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**From:** sara [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 22 April 2025 22:33  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Application 2024/5407/P

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From Miss Natasha Wood

20 South Hill Park Gardens  
Hampstead, NW3 2TG

Grave No. S3278

21 April 2025

To the Planning Committee

re Renovation of Highgate Cemetery. Application 2024/5407/P {Project 6}

I am deeply concerned, however, about the detrimental impact that the proposed Gardeners' Building would have on Highgate Cemetery.

The renovation of Highgate Cemetery is, also, a conservation project. The proposed Gardeners' Building would destroy the wildflower bank and cause environmental damage. It would, in turn, reflect heat and cast shade on the Mound and, possibly, cause local drought and flooding. The wildflower bank provides habitat, shelter, and food for wildlife. The soil is home to uncountable soil life. The Earth's soil safely stores more carbon than all plants, but when soil is disturbed, carbon is released into the atmosphere. The wildflower bank appears to be stable. It may only need to be partially re-turfed or sown with seeds or planted, in places, with low growing shrubs. There is turf on biodegradable meshing, pre-planted for retaining banks, which would be suitable.

The two outstanding features of the Mound are the wildflower bank and the view of the trees and old tombstones. The proposed Gardeners' Building would separate the Mound from the old cemetery. The two storey building looks aggressive, and there would be the noise of vehicles coming and going. In future, the bereaved might hesitate to bury their deceased on the East side of Highgate Cemetery because of the dominance of the proposed Gardeners' Building.

It is short sighted to destroy the wildflower bank and replace it with the proposed Gardeners' Building. The burial place of Karl Marx is an international tourist attraction. The proposed Gardeners' Building would dominate the walk between the Karl Marx monument and the old tombstone of Karl Marx. From both places, the two storey, concrete building would spoil the view. The visitor access to Stonehenge was completely re-designed because the previous design spoilt all the views.

There are, at present, sufficient facilities for the grave owners on the Mound. On the S.E. corner of the Mound, there is a wooden table with storage space underneath. There is a water tap at the bottom of the Mound. There are visitors' toilets, including disabled toilets, near both the East and West entrances of the cemetery. The proposed Gardeners' Building would block the open view of the trees, which give deep solace to mourners.

There are alternative solutions for accommodating the needs of the gardeners and volunteers, which could be either permanent or temporary. I have made some suggestions below.

#### **Providing for the needs of the gardeners and volunteers on site**

The master plan for the renovation of Highgate Cemetery seems to prioritise the new features of the cemetery over the needs of the gardeners and volunteers, and to show least consideration for the grave owners. The proposed Visitor, Cafe and Operations Building and proposed Education and Community Building are located in the places which currently provide for the needs of the gardeners and volunteers. As no suitable off site space was found for their needs, the wildflower bank was chosen for the location of the proposed Gardeners' Building. We, grave owners on the Mound, were not informed until March 28 2025 after the submission of the Planning Application. We were neither consulted nor invited to any meeting. This is a serious oversight.

While locating on site the provisions for gardeners and volunteers, and only the new features of the cemetery which need to be on site, while locating most of the new features off site? A beautifully designed, single storey gardeners' building or buildings could be located on site near the cemetery entrances, effectively upgrading the current provisions for gardeners and volunteers.

### **Other possible solutions**

Highgate Cemetery is a historic place, a nature conservation site, and for many it is sacred. It is, also, an international tourist attraction. It may be wise to accept a temporary solution before destroying the wildflower bank and ruining the beauty and atmosphere of a deeply cherished place. The proposed new buildings near the cemetery entrances and the North Lodge could be shared until suitable off site space has been found. The high, sloping roof of the proposed Education and Community Buildings could be converted into a loft or mezzanine gallery or, possibly, the building could have two storeys with a flat, green roof. As there is such a shortage of space, a high ceiling is not practical.

On the West side, the Courtyard Colonnade could be adapted to accommodate the ticket office and some provisions for gardeners and volunteers. The central steps would be left open. Part or all of the remaining colonnade could be enclosed with wooden panels or double doors between the arches. The appearance would resemble the Cutting Catacombs.

The building on Swains Lane, south of the cemetery on the West side, is currently being renovated. Could all or some of this building be bought or rented?

### **Gardeners' vehicles**

There may be electric gardening vehicles which are road worthy and which would be suitable for the gardeners' needs that could replace some of the gardening vehicles. If so, there may be garage space where they could be kept a little further away than the immediate vicinity of the cemetery.

Do the gardening vehicles need to be kept under cover over night? Do they need to be parked together in one place? On the West side, there is a small, side road off Swains Lane, just north of the cemetery. Would it be possible to rent day time parking space in this road? Alternatively, there may be some discreet places in the cemetery where vehicles could be parked during the day. At night they could be parked in the courtyard.

If the vehicles need to be kept under cover, as a temporary measure, they could be kept under tarpaulins or under a marquee. A marquee could look quite attractive in the courtyard.

### **The proposed Gardeners' Building violates a solemn place**

The plan to build a two storey, aggregated concrete building, in the place of the wildflower bank shows disrespect to the dead and is insensitive to the grave owners, who have chosen a peaceful place of natural beauty for the final resting place of their nearest and dearest.

On a personal level, the proposed Gardeners' Building is particularly distressing. My father's last years were plagued by neighbours' building works. Since my father died, my mother and I visit Highgate Cemetery every week. The time that we spend together tending my father's grave is precious to us and an important part of our lives. My father was a very fine architect. I think that he would have loathed the design of the proposed Gardeners' Building, and I am grieved that his final resting place will be utterly spoilt.

### **The display board is misleading**

The images purporting to show the creative process are misleading. There is a hiatus between each step such that the final design of the modern, urban, hard edged, two storey, grey, aggregated concrete Gardeners' Building bears no resemblance to the photograph of the old, rustic, moss covered, slightly irregular, buttressed, red brick garden wall. The graphic projections show an apparent size of the proposed Gardeners' Building much smaller than its actual size. In addition, all the giant figures are not drawn to scale. The grey computer image is poor and unclear. The stature of the ghost-like figure appears to be almost in proportion to the colossal bust of Karl Marx on his monument.

**Please do not grant Planning Permission to Highgate Cemetery, in particular do not grant Planning Permission for Project 6, the erection of a Gardeners' Building, on the active burial mound lying along side the monument to Karl Marx and Karl Marx original burial place.**

Natasha Wood [Miss]