

Application N Consultees Name Recipient Address Received Comment Response

2024/5407/P Sarah Robson 28 St James Road 30/04/2025 14:32:27 OBJ  
Bridlington  
YO16 3PF

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to register my strong objection to planning application 2024/5407/P concerning the proposed Gardeners' Building on the East Side of Highgate Cemetery. As a family member of someone buried at the cemetery, I find the plans both distressing and unacceptable in their current form.

Visual Impact and Scale:¿  
The height of the proposed building is deeply inappropriate for its setting. At its southernmost point, the building would stand 5 metres above the mound level and a staggering 7.8 metres above the path below. This sheer height—placed with no verge or setback—would create an overbearing and oppressive presence immediately adjacent to existing graves and pedestrian paths. The current embankment is only 3.9 metres wide, and the proposal would occupy up to 5.8 metres—making it 400mm wider than the available space.

The proposed reduction in the path's width—from 1.5 metres to just 1.2 metres, and even narrower due to projecting seating—further compounds this impact. This narrow access leaves inadequate space for wheelchair users and those seated along the edge, creating both safety and accessibility concerns. The building's looming façade would dominate the space, intruding into an area that is meant to be tranquil and reflective.

Access and Disruption During Construction:  
Because the path beneath the proposed structure is the only pedestrian and wheelchair access to this part of the cemetery, the construction process would render an entire section of the mound inaccessible for a prolonged period. This will inevitably disrupt the ability of grieving families to visit loved ones' graves and maintain them. The proximity of the works to active burial plots is deeply disrespectful and distressing to families.

Misleading Photomontage and Presentation:  
The published photomontages submitted with the application are not an accurate representation of the proposed building's scale or position. They appear to function more as artistic impressions than factual visualisations. The placement of the building in the illustrations is misleading, and the inclusion of oversized human figures distorts the scale, making the building appear far smaller and less intrusive than it actually would be. This undermines public understanding of the true impact of the proposal and raises serious concerns about transparency in the consultation process.

Inappropriate Memorial Wall:  
The proposed memorial wall integrated into the building bears a distinctly crematorial and clinical character, entirely out of keeping with the historical and spiritual nature of this part of Highgate Cemetery. It does not align with the cemetery's ethos and undermines the unique Victorian aesthetic that makes Highgate a place of national importance.

Environmental and Heritage Concerns:¿  
Highgate Cemetery is a Grade I listed site and Metropolitan Open Land, and as such, it must be

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protected from insensitive development. The proposed building will cast deep shadow over adjacent grave plots, alter the microclimate, and damage the established planting schemes maintained by families. Furthermore, the introduction of this building at the cemetery's heart—rather than on its periphery—flies in the face of multiple planning and conservation principles.

Loss of Sanctuary and Erosion of Trust:

¿ The cemetery is not simply a historic attraction. It is an active site of mourning and remembrance. This proposal would bring noise, foot traffic, and operational infrastructure into one of the most sensitive and emotional areas of the site. It is extremely painful for families—especially those with recent graves on the mound—to see their sanctuary compromised in this way.

Conclusion: ¿

This building, in its scale, positioning, and presentation, represents a serious misjudgment in both design and sensitivity. I urge Camden Council to reject this application and request that Highgate Cemetery Trust return to the drawing board and engage properly with families, the community, and better informed heritage professionals.

Thank you for considering this objection.

Yours faithfully,  
Sarah Robson

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2024/5407/P	Dr.Patrick Kiernan	64 Stoneleigh Terrace London N19 5TZ	30/04/2025 14:44:18	COMMNT	<p>Re: East Side Gardeners Mound Building</p> <p>I strongly object to the Gardeners Mound building being a two-story construction.</p> <p>I am a regular visitor to the East Side Mound as my son has been buried there for the last 13 years. When we chose this grave it was done so because of the beauty of the mound, its elevation and its accompanying views over the cemetery.</p> <p>If the building goes ahead in its present design his grave will be close to the side of a large building.</p> <p>Presently the mound is fortunate to have one meditative and tranquil view over the rest of the cemetery while two boundaries are already overlooked by large buildings of the Whittington estate to the south and east. The proposed two storey building would further enclose and dominate the area with buildings, and with it the outlook of this unique spot.</p> <p>From the architect's drawings the lower part of the building is for gardener's vehicles with the upper floor providing offices, with windows on the west side. As a consequence the staff will then have the very same tranquil view that will be denied the grave owners.Which brings into question who is the cemetery for ?</p> <p>I am not objecting in principle to a building at the side of the mound but that it should be a single storey with an appropriate eco flat roof. Windows on the west side of the single storey building will still provide adequate light and views for the staff. A situation that would satisfy all parties needs .</p>

