



REDINGTON FROGNAL ASSOCIATION
Umbrella body for residents' groups in the Redington Frogнал Conservation Area

19 April 2020

Dear Ms Hazelton,

35 TEMPLEWOOD AVENUE - APPLICATIONS 2020/1025/P AND 2020/1115/L

I am submitting a detailed objection to the proposed demolition of 35 Templewood Avenue and its replacement by an undistinguished London Developer's Vernacular building (in beige monochromatic brickwork) of excess bulk, mass and size (80% increase). The proposal would be detrimental to the Redington Frogнал Conservation Area and entail harm to the setting of both the Conservation Area and the listed swimming pool.

The detailed objection, set out below, should be read in conjunction with the documents attached.

BACKGROUND ON ARCHITECT OF LISTED STRUCTURE

As a back-drop to debating the Schreiber building complex, as it was originally designed and intended, it needs to be recalled that Sir Jim Stirling and James Gowan formed one of the great architectural duo's of the post war years and, at the time, on a par with the other great duos of Lord Norman Foster and Lord Richard Rodgers, and Sir Terry Farrell and Sir Nick Grimshaw. Of note is that all of these duos parted ways and then went on to create their greatest works as separate entities, as James Gowan has done here with the Schreiber House - in the year immediately after his practice separating from Sir Jim Stirling's [1963].

The separation of the garden and swimming pool from the Schreiber house itself in the 1980s, with the resulting development of the Boncara House on the site in 1993, created an uproar from the architectural profession as it was universally seen as being Gowan's finest work [see also the Listing description, in similar vein]. Indeed he was at the forefront of the similar protests at the earlier suggestion that the Schreiber House be demolished and redeveloped, the planning application for which was soundly rejected by Camden Council at the time. This is probably the reason from both the Schreiber House and its swimming pool being Listed Grade 2 in 1998.

Refer also to - 'Stirling and Gowan: Architecture from Austerity to Affluence', by Mark Crinson:

<https://www.architecture.com/riba-books/books/architects-and-designers/product/stirling-and-gowan-architecture-from-austerity-to-affluence.html>

James Stirling (1924-1992) is acclaimed as the most influential and controversial modern British architect. His partnership with James Gowan (b. 1923) between

1956 and 1963 put post-war British architecture on the international map, and their Leicester University Engineering Building became an iconic monument for



a new kind of modernism. ... their work was the product of two equally creative partners whose different concerns produced a dynamic aesthetic. This is..... an in-depth account of their training and early careers, their relation to key architects and movements of the time, and the commissioning, design, and construction of their work. This critical reassessment dispels previous myths and inaccuracies regarding their partnership and analyses how ideas about mannerism, modernism, nostalgia, community, consumerism, Victorian cities, and institutional typologies influenced their designs. Stirling and Gowan positions their avant-garde creations within a larger context as creative responses to Britain's post-war deindustrialization and the shift from austerity to affluence.

The Royal Institute of British Architects has an extensive photographic and documentary file on the Schreiber House, from which the following facts were gleaned.

- Begun: Mar 1963
- Completed: Jun 1964
- Total cost: £89,284
- Swimming pool subsequently added by Gowan in 1968.

1 ARCHITECTURE

A The mass of the building existing on the site verges on the overbearing, but it's broken form, decorative motifs, and variety of materials and architectural mannerisms give it a certain vernacular, and it is of its time being 'Post Modern' in a gentle way. In this way it has become part of the street scene, and like many buildings in Hampstead through the centuries, displays the architectural style of their time.

B The proposed new building is its generality is what is rather disparagingly in architectural circles know as 'London Developer's Vernacular', i.e. beige monochromatic brickwork with some articulation in its bonding etc., in that it is sufficiently well mannered and inoffensive to avoid much civic criticism for its style.

