

Dear Miriam Baptist,

I was shocked to receive a letter last week stating that a planning application for works in Highgate Cemetery (NO:2024/5407/P) had been lodged. There had been no consultation before that or earlier notification, although, as a grave owner, they will have my phone numbers and email. Not to inform grave owners of these plans I consider to be grossly underhand.

I have now looked at the very inadequate exhibition at the cemetery and also at their plans online and the detailed plans on your website. I am particularly concerned with the Gardners Building at the mound of the East cemetery.

I bought a double grave on the mound in 2017 when my husband died, intending when I died to join him there.

We had loved the cemetery since doing two fund raising programmes there a few years earlier, poetry and letters etc relating to the many interesting people buried there. We found it a wonderfully tranquil place.

Sadly, our grave is on the edge of the mound near the path and if these plans go ahead it will be far from tranquil. Are you surprised they didn't tell so many of us? Looking at the photograph of the proposed building I now realise it will be actually on the mound, not just below as I'd imagined. Not only is it far too big it is far too near the graves and I dread the damage it will do when the work is in progress.

When finished the thought of a 'viewing area' with visitors gawping at our graves is horrific. It certainly won't be peaceful.

I can understand that there are buildings in the cemetery that need care and preservation, but a new building in such a sensitive area is unthinkable! Would you want a loved one to be buried there? Or to be buried there yourself? More buildings more people, more noise.

Grief is a very powerful emotion and needs peace and quiet in beautiful surroundings. This building is a disgrace and an insult to caring loved ones.

Regards,

Pamela Pigott-Smith