

03 April 2024

Dear Iliyan Topalov,

SITE: Southwood Lane, Hornsey, London, N6 5SY

The Twentieth Century Society has been alerted to the planning application (HGY/2024/0189) for alterations to the elevation of 112 Southwood Lane on the Southwood House Estate in Highgate.

The Southwood House Estate comprises 43 low terraced houses, built in 1958-62 by Andrews, Emerson & Sherlock. The development is located south-west of Highgate Underground Station. Houses are organised into three terraces—Southwood Lane, Hillside Gardens and Jacksons Lane—which enclose a triangular communal garden that is accessible from the rear of all houses via their individual private gardens. The development was built on the site of the 18th-century Southwood House which was abandoned in WWII and demolished in 1953, and the communal garden retained some of the trees that were originally within the house's grounds. The buildings are generally of pink brick, with the exception of the houses at the lower end of Jacksons Lane which make use of exposed concrete and timber frames. It is a high quality post-war housing development and was favourably reviewed in *The Architect & Building News* in 1962 and more recently in the London 4: North volume of Pevsner's *The Buildings of England* series.

The Southwood House Estate is included within the boundaries of the Highgate Conservation Area and makes a positive contribution to its character and appearance.

Located as it is within a conservation area, the local authority should be mindful of section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which 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."

This is reiterated in Policy DH2 relating to 'Development Proposals in Highgate's Conservation Areas' within the Highgate Neighbourhood Plan (2017) which states that "Development proposals, including alterations [...] to existing buildings, should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Highgate's conservation areas...". It continues below, "Original windows and doors are integral to Highgate's special character, and should be retained and repaired wherever possible. Replacements should match the originals in terms of materials, design and detail."

Chapter 12: 'Management Plan and Design Guide' of the Highgate Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan (2013) states that buildings that contribute to the conservation area should be protected and that original architectural features should be retained.

The Twentieth Century Society is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England no 05330664

Registered office: 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ
Registered Charity no 1110244

The Society shares the concerns raised by the Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee (HCAAC) about the proposed alterations to the principal elevation of 112 Southwood Lane.

The applicant proposes to reconfigure the interiors, converting the existing ground floor bedroom and bathroom into an entrance lobby and expanding the kitchen. The existing front door would be “infilled” and a new door inserted into the return elevation of the existing bedroom projection. The proposal would also involve the replacement of the windows with triple-glazed white powder coated aluminium units, and insertion of “obscure glass” within the return elevation’s first floor window and to the ground floor window on the principal elevation.

The application in general lacks detail. Because the building is located within the Highgate Conservation Area, it should be supported by a Design and Access Statement or Heritage Statement - this requirement is clearly set out in Chapter 12 of the Highgate Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan. The planning officer should request this further documentation from the applicant.

The application suggests that the main door fixture (which we presume is original) would be removed, although it is not clear exactly what is proposed. It is important that this original door, which is a key part of the principal elevation, is retained in-situ, in line with Haringey’s local policy (cited above). We are not persuaded by the proposal to insert a new entrance door into the return elevation of the projection - these elevations are visible in views looking north from the south, down the slope of the road. The houses on Southwood Lane (and on Hillside Gardens) step forward and back from the street, creating a dynamic streetscape. The view down the street towards 112 Southwood Road fully takes in this stepped elevation. There is an overall uniformity in the design of the elevations in this view and a rhythm to their arrangement. The insertion of a door into what elsewhere remains a blind elevation would have a disruptive and detrimental impact. We are also concerned about the proposed insertion of opaque glass, for which there does not appear to be precedent on the estate. We have no objections to the proposed replacement of the existing windows with higher-performance units if it can be guaranteed that the replacements match the originals in their fenestration pattern (the plans indicate that this would be the case), and in their opening movements, finishes and detailing.

Overall, we have heritage concerns about the proposed work and hope that you will take our comments into consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Coco Whittaker

Senior Caseworker

The Twentieth Century Society
70 Cowcross Street
London, EC1M 6EJ
Tel 020 7250 3857
coco@c20society.org.uk

Remit: The Twentieth Century Society was founded in 1979 and is the national amenity society concerned with the protection, appreciation, and study of post-1914 architecture, townscape and design. The Society is acknowledged in national planning guidance as the key organisation concerned with the modern period and is a constituent member of the Joint Committee of the National Amenity Societies. Under the procedures set out in the *Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications – Notification to Historic England and National Amenity Societies and the Secretary of State (England) Direction 2021*, all English local planning authorities must inform the Twentieth Century Society when an application for listed building consent involving partial or total demolition is received, and they must notify us of the decisions taken on these applications.

The Twentieth Century Society, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ – Tel 020 7250 3857

coco@c20society.org.uk
www.c20society.org.uk