

Ms Miriam Baptist, Planning Application Case Officer

Camden Council Planning Department

Development Management,

Camden Town Hall, Judd Street,

Hello

I write as a regular visitor to Highgate Cemetery.

I am very unhappy to learn of this application, and surprised that there hasn't been any information about it available in the cemetery.

Here are some of the things I object to:

1. Size and design

The proposed building is overwhelming in scale. It will also block the only open side of the Mound, which will seriously change the character of the space. The building will also be visible across the cemetery. I consider it to be entirely out of keeping with the cemetery - which is, after all, a cemetery and not a park - and with the quiet and emotional experience of mourning, or of honouring one's dead.

2. Road Access

The road is too narrow to accommodate regular vehicle access, Particularly if vehicles are entering or exiting the proposed building. People will have to walk over graves to avoid vehicles. This is completely unacceptable.

3. Noise and Activity

Increased vehicle noise and foot traffic from gardening staff will dominate the area, undermining the peace and solemnity essential to any cemetery. I understand that the gardeners must do their work - I very much appreciate what they do - but I do not want to stand amongst them whilst I am observing loss and death and they are bustling about their service area. Even the security shutters will be noisy.

4. Construction

Little if any thought seems to have gone into the realities of building. How will the paupers' graves underneath it be excavated? Is the ground in that area of the cemetery stable enough? How will large and heavy construction machines access the area? In a

sensitive and densely filled space, have. Potential problems been fully costed? This looks ill thought through; the application evades serious potential issues.

5. Long-Term

Approval of this proposal could set a precedent for further development in or around the Mound and throughout the cemetery. This would fundamentally alter the character of the space and erode its historical and cultural significance. In fact, if this building is forced through and the consequent disruption suffered, it may in future be possible to argue that the cemetery has less historical and cultural significance than it did.

6. Alternatives

It would be entirely possible to achieve all the functions of this proposed building in a simpler building placed at the perimeter of the cemetery. Surely that would be better for everyone, including the gardeners?

Please reject this application. I urge the cemetery trustees to reconsider their plans and to demonstrate much more respect for the quiet and serene atmosphere that so many of us prize.

Sincerely

Kate Leys

Objection to Planning Application –2024/5407/P – 2024/5423/L Highgate Cemetery

My father Colin Young was buried on the Mound in 2022.

It's a peaceful beautiful place overlooking the rest of the East Cemetery that is - unless the proposed Gardeners' Vehicle Buildings and toilets are approved. Then the view and the peace would vanish. That Building would obscure the landscape of the East Cemetery which gives a sense of the continuum of time and memory.

I also object to the fact that there was no consultation or email notification of plans for the Mound by Friends of Highgate Cemetery, prior to this Application being sent to Camden Planning Department in early January 2025.

Five of the seven 'material considerations' that Camden Planning department will consider relate to objections raised by many grave owners.

1. 'The design, size and height of new buildings or extensions' – it has been admitted by Highgate Cemetery that these are not correct and therefore misleading.
2. 'The impact of new uses of buildings or of land.' Clearly there would be a horrendous impact on mourners to the Mound's graves as detailed in my opening paragraph.
3. 'Loss of light and the privacy of neighbours' – neighbours/stakeholders in this case being the grave owners of those buried at the Mound. We would be over-looked and disturbed by the comings and goings at the Gardeners' Building. This cemetery is a place of peace and serenity in which to contemplate the past and its memories.
4. 'The impact of noise from plant equipment.' The impact of noise if this building were to go ahead is obvious. Plant vehicles, excavations the length of one half of a working, peaceful, live cemetery.
5. 'Noise from new uses'. The proposed multi-purpose building would house Plant Vehicles that would be regularly coming and going out of the new build. There would be more work force people daily going about their maintenance business, maybe having discussions, using the toilets. All this while mourners tend graves of their loved ones or sit quietly in thought.

This Cemetery at the Mound is a place of peace and serenity in which to contemplate the past and its memories. It must not be touched. Another site needs to be found for maintenance and ground work facilities. And toilets.

I strongly object to this part of the above Planning Application where it relates to the Mound.

Keir Templeman-Young

Dr Jenny Wüstenberg
Professor of History & Memory Studies
School of Arts and Humanities
Nottingham Trent University
50 Shakespeare Street
Nottingham, NG1 4FQ
United Kingdom

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

**Objection to Planning Application 2024/5407/P & 2024/5423/L
Gardeners' Building, Highgate Cemetery (East Mound)**

13 May 2025

Dear Ms Baptist,

I write this letter of objection in my professional capacity as a scholar of memory, specifically in concerning grassroots and familial forms of remembrance and their importance in relation to community cohesion. Though I do not have a personal stake as a grave owner myself, I also write on behalf of grave-owning families, who asked me to contribute my expertise on this matter.

I respectfully submit this objection to the proposed Gardener's Building at Highgate Cemetery, on the grounds that the development threatens to undermine the cemetery's vital role as a site of memory, heritage, and cultural resilience. Highgate Cemetery is not simply a functional space—it is a profoundly meaningful place of reflection, remembrance, and collective identity. Any proposed intervention within its grounds must be held to the highest standards of sensitivity, especially when it impacts areas as symbolically and historically charged as the Mound.

The scale and design of the proposed building will irreversibly alter the character of the Mound, the only open side of which will be blocked. This is not just a matter of aesthetics; it compromises the contemplative and memorial experience that this space fosters. The visibility of the new structure from across the cemetery—especially from the Mound itself—risks disrupting the immersive atmosphere of tranquillity and reverence that defines Highgate's contribution to the cultural landscape of London.

Furthermore, the increase in vehicle movement and mechanical activity around the building would fundamentally shift the function of the Mound area from a space of solemn reflection to one dominated by operational noise and logistical traffic. The installation of grilled security shutters and daily staff usage risks transforming what is now a quiet and reflective part of the cemetery into a utilitarian service yard. Such a change runs counter to the cemetery's enduring purpose as a crucial

space for mourning and remembrance, and undermines the long-established relationship between the site and its local, national, and international visitors.

I am also concerned about the broader implications this proposal sets in motion. Approving a structure of this scale and visibility within the heart of the cemetery risks creating a precedent for further incremental development. Over time, this could erode the very qualities that make Highgate Cemetery a beacon of cultural memory and historical continuity. It is vital to consider how such decisions reverberate not only through the landscape, but through the public's trust in the stewardship of shared heritage.

Lastly, the argument that no alternative location exists is unconvincing. A modest and functionally equivalent facility could be accommodated along the perimeter of the cemetery or near existing entrance infrastructure, where its impact on heritage value and visitor experience would be significantly reduced. This would demonstrate a more careful balance between operational needs and the cemetery's irreplaceable cultural function.

In sum, this proposal is not just about a building—it is about the values we assign to places of memory. Highgate Cemetery holds a unique position in the cultural and emotional life of London and beyond. Any development must honour that status, not compromise it and stakeholders – especially the graveowning families and the surrounding community – must be properly consulted.

Most sincerely,

Prof Jenny Wüstenberg