

Samuel Uff

From: Richard Truscott
Sent: 30 March 2023 18:19
To: Samuel Uff
Cc: John McRory; Elisabetta Tonazzi
Subject: RE: Internal Consultation - App ref HGY/2022/2731

Dear Sam

[HGY/2022/2731 - 44-46, Hampstead Lane, London, N6 4LL](#)

Demolition of existing dwellings and redevelopment to provide a 66 bed care home (Use Class C2); associated basement; side / front lightwells with associated balustrades; subterranean and forecourt car parking; treatment room; detached substation; side access from Courtenay Avenue; removal 4 no. trees; amended boundary treatment; and associated works

Thank you for asking for my comments on this major application. I have been closely involved with assessing this proposal for the Council since its earliest pre-application discussions, all the way through its progress to and as a planning application, and am very familiar with the site, proposals and relevant issues.

Site Location & Context

The site is in the very far south-western corner of the Borough of Haringey; it faces Hampstead Lane, which forms the boundary with the Borough of Camden, with the boundary with the Borough of Barnet being one street, the width of a school playing field, to the west. It is therefore approximately mid-way between the centres of the two iconic hill-top, North London suburban “villages” of Highgate and Hampstead.

However, this application site effectively forms the south-western corner of a large area of detached houses of consistent character, known as The Bishops. This is a residential site, containing two existing large detached houses, with further large detached houses adjacent to its east on Hampstead Lane and north along Courtenay Avenue, and continuing for the whole of Courtenay Avenue and eastwards along the north side of Hampstead Lane for several blocks. But the whole of the south side of Hampstead Lane is of very different character, mostly consisting of densely wooded, walled estates, including the Kenwood Estate directly opposite, where the only visible structures are high walls, gates and occasional lodges, interspersed with entrances to the vast public parkland of Hampstead Heath beyond. Meanwhile, the next property west on the north side of Hampstead Lane, occupying the opposite corner of Courtenay Avenue and for the whole of the next block, is a school playing field, belonging to private Highgate School, with the next street east being The Bishops Avenue, notorious for its’ millionaires’ and oligarchs’ mansions. The site can therefore be seen as being at the junction of three distinctly different character areas.

The site is within Haringey’s Highgate Conservation Area, which included the whole of Courtenay Avenue and the whole of Hampstead Lane within the borough and the whole of Courtenay Avenue. Bishops Avenue and the north side of Hampstead Lane is contained within Barnet Council’s Hampstead Garden Suburb Conservation Area, whilst Kenwood House, including its grounds, wall and lodges, are Statutory Listed. The Conservation Area will provide detailed heritage and building conservation comments but suffice it to say the principle of demolition and the quality of design of the proposed replacement are considered to meet the necessary conservation tests. The playing fields opposite, along with The Heath & the estates on the south side of Hampstead Lane, are designated Metropolitan Open Lane (MOL), which protects the openness of surroundings as well as uses of the designated area; this will be discussed in further detail under .

The ground slopes steeply to the north, down Courtenay Avenue, dropping about 5m across the width of the site, whilst it levels off quickly just south of Hampstead Lane, before falling steeply towards central

London, albeit that this view is completely hidden here by the densely wooded Kenwood grounds. The site is not a Site Allocation, and there is no other policy designation on the site. The playing fields are part of Site Allocation SA41 which covers all of the Highgate School estate and has led to the writing and adoption of the Highgate School SPD, which controls development of the school estate, but does not affect neighbouring sites such as this one. There is, therefore, no masterplanning requirement for this site.

Streetscape Character & Pattern of Development

The proposals retain the existing streetscape character of individual large houses, sitting in their own front, side and rear gardens, whilst scaling that up. This is considered appropriate in urban design terms, reflecting the corner site and main street frontage whilst respecting the strongly prevailing character of individual houses, by treating the building architecturally as two separate buildings with a light weight, transparent link (on which, more detail under Materials & Detailing below).

Front gardens with gates & trees are retained in this development. These will be predominantly soft landscaped, albeit with vehicular driveways for both houses and parking for seven cars. The front garden wall will be a key detail to get right to ensure the development is well integrated into its context. Whilst tall gates and fences have become the norm, and tall solid walls and fences are becoming more and more common in this neighbourhood, garden walls or fences were originally of modest height, to allow an eye-level view of the front of the house, including to its front door, and this would be by far preferable.

Both “houses” will clearly address the street, with plentiful windows facing both street frontages. Clearly visible front doors to both “houses”, with distinct, different purposes, mark and anchor each “house”. Around the Courtenay Avenue side, as the land falls away steeply, the lower ground floor will emerge, with a row of bedroom windows below entrance level emerging from a wide, level bottomed lightwell with sloped sides, from one floor below ground floor at the front to ground level at the rear. A wide gap between the rear of the proposed building and the first house on Courtenay Avenue will maintain a sense of hierarchy between the more important Hampstead Lane and the less important Courtenay. This gap is partially closed at what is by then the ground level (effectively below lower ground floor within the building), with two small single storey structures for services.

