Osborne Grove Nursing Home - Conservation Area Assessment 1

1 GENERAL

1.1 There is no current Conservation Area Character Appraisal for the Stroud Green Conservation Area but Haringey's Stroud Green Urban Character Study (February 2015) does cover the Conservation Area.

The Urban Character Study notes the significance of the 'node' where Upper Tollington Park crosses with Stroud Green Road. Reference to the 1862 map of Stroud Green shows that the development first built in the area was at the junction of the two roads.

None of the early buildings indicated on the 1862 map have survived and unfortunately, all but one of the later nineteenth century buildings, built about the crossing, were lost to war damage. However, the nineteenth century building on the south-east corner of the junction is an important building in the townscape and it demonstrates the built form adopted for the crossroad location; built tight to the back of pavement, four storeys in height with the top storey set back behind a high entablatured parapet. In views from Upper Tollington Park towards the crossing this building contributes to the townscape, the entablature being an important design feature that carries the view onward from Upper Tollington Park.



1897 map of area



Osborne Grove and 19th century buildings

At the north-east corner of the junction (opposite the building referred to above), on the plot now occupied by Nando's, there was a fine classically designed public house. That building created a strongly marked corner. Old photographs show a well-designed large four storey building based on classical ideas.

1.2 The Urban Character Study for Stroud Green includes the following comments which are of particular relevance to the Osborne Grove Nursing Home site:

- Street Pattern. Upper Tollington Park; an important east-west secondary route connecting Green Lanes to Hornsey Road. A busy activity node where it crosses with Stroud Green Road.
- Urban Form. Urban in character with dense compact urban form of buildings lining perimeter blocks, well-proportioned streets. High quality architectural townscape.
- Building height recommendations. The Grove site falls within 12 – 21 metres approximate recommendation. Three to six storeys, medium rise buildings.

2.0 SITE CONTEXT AND HISTORY

2.1 Before the present Nursing Home was built, the site was occupied by Victorian terraced houses, two short terraces of large early Victorian houses to the Upper Tollington Park boundary, with a cul-de-sac opening between houses at the centre of the group, giving access to Osborne Grove. The large houses to Upper Tollington Park were four storey, comprising lower and upper ground floors, first floor, plus mansard storey



Images of strong lines of eaves and parapets



Images of 'flat' facade frontages, projecting bays and variations in height

with dormers. The cross section of these houses on Upper Tollington Park can be read from the demolition scars on the side of the tall gabled building adjacent to the car-wash entrance. (That building is in fact the earliest survival in the immediate area. Its appearance is misleading due to cementitious render over the principal façade and the exposed rendered flank.)

The demolition of the nineteenth century buildings resulted in a significant loss of townscape character; the consistent and coherent form of street enclosure, urban grain and rhythm was lost. The Victorian streetscape, that effectively led one's eye through the landscape was lost, and the new buildings and their placement on the site was without reference to the site context or sense of townscape. Where strong townscape character is most needed, close to the node, it was lost. A gap was created that reveals unintended views of building backs thus detracting from the setting of the conservation area. In terms of impact on the significance of the setting of the conservation area, the form and loose grouping of the existing buildings is negative.

3.0 CHARACTER OF UPPER TOLLINGTON PARK

3.1 The regularity of the housing development along Upper Tollington Park is remarkable. The long terraces read not as individual houses but as expansive strong forms with regular grain and rhythm. Their handsome brickwork facades are generally based on classical proportions, and there is a balance between vertical and horizontal elements of the design. The facades, with prominent eaves lines, are sufficiently tall, so that from eye level, strike the silhouette against the sky. The eaves and gutter line is a strong design element and although the buildings have pitched roofs, the slopes themselves are generally unassertive from the pavement and it is only the mass of the large chimney stacks that break above the skyline created by the eaves and gutter line.

The architecture of the terrace frontages is essentially a modulation of a long plane of brickwork; at ground floor level there are bay windows and prominent door-cases which step forward from the plane, sash windows to upper floors set back behind reveal. The brickwork plane is modulated by secondary devices including brick pilasters and vertically recessed brick, to articulate plan rhythm in the vertical. The vertical emphasis is countered by horizontal brick banding used to lead one's eye, and to tie individual houses into the group. From most viewpoints individual houses do not stand out, but the unity of the terrace is expressed with a classical sense of balance.