C The building form in itself, though, does draw criticism and in this it is not helped by the architecture as it is remorselessly brick based facing onto the boundaries so this, allied with the singularly solid main block with attached wing all now pressed hard up against the boundaries of the site, make it overbearing and oppressive. The proposal also draws attention to itself and its massing by the use of a bland beige brick colour completely out of keeping with the surrounding red brickwork [other than the Schreiber House] for which the whole of the surrounding Froggnal and Redington Road Conservation Area is noted.

2 SIZE OF PROPOSED BUILDING

A The proposal is for the existing building, of 725 square metres, to be increased by a further 576 square metres, to now be a total of 1,226 square metres. This increase

is to be generally above ground, thereby increasing the physical site massing by something of the order of 80%.

B The Application documents argue that an existing Consent allows for a much increase size for that building, but note should be made that much of that Consents additional



space was underground, whereas this Application is generally all above ground, thereby greatly increasing its mass, bulk, and size. This becomes apparent when studying the drawings, which show a building of greater height, greater plan dimensions, and much increased proximity to the site boundaries on three sides. This can be seen clearly when overlaying the outline of the existing building onto the proposal drawings [see attached documents 1, 2, and 3].

3 MASS, BULK, AND SCALE

A No mention is made of the increase in the mass and bulk of the building generally, nor specifically in the vicinity of Templewood Road, where the existing upper part of the building is set back from the road by 11 metres and the wing is a single storey over a raised ground floor. The proposal is now for the upper part of the main building to be extended by almost 10 metres so that it is only a couple of metres from the boundary along Templewood Avenue and the wing to have an elevated storey such that this will now be an additional 3 metres taller. The increase in massing on to Templewood Avenue will, therefore, be significant [see attached Documents 4 and 5].

B No mention is also made of the increase of mass and bulk around the swimming pool glass lantern, such that it is now over-bearing, enclosing, and dominating the interior and, one would have thought, making the interior less light during daytime given that the building mass is on its south side and the pool will be in its greater shadow.

C No mention is made of what is effectively an additional floor on the main block, setting aside the small living room at this level in the existing building that is set back from the external walls of the block below, or of the addition of a double-storey height of the living area on the wing.

D Little mention is made of the 'rotunda' at roof level, yet this is clearly stated to be a terrace from the main bedroom. This stands well in front of the massing of the new building on the site and is a massive feature within the townscape, being clearly visible from both Templewood Avenue and West Heath Drive. Its form is completely alien to the Redington and Froggnal Conservation Area, and deeply intrusive within the streetscape.

Whilst it does not come within the measurable floor area of the building it does add significantly to the massing of the building [see attached Wikipedia description of massing, as a layman's guide].

4 LISTED STRUCTURE

A The proposed change of use from the swimming pool to now being a dining room traduces the Listing of the building, as this proposed use bears no relationship to the original purpose of the space. Without that use the form of the space becomes irrelevant and illegible.

5 HERITAGE



A The tone of the Heritage Statement is surprising, given that the swimming pool is specifically mentioned in the Listing and which states, at the end of the reason for its listing, that *'The result is one of the most significant town houses of the post-war period'*.

B It also makes the statement that *'Extraordinarily, the listing of the Schreiber House and swimming pool in 1998 occurred after the subdivision of the plot and construction of the 1994 villa. In part the listing can be understood to be as a remedial measure to prevent the further erosion of the relationship between the house and the pool'*.

C Given the increased and intrusive mass, bulk, and scale of the proposed building within the Redington and Froggnal Conservation Area it is also interesting to note the claim that *'This assessment has therefore found that the proposals have an overall moderate beneficial impact upon the Conservation Area and listed buildings'*. This is particularly so in the light of its statement that *'The area is characterised by large detached plots set within ample grounds. The properties on West Heath Road have a very green and verdant setting, overlooking West Heath to the north'*, neither of which this proposed scheme would provide.

