risk Assessment (FRA) (Report Ref: B2538/22/BIA) have been carried out by EEGSL.
- Structemp (Structural Engineers for the project) have reviewed the GI, FRA and BIA and have produced a 'BIA Supplementary Report' (Report Ref: 26S-BIA-1001) which includes proposed viable structural schemes.

Copies of these have been submitted with the planning application.

The basement perimeter walls can be constructed using secant or contiguous piles which will be temporarily propped appropriately during the excavation works after the installation of the piles. Monitoring of the adjacent party walls, structures, road and the new piles will be carried out during the construction period to ensure the integrity and safety of all existing adjacent structures. For further details, please refer to 'BIA Supplementary Report' (Ref: 26S-BIA-1001) which has been submitted with the planning application.

As previously mentioned in this site planning history a similar approach has been granted for *"Demolition of existing house and erection of a new two-storey dwelling house with accommodation with the roofspace and at basement level"* (application ref. HGY/2008/1295) back in January 2009. The granted design was never built but it had a significantly larger basement with less natural light, lightwells affecting the front elevation and no connection with the rear garden. Additionally, the building shape was quite irregular and bulky resulting in a design that was less sympathetic to the neighbours.

In our professional view, we are now in a better position to create designs that are more in line with the updated guidelines while proposing in conservation areas such as this one. Additionally, we are much more aware of the importance and the impact a design can create for the current and future habitats so we can securely state that our proposal reflects a contemporary approach that is more sensitive in relation to the surrounding context, whilst responding in a positive way to the need of our client's family.

6. Sustainability Statement

Sustainability can take many forms, all of which are valid routes to reduce the overall energy costs of the building in construction and use. We have considered key strategies in pursuance of the highest achievable standards of sustainability and energy efficiency.

The site's residential use is well established and by virtue of its location has every chance of remaining an extremely desirable place to live for many years. The design of the property has been carefully considered to provide generously proportioned rooms and a robust structure capable of alterations to meet potential future requirements of the current to future owners.

The proposed building is to be constructed to achieve and exceed where possible current standards of sustainable and accessible construction. The chosen construction system priorities efficient materials which maximise thermal performance and that have low maintenance for the current and future owners.

The recent updates of the building regulation can assure that new builds are meeting an adequate standard but we intend to actually exceed where possible to maximise energy efficiency. Active and passive systems will be considered to contribute to this main goal. Accredited construction details are to be used to prevent thermal breaks, and high-performance insulations will be used.

The main source of heating would be through an Air Source heat pump in combination with low-pressure hot water underfloor heating at all floors. Comfort cooling will be provided by a number of individual air conditioning units that will be activated only when extremely necessary.

Since we will be aiming for efficient airtightness, permanent ventilation will be done by an MVHR system adequate for the requirements of the house thereby minimising any unwanted heat losses through other less effective ventilation systems.

Rainwater will be collected to an underground rainwater harvesting system to be used for external and gardening purposes.

The proposed flat roof at the rear will incorporate a green roof system that has been proven to offer a variety of benefits at an economic, ecological and societal level. Besides their visual benefits, they restore habitats and improve biodiversity, contribute to air purification and increase oxygen levels which have been proven to provide physiological benefits in humans. The green roofs also provide natural structural protection extending the lifespan of the buildings, creating a fire-resistant layer and a rainwater buffer which reduces energy consumption/cost and consequently adds value to the property and to the overall neighbourhood as well.

We recognise the benefits of inclusive design and have endeavoured to apply inclusive design principles to this project. It was our intention to provide a solution that can be suitable for a lifelong family house not only for our client but for the future owners as well.

The design complies with easy access to the interior of the house, and internally there is a home lift capable to fit a wheelchair that will grant easy access to all floors. All rooms have good circulation areas or are adaptable for someone with reduced mobility.

As a new building, the proposals will be required to fully comply with the Building Regulations Part M.

7. Policies considered

- London Plan 2021
- National Planning Policy Framework (2021)
- City Plan 2019-2040 - April 2021
- National design guide
- National Heritage List for England
- Haringey's Local Plan Strategic Policies 2013-2026 (2013)
- Development Management DPD (2017)
- Highgate Conservation Area - Character Appraisal and management plan (2013)
- Highgate Neighbourhood Plan (2017)

8. Conclusion

The proposed development is for a high-quality single-family dwelling in a style and materials complementary to the Conservation Area. The building replaces an existing building that has previously been acknowledged as not being of special architectural or historic interest, so for this reason, the principle of demolition is, therefore, acceptable subject to the design of the replacement building preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Highgate Conservation Area.

As RIBA architects we are certain that we have respected the importance of presenting a proposal of the highest architectural quality that responds positively to their character and appearance while contributing to their adequacy for new requirements of the people that use them.

This planning application has been prepared with full regard to the relevant planning policy framework. The new proposed scheme was designed in consideration of the character and appearance of the Highgate Conservation Area, to benefit the site context, and avoid impacting the amenity of surrounding neighbours.

We trust that the enclosed application is supported by a comprehensive package of information to address all the relevant issues arising and for this reason we consider that this proposal is compliant with local, regional and national planning policy and planning permission should be forthcoming.