



## HAMPSTEAD NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

8 December 2020

Ben Farrant  
Supporting Communities Directorate  
Camden Council

Re: **2020/5214/P**, 18A Frognal Gardens

Dear Mr Farrant,

Further to our letter of objection to the original application 2019/5348/P dated 12 November 2019, the Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum has now had a chance to review the latest and revised application 2020/5214/P.

HNF objects to this new proposal on a number of issues and many of our objections remain as per our original objections i.e.

1. Whilst the revised scheme has been marginally modified in terms of height, form and junction with neighbours, the proposed mass and height continue to overwhelm the site and nearby houses – especially as one views the proposal up Frognal Gardens.
2. The scale of the proposal is excessive and contradicts both the environs and streetscape
3. Its relationship to the street is incongruous.
4. The roofline bears no relationship to its setting.
5. The design concept is fundamentally flawed being nothing more than two-dimensional streetscape facadism with unresolved juxtapositions at neighbours and at boundaries. Being covered in contrasting green glazed tiles neither resolves nor justifies such a proposal. The design adds nothing of architectural merit to either the concept of architecture or to the required spatial sensitivity of the immediate topography and conservation area context.
6. And the proposed materials and colour are inappropriate and damaging to the conservation area.

The proposal is therefore contrary to Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan DH1 and DH2 as well as Camden Local Plan D1 and D2 and the Hampstead Conservation Area Statement.

18A Frognal Gardens is situated in Character Area 2 of the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan. The description of this area in Appendix 2 states:

Some high quality modern detached houses exist in the area, with some from the 1970s and 1980s now being replaced. New additions of similar scale that fit within the landscape are successful, but recent precedents of larger scaled proposals threaten the character of the area. In some areas, newer houses dominate the setting and appear to be crammed onto sites that are too small for them; these are inappropriate additions in an area where buildings, although often large, rarely overwhelm their landscape setting.

The proposal is an example of a large-scale development that would overwhelm the site physically and create a dominant visual insertion where the existing architectural palate is a pleasing uniformity.

### **Design**

DH1 requires that buildings respond positively and sympathetically to the existing rhythm, proportion, height, scale, massing, materials and storey heights of surrounding buildings. It also requires that the design is sympathetic to established building lines and arrangement of front gardens, walls, railings or hedges.

The building fails to respect the established building lines by replacing front landscaping with a ground floor extension to the pavement.

The building has its own rhythm, but not one shared by any other buildings nearby. Contrary to the argument presented by the D&A statement, there is nothing similar between the teal-faience tiles of the proposed building and the terracotta, traditionally coloured, hung tiles nearby. The proposed tiles, in fact, are nearly the opposite – shiny versus matte, brightly coloured versus earth-hued. The use of such tiles is also anachronistic to domestic architecture in the area. The only faience tiles in the area are the signature ones found on a public building, the Hampstead Tube Station, and these are traditional terracotta coloured.

Whilst the overall height has been marginally reduced, the height of the building continues to appear even higher from street level looking from west to east because of the flat roof (as opposed to a pitched roof) and the rising slope of the street. It overwhelms the house to which it currently is attached. The proposal is at least one full level too high.

The swooping curves of the façade and numerous street-facing balconies are more reminiscent of buildings found in the Mediterranean than in chilly England and share no affinity with nearby houses, again failing to respect and enhance the character of the local area and the conservation area as a whole.

This revised proposal remains insensitive to the context in which the applicant wishes to build and live. Support for this ill-conceived design would cause long lasting damage to a fragile conservation area which boasts of having real icons of modern architecture in the immediate vicinity.

### **Basement impacts**

We note that the BIA anticipates “the category of the movement expected is between 1 and 2 based on the Burland”, contrary to Policy BA1, which requires all proposals for basement development to “aim for no higher than Burland Scale 1. Construction will not be allowed to proceed where there is evidence that damage to neighbouring properties would exceed Burland Scale 1”.

We recommend that Camden refuse this application.

Sincerely,

Glen Robinson  
Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum