

My name is Sebastian Martienssen and I live at 32A Winchester Road with my wife Gerelmaa Chinbat and a feral cat called Ginger. A planning application has been submitted to Camden Council for the building of a two storey extension to the North side of the house at 32 Winchester Road. I vehemently object to this planning application.

The house is divided into three flats, a bottom flat occupying one floor, a middle flat occupying one floor and a top flat occupying two floors. 32A is the bottom flat with its own front door and the other two flats share the front door at the top of the steps. The house is at the North end of a group of six terraced houses built by the Victorians something like 140 years ago. This terrace is the best looking bit of Winchester Road.

The top flat changed hands recently and a planning application has been submitted to Camden Council by City Planning Limited on behalf of Gloral Developments Limited. City Planning exists and has a small office in the building at 244 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V. Gloral Developments Limited does not exist so I think Camden Council should have summarily dismissed the application.

If this project goes ahead it will seriously and deleteriously affect the occupants and owners of the bottom flat and the middle flat. It will affect the residents of 73 Eton Avenue whose private car park is bang up against where the extension will be built. There is a large tree on the edge of the car park which will have to be cut down. I think the tree is under a Tree Preservation Order along with many of the other large trees in the neighbourhood.

The North wall of 32 Winchester Road was built by the Victorians and is actually two walls with a wide cavity in between them which provides brilliantly effective insulation for the house. An extension will have to have foundations and these could structurally damage the North wall. Holes in it may be required so as to connect the extension to the rest of the house. The extension may also have loos in which case they will have to be connected to the main drainage system in the middle of Winchester Road. One way of doing this would be to dig a deep ditch through the front garden. Another way would be to go through or under the North wall and link the extension sewage system with the existing Victorian sewer system underneath the house.

During the previous owner's occupation of the top flat the sewerage system became blocked and overflowed into the front garden just in front of the 32A front door. My wife and I bailed the stuff out as best we could and got some sewage engineers to come out on a late Sunday evening three days before Christmas in 2019 while it was pouring with rain. They pulled out about 1,000 baby wipes and unblocked the drain.

An extension would also affect everybody else in Winchester Road because the extension would be an eyesore in the same way that the extension which has been built on the West side of 148 Fellows Road is an eyesore. Winchester Road runs North to South and Fellows Road comes off it running from West to East. The extension would also be visible from the South side of several houses at the West end of Eton Avenue.

Nobody in the immediate neighbourhood has been properly informed. There's just a bit of paper in a plastic envelope tied to just one of the lamp posts in Winchester Road and I wasn't aware of it until Monica in the middle flat pointed it out to me:

Are you affected by this planning application?

The Council has received an application for:

Erection of a two storey side extension between the lower and raised ground floors for ancillary accommodation to the first and second floor flat.

At 32 Winchester Road London NW3 3NT

Application Number: 2023/2886/P

HAVE YOUR SAY

You can comment until: Saturday 01st 2023

See the plans / make a comment: www.camden.gov.uk/viewplans

The person dealing with this application is:

Obote Hope (020 7974 2555)

All comments are public, and can be viewed online. We will not acknowledge receipt of your comments. In the event of

an appeal all comments will be shared with the Secretary of State. If this is a householder or minor commercial application you will not have a further opportunity to comment at appeal stage.

I rent 32A from Mary Komocki who owns 32A and lives in Spain. I think she should have been informed and given a chance to oppose the planning application. Mary doesn't have the internet or a computer or a mobile phone. She has a landline phone without an answer machine. She also has a postal address. On at least one occasion it took a month for a letter to get from London to Mary in Spain. Would Camden Council accept a letter from her, rather than a comment on their web site, opposing the planning application? If so would they be prepared to give her a bit more time in which to write a letter and for the letter to reach London?