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2024/5407/P	Clare Baker	39 Norwood Beverley HU17 9HN	30/04/2025 14:21:14	OBJ	<p>Objection to Planning Application 2024/5407/P: Proposed Gardeners' Building on the Mound, Highgate Cemetery</p> <p>To Whom It May Concern,</p> <p>I write with considerable unease and sadness to object most strongly to the proposed development at Highgate Cemetery, namely the construction of the Gardeners' Building (Project 6) upon the Mound, as outlined in planning application 2024/5407/P.</p> <p>When one considers that this part of the cemetery is reserved for relatively recent interments—including, heartbreakingly, children and infants—it becomes incomprehensible that such a project should be sited here, of all places. Alternative options have been proposed which would achieve the Cemetery's operational goals without violating the integrity of the Mound. Improvements to existing facilities at the East Cemetery entrance, for example, or the use of modest, unobtrusive structures at the perimeter, would serve the same purpose without desecrating the heart of this precious site.</p> <p>Why elect to disturb the section most actively visited by grieving relatives? I note from recent press coverage that the Cemetery are reclaiming 500 graves, with plans to exhume the bodies unless relatives come forward. Might I suggest some of that space could be utilised? For those of us with loved ones buried there, Highgate is not merely a site of historic interest—it is a place of profound personal and spiritual significance. My beloved sister lies beneath that earth, as do the relatives of many other families who visit frequently to reflect and grieve in peace. The proposed structure, in both scale and design, is entirely at odds with the cemetery's character. A tall, utilitarian building with an industrial appearance—replete with roller shutters, staircases, and loading bays—would tower some five metres above the graves and rise over six metres from the path below, casting deep shadow over the sacred ground. It would be a stark imposition upon the serenity of the Mound and wholly alien to its reflective purpose.</p> <p>There is already a tacit acknowledgement of the Mound's sensitive nature—Highgate itself erected a 'no entry' sign to deter casual visitors from intruding on this active burial ground. And yet, incongruously, the proposed building includes a viewing platform, clearly aimed at enhancing the tourist experience. One can only interpret this as a disregard for the mourners who come seeking solace, not spectacle.</p> <p>The impact of such a development upon the environment and atmosphere of the Mound cannot be overstated. The wildflower bank, so lovingly tended and ecologically valuable, would be lost. The sunlight, which presently graces the graves and supports small plantings, would be blocked by the sheer height of the proposed structure. The resulting microclimate would be colder, dimmer, and less conducive to the natural beauty that currently thrives there.</p> <p>Practical matters, too, give rise to concern. The paths around the Mound are narrow, uneven in places, and already a challenge for older visitors. Introducing a building with two showers and multiple toilets—surely designed for frequent and prolonged use by staff—would bring footfall, machinery, and noise wholly incompatible with the purpose of a burial ground. Moreover, it</p>

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					<p>appears likely that some paths would be further constricted, potentially rendering the Mound inaccessible to those in wheelchairs. It would be difficult to overstate how distressing this would be for families hoping to visit loved ones.</p> <p>One cannot ignore the broader trend at play here. The introduction of cafés, ticketing systems, and event spaces suggests a gradual commercialisation of a place once reserved for reverent remembrance. This proposed building is not an isolated initiative—it is part of a direction of travel that many of us, with long-standing ties to the cemetery, find increasingly disturbing.</p> <p>Finally, it is deeply disheartening that many grave owners were not made aware of the application until it was well advanced. Communication appears to have been selective and, frankly, lacking in courtesy. It is my understanding that local societies were contacted early on to secure favourable comments, while those most affected by the plan were left in the dark. One can hardly call that consultation in good faith.</p> <p>Cemetery operators are bound not only by planning law but by a common law duty of care. This includes a responsibility to safeguard graves from physical damage and protect relatives from distress. As yet, no clear explanation has been offered as to how graves on the Mound will be protected during construction, and this absence of reassurance has only deepened our unease.</p> <p>I urge Camden Council to reject this application and to work with the community in identifying a more appropriate solution—one that respects the cemetery's heritage, honours the memory of the deceased, and upholds the trust placed in its custodians.</p> <p>Yours faithfully, Clare Baker</p>