Form, Bulk, Height, and Massing

Additional height represents a modest increase on existing, including disguising the lower ground floor so that the prevailing appearance of the proposal from the front will be of a pair of large, two to three storey houses (the third storey being half in the roof). Such an increase in height is appropriate to the location, in urban design terms, as it is: on a major street (Hampstead Lane), at a street corner (of Courtenay Avenue with Hampstead Lane), opposite the large open space of the school playing fields to its immediate west, and opposite the densely wooded walled estate of Kenwood, from which neither the house nor any of its many open spaces are visible. It can also be seen as more appropriate to this proposed use as an institutional old peoples home for it to be made up of two slightly larger buildings than even the large single family houses of the streets to the north and east.

The large sweeping pitched roof form, made up of steeply pitched roofs broken up with gabled bays and dormer windows, is a strong and important part of how the proposal represents a contemporary reinterpretation of the Arts & Crafts style that is so prevalent in the Bishops area to the north and east of the site, as well as in the Garden Suburb area not far to the west, and is recognised as being such an important aspect of this part of the Conservation Area. Further elements that have been contemporarily reinterpreted include; asymmetrically breaking up of what would otherwise be a simple pitched form with gabled projecting bays, the insertion of tall brick chimneys and wide pitched dormers, asymmetrical windows within bays and facades, and strongly expressed front doors with decorative surrounds.

From the Courtenay Avenue side, and even more so from the rear, as the land falls away, the proposal inevitably takes on the appearance of a larger, taller building, as the lower ground floor appears from the sloping ground. The side elevation mitigates this by dropping the roof lower to the rear over the very short projecting wing to the Courtenay side and into this corner of the building proper. The rear will not be much visible from the public realm; Courtenay Avenue itself is a private road, gated close to its junction with Hampstead Lane, with concierge controlled access, and much of the rear will only be visible,

if at all, from private back gardens, and at some distance, the private golf course far beyond, but the large numbers of large mature trees in this and other back gardens and along Courtenay Avenue will probably further hide it. Nevertheless, the slightly recessed central portion of the rear elevation is designed as a series of terraces and balconies, with the potential for balcony and trellis planting to further hide the building.

The form bulk and massing of the proposal breaks down its size in a number of ways including; the main (upper) ground level, where the entrances are, is set low to the ground level, itself well below street level on Hampstead Lane, design as two separate “houses”, linked only at ground floor and below, or at upper floors by only a light weight link (on which, more detail under Materials & Detailing below), breaking up the facades into several back and forward projecting bays, and that the second floor is contained within the roof, with their bedrooms and communal rooms lit by full and semi-dormer windows and windows in gables of bays.

The size, height, bulk, and massing of the proposal is unavoidably larger than the two existing houses, but only represents a modest increase, which can be considered reasonable considering the location., setting and different use, as well as being well disguised in an ingenious design, a contemporary reinterpretation of Arts & Crafts that balances referencing the context, breaking down the height and bulk and honestly expressing the contemporary, specialist residential function.

Elevational Treatment, Fenestration, Balconies, Materials & Detailing

This contemporary reinterpretation of Arts & Crafts is composed in a balanced, asymmetrical manner, made up of two “house” sections defined by their encompassing roofs, modified by asymmetrical gabled projecting bays, containing asymmetrical arrays of large, vertically proportioned windows. Window reveals will be deep to increase the weight and quality of the elevations, whilst dormer window surrounds are appropriately as light and slender as possible. Detailing of cills, lintels, dormer surrounds, eaves, verges, chimneys, main front door surrounds and decorative brick panels are simple and elegant but provide sufficient enlivening and decoration to raise these design features and compliment the overall composition.

The predominantly brick based architecture comes with an appropriate promise to choose good quality dark red, variegated multi-stock brickwork, to be confirmed in conditions. Roofs are proposed to be in bronze standing seam metal, of a similar colour to traditional clay tiles but more contemporary and with a simpler, smoother rhythm and pattern of parts, a contemporary reinterpretation of traditional construction. Similar bronze finishes will be used on metalwork such as window frames, dormer surrounds and where solid panels are inserted into windows, but each with subtly different colour, reflectivity and therefore appearance. All will be subject to condition to protect quality and appropriate appearance.

The rear elevation only features balconies; as noted above looking onto a wooded landscape as the land falls away into the valley to the north where Highgate Golf Course sits. Chunky timber loggia detailing to those balconies that project, and glass balustrades within chunky timber frames and handrails, will provide light and views, especially important as many residents will be sitting or bed-bound, whilst providing a robust appearance that references the firm, simple garden structures of Arts & Crafts in a frankly contemporary manner. Given that the rear elevation will be barely visible from neighbours and probably completely invisible from any part of public realm, and that these residents are particularly unlikely to clutter their balconies, there is very little chance of the usual concerns at glass balustrades to residential balconies being relevant here.