Back in 1971 my very good friend Tony Pritchett of computer animation fame, who deserves a blue plaque on the house, was living in the top flat and in the early 1970's I stayed in his flat for a while. Mary Komicki was living in the bottom flat back then. One day she rang the door bell and I answered it and she said "There's a rat in my flat. Could you deal with it?". I raced into her flat, cornered the rat and killed it. I came out with the dead rat and was surprised to discover a small group of children along with Mary at the front gate. On showing them the dead rat they all gave me a round of applause. Mary and I have been friends ever since.

Mary left for Spain back in the 1970s and has rented her flat to people ever since. In 2006 I moved in with Tony once again. In 2010 Mary's flat became vacant and I became her tenant and have been living in it ever since. Tony died in 2017 and a banker bought his flat in 2018.

This banker applied for planning permission to build a two storey extension on the North wall of the house and then withdrew his application but he carried out a renovation which lasted for about a year and a half. The constant noise and banging was awful for me and my wife in the bottom flat but even worse for the occupants of the middle flat. The top flat owns the Northern side of the front garden and it became a building tip. The hall which is shared by the middle flat and the top flat was filled with junk.

In the midst of this an aesthetic disaster happened. I had been looking after the front garden. Half of it belongs to the bottom flat and the top flat owns the other half. There were two beech hedges on either side of the gate and for years I carefully pruned the hedges and created a beautiful beech hedge arch over the front gate. This was much admired by other residents in Winchester Road. Then suddenly the top flat's bit of the hedge was chopped down. The arch had gone. Monica in the middle flat was almost in tears. Residents asked me what had happened. Had I done it? No! I asked the banker and he told me that it had been an accident. His gardeners had uprooted it by mistake.

The banker sold his flat in January 2022 for £1,700,000 to the current owner or owners. I didn't know who now owned the flat but saw a letter addressed to Guy Horne and met David Searle on one or two occasions. I guessed that one or other or both of them were the new owners of the top flat. Neither of them live in the flat but other people do. I asked them who owned the top flat and they

said that David Searle and Guy Horne owned it.

The three flats in the house are all owned freehold and things like house insurance have been shared out between them with each flat paying a share based on how many floors they have. The bottom flat has one floor, the middle flat has one floor and the top flat has two floors so the bottom flat and the middle flat pay 25% each and the top flat pays 50%. That's how it's been in the past with Tony Pritchett in the top flat organising things.

Mary Komicki got in touch with me. She wanted me to give her an opinion as to whether the front facade of the house needed redoing. David Searle wanted her to pay a share of the cost of doing this. I said it didn't need redoing and sent her a photo of the six houses in the terrace. From a facade point of view they all look the same. I think they look really elegant. Redoing just one of them would spoil the whole terrace. I think that if they're going to be redone all of them should be redone at the same time.

Then there were a couple of workmen on the roof but just for a few days. I don't know what they were doing. As far as I was aware there was nothing wrong with the roof so perhaps they were putting in a skylight for the top flat or trying to remove bats. I see bats flying around above the back garden every now and then in the evenings and perhaps bats had been roosting in the roof.

The workmen used no scaffolding and safety nets and once or twice dropped tools into what I call the sitting garden just outside the back door. It's a beautiful spot and I use it a lot and it's part of Mary's beautiful back garden. On something like the third day of the roofing work a brick came hurtling down. Monica, who was in the middle flat at the time, actually saw the thing going past her window and I heard it hit the ground just outside the back door. Monica thinks that if that brick had hit me on the head it would have killed me. I think she's probably right.

Mary Momicki owns the bottom flat and Yvonne Liu owns the middle flat but who owns the top flat? I tried to find out and googled "David Searle Guy Horne".

They are involved with lots of different companies too numerous to name and at least two of them have been dissolved but there's a big one called Grolar Developments Limited. Grolar is a private limited company with two directors each of whom own 50 shares. One of them is David Asher Searle and the other is Guy Alexander James Horne. Michael Reason was appointed as their Finance Director on 1/6/22 and resigned on 29/11/22. The accounts for 2022 show assets of £48,486,297 and liabilities of £47,306,882. Grolar appears to specialise in the buying and selling of own real estate and the development of building projects and they've been in trouble with the Health and Safety Executive. Perhaps the rise in interest rates and the recent fall in property prices has put them into negative equity. Perhaps they could go belly up while half way through building their proposed extension.