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2024/5407/P	Rachel Robson	38 Crescent Road  N22 7RZ N22 7RZ	30/04/2025 14:10:21	OBJ	<p>Response to Planning Application 2024/5407/P: Objection to Proposed Gardeners' Building on the Mound, Highgate Cemetery, PROJECT 6.</p> <p>This submission outlines significant concerns regarding the proposed Gardeners' Building (Project 6) at Highgate Cemetery, as put forward under planning application 2024/5407/P. The project is entirely incompatible with the site's sensitive heritage, spiritual significance, ecological setting and functional use. Although some of my objections stem from the deeply personal and emotional connections I have with the cemetery and its landscape, many are grounded in broader public interest.</p> <p><b>1. Heritage, Setting and Design Conflicts</b></p> <p>The proposed two-storey structure is visually intrusive and entirely inappropriate for its surroundings. Its sheer bulk, industrial finish and scale clash with the character of the cemetery. Far from blending into the historic Grade I listed landscape, the building would dominate the mound, detract from its serenity, and obscure cherished sight-lines to memorials, trees, and open sky. The design is particularly jarring in its inclusion of roller shutters, staircases, elevated walkways and loading bays—features more in keeping with a commercial depot than a space of memorial and mourning. Constructing a large, rectangular building made of aggregate concrete—rising 3.7 metres above the Mound and 6 metres above the path below, and stretching along nearly the entire eastern side—entirely compromises the character of the Mound.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Artist's Impressions are rather deceptive, as the full scale cannot be seen, making the Gardeners' Building seem much smaller than it is; the proposed building would stand five metres higher than the graves, making it horribly intrusive.</p> <p><b>2. Emotional and Spiritual Concerns</b></p> <p>The Mound is not simply a plot of land; it holds profound meaning for those who have buried loved ones there. Many grave owners make regular, often weekly, visits to grieve, reflect, and maintain graves. The quiet and secluded atmosphere has provided emotional sanctuary for years. The proposed development threatens to disrupt this space permanently, replacing serenity with operational noise, and peace with increased footfall and vehicle activity. It would be horribly intrusive.</p> <p>The Cemetery is a huge space - I cannot comprehend why it is being proposed to disturb an active burial area with the most recent graves and the highest volume of grieving family members. There are children and babies buried on the Mound.</p> <p>Tellingly, Highgate Cemetery installed a 'no entry sign' to the Mound to shield this area from casual visitors, acknowledging the need to protect grieving families' privacy.</p> <p>Despite this, a viewing platform is included in the proposed building; an extraordinarily tawdry and revealing addition. This shows how little the needs of grieving families have been considered, instead prioritising commercial interests. Viewing platforms are surely concerned with increasing revenue and tourism - the Cemetery is not a theme park. I suggest that this cannot be compliant with a positive Heritage Impact Assessment, as it would affect the cemetery's historical and cultural value.</p> <p>Beyond personal grief, there's a very strong sense of betrayal. Several families were told that the mound would remain untouched when purchasing graves, and now feel deceived. The proposal is seen not only as inappropriate, but as a violation of trust and a failure to protect what has been</p>

