

From: Deirdre McGinnis Lopez
Sent: 14 April 2025 15:00
To: Planning
Cc: sylvied mcginnis
Subject: Highgate Cemetery Swain's Lane London N6 6PJ - 2024/5407/P & 2024/5423/L

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To whom it may concern,

Highgate Cemetery Swain's Lane London N6 6PJ - 2024/5407/P & 2024/5423/L

I am writing on behalf of my mother, Sylvia McGinnis (Grave No. 53282), who was deeply shocked and distressed to receive a letter last week from Dr. Ian Dungavell, CEO of Highgate Cemetery, dated 27 March 2025. This was the first time she had been made aware of a planning application (Ref: 2024/5407/P) proposing works at Highgate Cemetery—an application which, to our astonishment, had already been lodged.

What is most troubling is the complete lack of prior consultation. Neither my mother nor my brothers—who, like her, are grave owners—were informed in advance. There was no planning notice posted at the Mound, nor any communication via letter or email. For such a significant proposal, this silence is both baffling and unacceptable.

Our primary concern lies with the planned development of the Gardener's Building at the Mound of the East Cemetery. This is not only the resting place of our father but also one of the most frequently visited and recently active sections of the cemetery. It is deeply upsetting to us, and likely to many others, that bereaved families were not engaged in discussions before such a sensitive area was earmarked for construction.

The proposed location is entirely inappropriate. It is hard to understand why the Cemetery would choose to disturb this specific site—one with high emotional and spiritual value—when there are clearly less intrusive alternatives. For instance, a disused area with a skip that has sat untouched since we began visiting in 2021 could easily be repurposed without disrupting grieving families.

When my mother chose our father's grave, she did so with the understanding that this would be a tranquil and private space for remembrance. The view of the trees from the Mound was part of what made the location so meaningful. That view is now threatened by a proposed two-storey building which would serve as a public toilet and workspace. Frankly, the idea of placing such a facility directly beside sacred ground is, in our view, entirely disrespectful.

While we understand the need for a gardener's workspace, we firmly believe it should not come at the emotional cost of grieving families or at the expense of the cemetery's integrity. There is still time to reconsider this plan and relocate the proposed works to a more suitable and less sensitive location.

We ask, urgently and respectfully, that this objection be taken seriously and that grave owners—particularly those directly affected—be fully consulted going forward.

Yours sincerely,

Deirdre McGinnis
on behalf of Sylvia McGinnis (Grave No. 53282)