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15 March 2023

Dear James Mead

Application Ref: HGY/2023/0328

RE: Dyne House, Southwood Lane, Hornsey, London, N6 5EE

The Twentieth Century Society has been notified of the above planning application for the

“Redevelopment of Dyne House, to include: 1) Retention, refurbishment, extension and basement works to the principal five storey Dyne House structure (plus plant and lift over run); 2) Demolition and redevelopment of the rear extension and associated buildings to the rear, with erection of a new part one and part two storey structure, together with new basement levels; 3) Retention of the Parade Ground open space, with new multi-use surface; 4) Associated improvements to the Island Site access and underground tunnel, including: demolition of existing service block and erection of a replacement part one and part two storey structure; and 5) Associated landscaping and improved provision for emergency services, servicing and disabled parking.

The Society objects to proposals to partially demolish and reclad Dyne House on the grounds that it would involve the loss of a building which we consider to be a Non-Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA) and positive contributor to the Highgate Conservation Area.

Background

Dyne House was completed in 1967 to designs by Ansell & Bailey and was built to provide Highgate School with a new music and arts centre. It is a striking modern design which is concrete-framed with expressed concrete shallow pointed arch canopies at the lowest level, pre-cast concrete panels to the floor plates with windows between and red brick-clad piers. Its choice of materials and the motif of the pointed arch were perhaps intended as a gesture towards the Gothic architecture of the Victorian Old School Building and chapel (1860s) opposite, which make use of red brick and stone dressings (and are Grade II designated).

Dyne House was designed by Arthur Bailey (1903-1979) who at the time was working in partnership with William Henry Ansell (1873-1959). Bailey received his training from the acclaimed E. Vincent Harris (1876-1971) and went on to become well-known principally as a church architect. Bailey and Ansell played a key role in the restoration of London's blitzed churches, including Hawksmoor's St George in the East (re-consecrated in 1964). Bailey also designed new churches, such as the Dutch Church, Austin Friars, London (1950-54) and Holy

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Trinity Church, Twydall Lane, Gillingham (1963) which are both Grade II listed. Bailey's design for Dyne House was exhibited at the Royal Academy's summer exhibition in 1965 ('Royal Academy: Mixture as before at summer exhibition', *Architects' Journal*, 5 May 1965, p.1059).

Heritage policies

The Society considers Dyne House to be a Non-Designated Heritage Asset. National Planning Practice Guidance (2019) defines NDHAs as "buildings [...] identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions". It continues, "local planning authorities may [...] identify non-designated heritage assets as part of the decision-making process on planning applications". We encourage the local authority to identify the building as an NHDA.

The following heritage policies should apply here:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) describes heritage assets, which includes "buildings of local historic value", as "*an irreplaceable resource* [...] [which] *should be conserved* in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations" (paragraph 189) (our emphasis).
- It states that, "In determining applications, *local planning authorities should take account of: a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets* and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness" (paragraph 197) (our emphasis).
- Concerning NDHAs, the NPPF asserts that "In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset" (paragraph 203).

Dyne House is located within the Highgate Conservation Area, a Designated Heritage Asset. The following heritage policies are relevant here:

- Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that "In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area [...] special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area."
- The NPPF requests 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* [...] This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance" (paragraph 199) (our emphasis). It states that "Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification" (paragraph 200).

Assessment

It is the Society's view that Dyne House is a valuable historic building which makes a positive contribution to the streetscape. It is a fine example of 1960s school architecture and a significant secular work by the important practice of Ansell & Bailey.

It is a heritage asset and an 'irreplaceable resource', which should be conserved in line with paragraphs 189 and 197 of the NPPF. The application would result in the demolition of the building's elevations, resulting in the complete loss of the building's 1960s character. In response to paragraph 203 of the NPPF, we therefore maintain that the application would result in the total loss of what is in our view a non-designated heritage asset of considerable significance. The applicant states that "some of the external precast concrete panels are now starting to fail, creating leaks to the building interior", but we see no reason why these cladding panels could not be repaired or carefully replaced to allow for the necessary upgrades while conserving the building's historic appearance and character.

While the modern building represents a departure from the established character of the street—as acknowledged in the Highgate Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan (2013), which states that "While it is a good example of its time, the scale of the building does not reflect the established scale and character of the street" (p.54)—it is our view that, in doing so, it contributes to the variety and interest of the streetscape and the richness of its heritage. We maintain, therefore, that it makes a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the area and its loss would cause harm.

Summary

The Society objects to the application on account of the heritage harm that would be caused through the total loss of the significance of a building which should be considered a Non-Designated Heritage Asset and positive contributor to the Highgate Conservation Area. We recommend that the local authority refuses planning permission.

We hope that these comments are of use to you. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions. We would be grateful if you could inform us of your decision on the application.

Yours sincerely,

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