D The proposal will have a detrimental effect on Templewood Avenue, as it will form an intrusive and alien structure within the well space and tempered townscape within which it sits. Attention is drawn particularly to the Redington and Froggnal Conservation Area statement, which says of 'Sub Area 4: Redington Road and Templewood Avenue' – *form an area containing some of the larger and more generously space houses in the conservation area setting a mature landscape. Whilst this gives the sub area a general theme, the period over which the area was developed has resulted in a mixture of architectural styles. Despite this, parts of Redington Road and the majority of Templewood Avenue are of consistent character and appearance. There are a number of examples of mid and late 20th century houses and flats occupying part of the former grounds of adjoining properties. These are, with a few notable exceptions, of a more modest scale and the neighbours generally do not overly detract from the character of the conservation area.*

6 TRANSPORT ASSESSMENT / ARBORICULTURAL REPORT

A Moving the car access from Templewood Avenue, a quiet street, to West Heath Drive, a main thoroughfare between Hampstead and other areas of London, immediately adjacent to the car access for the Schreiber House, and immediately opposite an island

in the road, is bound to make this a dangerous junction as it also requires cars crossing a very busy pedestrian pathway [see attached document 6].

B There is no traffic analysis, nor accident statistics, in the Transport Statement to answer any of these points in detail.

C The drawings fail to show the existing and immediately adjacent crossover in West Heath Drive to allow car access to the Schreiber House. Conflict between traffic movement



on these immediately adjacent crossovers seems inevitable, and creates a greater hazard for pedestrians to navigate.

D It may be irrelevant, in planning terms, but we wonder if this proposal is also aimed to be provide an argument for a more exclusive West Heath Drive address, rather than the present 35 Templewood Avenue address?

E The road to the garages also cuts through the logical connection between the swimming pool and the original Schreiber House, both physically and visually, thereby traducing the historic, architectural, and functional connection between the two.

F Reference to the Arboricultural Report will show that this access and road, plus the redevelopment of the site, results in the loss of the bulk of the trees presently on the site. The Appendices list 7 of the 12 trees on the site to be felled.

G The documents submitted in association with the application notably omit both a bird and a bat survey. These will be required prior to any further assessment of the application.

7 PLANNING STATEMENT

The Conclusions in the Planning Statement state that: -

A *The building is of poor architectural quality – this is a subjective assessment, based on no expert opinion, and in any case as stated earlier the building, like many in Hampstead, is of it’s time and is celebrated for the fact.*

B *The principle of partial demolition with the retention of the listed pool has been full justified in terms of heritage and sustainability considerations. This cannot be the case*

as the Demolition Drawing in the Planning Application set show a complete demolition of all the buildings on the site, other than the specifically Listed structure.

C *The proposed replacement buildings will finally deliver an appropriate setting for the retained listed swimming pool. The pool becomes the fulcrum of the site, off which the geometry and the design of the replacement building follows. This is not believed to be the case for the reasons set out previously in this document.*

D *This application represents a scheme of exceptional architectural detail and quality. Again this is a matter of opinion, and unsupported by the many examples in and around London of very similar architecture and detailing.*

E *The application will secure the long term future of unique listed swimming pool. This may have been the case had it remaining as s swimming pool, but as proposed it is a traducing of the original intentions of the architect of the Listed structure.*

F *The replacement vehicle access to West Heath Road, (which was previously approved by the LPA some time ago) represents an improvement over the existing steep ramp and the car lift which sat*



directly from the pavement edge. The link to a Consent of 16 years ago is tenuous, at best, and for reasons set out earlier in this document the belief is that this will create a dangerous situation vis as vis the immediately adjacent existing access to the Schreiber House and the immediate traffic island in West Heath Drive. Other houses within West Heath Drive to not have another frontage for car access whereas this site does - in Templewood Avenue - which can easily be retained.

Also, of note, no crossover in West Heath Drive is juxtaposed with another, such that safety issues are far less than in this proposal.

G The landscaping of the garden area, including the reinstatement of the grass mound and the exposing of the circular entrance route within the garden represent clear benefit and enhancement to the listed structure and its immediate setting. It is difficult to see how this can be claimed to be true, if this proposal requires the felling of 7 of the 12 trees on the site.

Yours sincerely,

Rupert Terry
Chairman

Redington Frogna! Association
<http://www.redfrogassociation.org/>