Streets are generally straight and wide, creating a feeling of spaciousness throughout the Victorian development. Behind houses lie gardens that are hidden from view. The consistent use of brickwork facades to enclose the spaces without space 'leaking away' is key to the success of the urban form created in the conservation area.

Planting in the small front gardens and street trees at the kerb edge soften and green the urban landscape. Although modest in quantity, the impact of the planting is significant, the organic forms of plants and trees making an engaging contrast with the discipline of the built forms.

4.0 SITE RELATIONSHIP TO CONSERVATION AREA

4.1 The potential impact of the development on the significance of the CA is what must be assessed.

4.2 The site of the proposed Osborne Grove Nursing Home sits outside the boundary of the Stroud Green Conservation Area. The development is adjacent to the CA. Houses opposite the front of the proposed building, on Tollington Park Road, are included in the CA.

4.3 Other site boundaries are internal boundaries to which there is no public access; there are rear gardens to Perth Road, garages behind Victoria Terrace and workshops behind Stroud Green Road.

4.4 From publicly accessible space, the proposed development, although itself outside the CA, would



Images of windows, entrances and road corner returns



Images of conservation area details

be visible in views from the conservation area along Tollington Park Road. There would also be two glimpse views into the site from the CA, one from Perth Road and one from Victoria Terrace. Each of these glimpse views subtends a small part of the visual field and by virtue of existing landscaping, including street trees, the views are screened.

4.5 The potential impact of the development on the significance of the CA needs be assessed in relation to the above.

5.0 IMPACT OF THE DESIGN ON THE CONSERVATION AREA

4.1 Haringey Integrated Impact Assessment November 2020
The assessment states as follows:
'Policy SP12 of the Local Plan looks to ensure the conservation of the historic significance of Haringey's heritage assets, their setting and wider historical environments. The historic environment should be used as a basis for heritage-led regeneration as the basis of good design and positive change.'

The sections above analyse the design of the surroundings and the immediate part of the conservation area which relates to the proposal and sets the site in its historic perspective. The genesis of the design derives from understanding the design of the area to be the basis of a heritage led good design.

4.2 The design of the Upper Tollington Park façade is the most prominent element in relation to the setting of the conservation area. The design is an opportunity to address the weakness of the existing townscape as identified above. The proposal therefore deals with the negative 'gap' to regain the continuity of the streetscape, and the sense of urban containment.

The components of design informed by the context are;

- Brick used as the primary building material
- Respecting the urban grain and rhythm
- Respecting the general historic heights and massing – a four storey building with set-back top storey
- The setback top storey clad in zinc to sit lightly in the townscape (compare the top storey of Haringey Civic Centre)
- Designing the building to carry on the sense of the street
- Incorporation of a simple cornice at the parapet level to carry on the streetscape view to and from the building (the significant eaves line and the entablature of the historic building at the SE corner of the crossroad)
- Projections from the wall plane limited to ground floor bay windows and the entrance porch
- Upper windows all set behind a brick reveal in a consistent manner
- Basing proportions on classical precedent and reference to the 'golden section'
- Using vertical (pilaster strips) and horizontal design elements (brickwork bandings) in the facades to balance the design and integrate the masses of the proposal
- Differentiation of the ground floor storey by the use of horizontal brick banding detail also carried around new screen wall of the gas governor structure
- Incorporating landscaping in the small front garden area and a regular line of trees planted at the kerb-line.
- References are taken into the design from the history of the site and from observation of the design elements that contribute to the townscape quality of the area.

The approach to the design of the building is demonstrated to be contextual, heritage led design, which repairs the loss occasioned by demolition of Victorian buildings on Tollington Park Road. The impact on the conservation area would be beneficial, the design would enhancing the area and mend the streetscape.
The glimpse views into the site from Victoria Terrace and Perth Road are set well back from the possible viewpoints and subtend little into views which are further mitigated by existing planting, including street trees. The impact on the conservation area is minor.

References are taken into the design from the history of the site and from observation of the design elements that contribute to the townscape quality of the area.