The light weight link between the two “houses” at 2nd & 3rd floors is also to be detailed in chunky, robust timber framing with plain clear glass between. This also references Arts & Crafts garden features and secondary structures such as loggias and canopies, but more importantly giving it a good chance of appearing almost invisible. The link is carefully design to prevent clutter and light spillage (including recessed electric lighting), to ensure it will appear from outside to be transparent by day and dark by night.

External terraces and balconies to rear are designed to provide a bright, light weight outlook and provide views for residents, who are particularly likely to be sitting and /or bed-bound, so are generally given glass

balustrades. But maximised vegetation to minimise impression of an over-large building when viewed from the rear, notwithstanding that all or almost all views of the rear of this proposal will be from within private gardens or the private, gated street of Courtenay Avenue.

Residential Quality

Although there are no adopted planning standards for older persons' residential accommodation, the standard of accommodation proposed appears to be superb, with spacious bedrooms and plentiful, varied and attractively designed communal accommodation. Officers are confident that the care and detailed attention shown by the applicants into the design of bedrooms and communal facilities, all areas have been designed to promote dignified living standards for the frail, elderly, and those suffering with dementia.

Bedrooms are generally single aspect, as is to be expected, facing north, west and south. The large number of trees to the southern front gardens and to the woodlands on the opposite side of Hampstead lane mean there was significantly reduced danger of overheating due to solar gain, whilst the north facing bedrooms will benefit from great sunny views across the steeply falling, predominantly wooded landscape of the houses along Courtenay Avenue, their generally large, wooded back gardens, and the Highgate Golf Course quite some distance away beyond.

Daylight, Sunlight, Privacy & Outlook

Of relevance to this section, Haringey policy in the DM DPD DM1 requires that:

"...D Development proposals must ensure a high standard of privacy and amenity for the development's users and neighbours. The council will support proposals that:

- a. Provide appropriate sunlight, daylight and open aspects (including private amenity spaces where required) to all parts of the development and adjacent buildings and land;*
- b. Provide an appropriate amount of privacy to their residents and neighbouring properties to avoid overlooking and loss of privacy detrimental to the amenity of neighbouring residents and residents of the development..."*

The applicants provided Daylight and Sunlight Report on their proposals and of the effect of their proposals on neighbouring dwellings. These have been prepared fully in accordance with council policy following the methods explained in the Building Research Establishment's publication "Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight – A Guide to Good Practice" (2nd Edition, Littlefair, 2011), known as "The BRE Guide".

The assessment finds that the day and sunlight received by all neighbouring properties would largely meet the BRE recommended guidance. The few locations that do not quite meet the recommended levels consist of two ground floor flank windows in no. 42 Hampstead Lane, close to the boundary with the application site. These windows are believed to light a living room which also has large windows to the front and back, and as such is expected to retain good levels of illumination and daylight distribution.

The applicants' assessment also finds the proposals would achieve excellent levels of day and sunlight at or above the BRE Guide recommended levels.

In the case of higher density developments, it would normally be noted that the BRE Guide itself states that it is written with low density, suburban patterns of development in mind and should not be slavishly applied to more urban locations; as in London, the Mayor of London's Housing SPG acknowledges. Therefore, full or near full compliance with the BRE Guide is not to be expected and the fact that it is wholly achieved here is considered an exceptional performance, albeit that it recognises this is one of the more suburban parts of the borough.

The proposals are well set back from or turn to face away from boundaries to the neighbouring existing residential dwellings at 42 Hampstead Lane and 1 Courtenay Avenue. There is no expectation of any overlooking or loss of privacy concerns to either property.

Conclusions

This proposed development is to provide a much-needed form of specialist accommodation in a part of the borough that is not particularly well connected but nevertheless highly desirable, as reflects the exceptional quality of the predominantly green, wooded landscaped setting and being on the edge of the huge and beautifully landscaped public open spaces of Hampstead Heath. The proposal is just in a Conservation Area, but respects the form, pattern and style of that Conservation Area in a contemporary reinterpretation of Arts & Crafts that balances referencing the context, breaking down the height and bulk and honestly expressing the contemporary, specialist residential function. Height, bulk, and massing is unavoidably larger than the two existing houses, but only represents a modest increase, which can be considered reasonable considering the location., setting and different use, as well as being well disguised in an ingenious design. With a promise of high quality materials and detailing, this proposal has the potential to be an excellent addition to the architectural heritage of the borough, neighbourhood and this special location.

Regards

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-----Original Message-----

From: Samuel Uff <Samuel.Uff@haringey.gov.uk>
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To: Richard Truscott <Richard.Truscott@haringey.gov.uk>
Subject: Internal Consultation - App ref HGY/2022/2731

Please find attached document