Grolar Developments Limited. What's a Grolar? It's a grizzly-polar bear hybrid. I think they're ferocious and dangerous because when spotted in the wild in Canada they're nearly always shot dead. A small number are in captivity.

Mary Komicki has sent me copies of her correspondence with David Searle. Here are some quotes from her letters to him.

"Dear Yvonne and David, Thank you very much for your letter (written on April 19) asking about setting up a management company for 32 Winchester Road."

"I am very confused by the developments at 32 Winchester Road, and would dearly love us to sort it all out, for the best for all concerned, as I'm sure you would too!

You have asked for my comments about setting up a management company. I don't actually want to be part of a management company. In fact I prefer to remain autonomous, where I would have control of money spent, without set up charges, sink funds, service charges etc. I would like to keep things as simple as possible for us all, as we always have. We are not property developers after all!

I suggest that we just pay for any work done when provided with an invoice as usual. I can't see that we need a management company to oversee some maintenance, and pay the insurance once a year. We never needed one before and it was fine. Surely one person can liaise with the builders when necessary. A management company sounds far too complicated to me, involving more middle men and therefore more confusion, more bureaucracy and much more money.

I don't understand how the management company would take the pressure of us as individuals if it is run by Grolar Developments, who are based in the top flat anyway.

Most seriously of all, I received another letter, (written 2 days later), with a huge service charge from a company I have no knowledge of. This was a demand for £7,881.66 as a third of a total of £23,645. This massive amount was to be paid to Grolar's account. This can't be right. I don't even know who they are or anything about them. The itemised breakdown of the quote that was said to be included in the letter, was not enclosed. There was no proper legal invoice either.

It appears that Grolar, whoever they may be, appear to have jumped the gun, and tried to assume control before waiting for my input or consent, already asking for money without my permission, and no signed official contract with me! Also, surely Yvonne and I should pay a quarter each as usual, and the top flat, being double the size, should pay half, as we do with insurance.

There was also a summary of rights and obligations for lease holders but as I am not a lease holder but own the Freehold, none of this applies to me anyway."

Mary then asks some questions. Here are two of them.

"2. Who owns the Freehold? Please could you send me a copy of it. Could I also have David's and Grolar's phone numbers. Should I contact Guy Horne?

3. What happened to the original idea of setting up the limited management company for the 3 flats of Winchester Road co-managed by us as joint directors? Would it be part of Grolar, does it employ Grolar, or is it Grolar? Am totally confused."

Mary also writes in this same letter:

"As far as work on the roof is concerned, I would need to know what it involves, scaffolding etc. at the front or the back of the house, and for how long my tenants lives will be disrupted, as they have always been my top priority, as you know. I also need a clear breakdown of what the massive sum of £23,645 is actually for."

Here are some quotes from another letter Mary sent to David Searle.

"I am still waiting for your invoice for the roof repairs ... Also I have had the front inspected, and it does not appear to need any special work, so that's lucky ... I was rather shocked to receive the

enclosed letter from City Planning ... Gloral Developments ... extension ... Gloral ... Are they Yvonne and Grolar ... I would also be extremely grateful if you could write to me and keep me in the loop of what is going on, and also if you could keep Sebastian Martienssen in the garden flat informed of all the developments."

David hasn't kept me informed. Who actually owns the top flat anyway? According to the Land Registry it's owned by Theo Grolar Developments. This thing doesn't show up in a Google search. I don't think this thing exists as anything more than a name.

Here's another thing and it's a SPAD called Jason Stein. He's been living in the top flat and he is currently under investigation by the Cabinet Office's propriety and ethics unit. I think that David Searle and Guy Horne are good friends of his. Has he been trying to influence government policy in favour of property developers such as Searle and Horne?

Back in 1973 I killed a rat for Mary. Fifty years later it's not a rat she needs me to kill but a Grolar.