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					<p>a sacred site for many.</p> <p>3. Operational and Access Issues  The Mound's layout, with its narrow footpaths and fragile landscaping, makes it a poor candidate for a service hub. I am concerned about how construction vehicles, staff, and ongoing maintenance logistics would be managed without causing damage to graves or seriously disrupting the experience of visitors. I also have safety concerns about mixing heavy equipment with pedestrian paths already used by elderly visitors and mourners.  Furthermore, it seems to me that the paths will be so narrowed by the proposed building that visitors using wheelchairs would not be able to access the Mound.  Even post-construction, the noise and increased human traffic associated with a working building would be incompatible with the cemetery's intended use. It would transform a peaceful, reflective site into a functional, disruptive space. The building includes showers - two of them - and toilets. This is simply inappropriate next to an active burial space.</p> <p>4. Procedural Failings and Lack of Transparency  Shockingly, a large number of grave owners were not informed in good time about the proposed development. Notices were as tardy as late March, and some mourners only found out through informal channels. Many of us believe that communication was deliberately limited by Ian Dungavell to avoid resistance, which seems a reasonable assumption given the efforts made to garner support at the beginning of the consultation. To contact local societies and supporters to add positive comments without even informing grave owners of the plans is utterly crass. Moreover, owners of graves on the Mound were not meaningfully consulted or involved in design discussions. This lack of inclusion has caused further frustration and alienation, particularly among living relatives who have bought plots in order to be buried with their loved ones. Reading the heartfelt written objection from the married couple who bought their plot during lockdown is very moving indeed - how do Highgate Cemetery propose to deal with such cases? What has happened to their values and duty of care to stakeholders?</p> <p>5. Environmental Impact and Visual Harm  The proposed Gardeners' Building would entirely destroy the wildflower bank and cause environmental damage. It would cast deep shadow over adjacent grave plots, changing the microclimate and affecting both planting schemes and wildlife. Because of the building's excessive height, it will block sunlight from at least half of the Mound, making it much harder for grave owners in the shaded areas to continue planting flowers as we currently do. Shadow diagrams and photomontages requested by the public were not included in initial submissions, leading many to believe the impact has been deliberately underrepresented. The structure would impose hard surfaces and dominant geometry where gentle greenery and open light currently prevail.</p> <p>6. Contravention of Planning Policy and Cemetery Ethos  As Metropolitan Open Land and a Grade I listed site, Highgate Cemetery benefits from strong planning protections. Policies clearly discourage development that impinges on openness, historic character, or tranquillity. The Gardeners' Building violates both the spirit and letter of these guidelines.</p>

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					<p>The Camden Design Panel also raised concerns about the proposal's scale and location, which appear to have been disregarded. There is widespread agreement that any new infrastructure should be sensitively located on the cemetery's edge, not in its heart.</p> <p>7. Viable Alternatives Overlooked Multiple practical alternatives have been proposed, including: Upgrading and expanding existing maintenance buildings near the East Cemetery entrance. Consolidating operational functions at the site's edge. Using demountable or discreet low-level structures built into the slope of the Mound. Moving operations to areas currently used for storage or garages. Such options would avoid desecrating the Mound while still improving functionality.</p> <p>8. Erosion of Trust and Ethical Concerns It is clear that revenue and tourism are being prioritised over remembrance and respect. The broader direction of development at Highgate Cemetery - cafés, ticketing, events spaces - is evidence of shifting values. The Gardeners' Building plans exist not in isolation, but as part of this unwelcome drift toward commercialisation. In addition to the breach of trust experienced by us as grave owners, we are deeply concerned about how the cemetery's custodians are disregarding their moral responsibility to protect mourners, choosing instead to focus on visitors.</p> <p>9. Common Law Duty of Care: Cemetery operators (whether local authorities or private entities) have a duty of care to maintain sites in a safe condition, including taking steps to protect graves from damage. We have not yet been informed how Highgate Cemetery intend to safeguard graves from such damage during the proposed work, which is deeply distressing.</p> <p>Conclusion Permit me, in conclusion, to refer to the very words published in 'The Trust's Vision' by Hopkins Architects: Highgate Cemetery is a place of sanctuary. We are passionate about being enchanting, respectful, nurturing and visionary. Regrettably, these noble aspirations find no reflection in the present proposal. Instead, we are confronted with a plan that is disruptive, discordant, and distressing to those it most affects. The proposed Gardeners' Building is a profound misstep by Highgate Cemetery - practically, ethically and environmentally, as custodians of a heritage site. While the cemetery must continue to evolve, development should never come at the cost of mourners' trust, historical integrity, or sacred atmosphere. This application should be reconsidered; sensitive alternatives exist and the community is ready to support them.</p>