

Anna Seifert-Speck

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UK

Ms Miriam Baptist
Planning Application Case Officer
Camden Council Planning Department
Development Management,
Camden Town Hall, Judd Street,
London WC1H 9JE.

13 May 2025

Re: Objection to Planning Application –2024/5407/P – 2024/5423/L Highgate Cemetery
Addendum to Original Objection Statement Regarding the Proposed Gardener's Building at
Highgate Cemetery

Dear Ms. Baptist,

Unfortunately, I was unable to take part in the meeting with you on the 8th of May 2025. However, I have reviewed the information prepared by Amir Sinai and visited the site to confirm the impression that the computer modelling submitted by Highgate Cemetery as part of the planning application gives a false impression of the size and dimension of the proposed Gardeners Building.

This has crystallised my concerns regarding the planning application, and I would like to further specify my objections.

I have already outlined my concerns regarding the consultation process. What took place does not look like an open and honest approach to engaging stakeholders prior to submitting the planning application. I am told this constitutes a breach of basic planning norms.

I am convinced that objections to the proposal have been kept artificially low as a result of the way information was withheld and communication amongst grave owner was undermined by

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removing material containing opposing viewpoint from the Mound.

Far from creating a peaceful and secluded space the proposed Gardeners Building undermines the openness of the Mound. Its massive dimensions will visually and experientially dominate the space and its surrounding area. The published images don't give an adequate sense of the sheer size, rising to 7.8 meters in height and 25.5. meters in length.

The proposed width of 5.8 meters is particularly concerning to me. When I bought the grave for my husband and myself, I was told the Mound was created on top of a common grave and that many of London's poor were buried there. The Mound had therefore been specifically designed in order not to disturb this grave. The current plans seem to ignore these considerations and instead talk of memorialising those buried in the common grave on the proposed memorial wall. I see this as further evidence of contextual insensitivity to the specifics of the site. In addition, the material making up the Mound are likely to cause construction issues that have not been adequately addressed.

Further, the Gardeners building's visibility from across the cemetery will have a substantial and negative impact beyond the Mound.

While some mourners on the Mound value a degree of privacy, I feel segregating mourners and their grief from the historic cemetery with a huge wall is not in line with the stated ambition of keeping the cemetery an active burial ground. This is likely to impact the way historic graves and the rest of the cemetery are experienced by visitors and may have negative consequences in terms of respecting the sanctity of the entire site.

In addition, the proposed Gardener's Building would cast a deep shadow over the Mound. This dramatically change the character of the area's sense of openness and tranquillity and runs the risk of transforming it into a gloomy backyard of the historic cemetery.

Furthermore, vehicular access to this part of the cemetery is already difficult and makes it hard for gardening vehicles to manoeuvre safely. This will be even more of an issue for construction vehicles. I anticipate both types of vehicles causing major disruption and anguish during construction and beyond, in the latter case.

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The metal shutters on the ground floor façade of the proposed building are bound to generate noise throughout the day. Gardening staff accessing the building and a public toilet placed on the Mound will introduce more disruption and noise in an area that currently exudes peace and calm. The suggestion that this would not be disruptive because the gardeners only work between 8-16h does not make any sense. Given the opening hours. This would leave one undisturbed hour between 16-17h. Neither do I find the suggestion that electric vehicles being used by the gardeners will solve the problem convincing.

In summary, I consider the Gardeners Building wholly unsuitable to the proposed site for the above reasons.

Yours sincerely

Anna Seifert-Speck